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**HOW TO BE NORWEGIAN IN TALK?**  
POLISH-NORWEGIAN INTERETHNIC  
CONVERSATION ANALYSIS.

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## Foreword

*The present volume is a marginally revised version of my dissertation for the degree of Philosophy Doctor, submitted in May 2009 and defended in September 2009 at the Faculty of Modern Languages and Literature, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań.*

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*Despite the assistance provided, I alone remain responsible for the content of the following dissertation, including any errors or omissions which may remain.*

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*To my grandfather Zygmunt,  
who just could not wait*

# **Chapter 1.**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 The purpose of the study**

It is an acknowledged fact, and possibly even a truism that oral communication is influenced by cultural factors. The basic idea behind this dissertation is that ethnic-specific ways exist of expressing social relations and handling the act of one-to-one communication, which are manifested on a linguistic level and identifiable through conversation analysis (CA). In order to grasp the specificity of ethnic discourses there is a need to determine the impact of cultural factors on conversational practice.

The research question posed in the thesis concerns what it means to be Norwegian in talk, and more specifically: what it means for Norwegian as a second/foreign language (N2) users to be Norwegian in talk. As such, the study embarks on a notion central to the field of second language use, namely communicative competence, introduced to linguistics by Dell Hymes in 1972. Since then, the concept has been especially enthusiastically used in second language learning context. It is to be strived for by both teachers and learners, and has been allotted prime position among the goals of the language learning process in syllabi, yet often without providing a precise and exhaustive explication of precisely what the concept implies for the practice of language use (Hagen, 2006).. Moreover, few studies so far investigated the place of conversational practices within the notion of communicative competence. Conversation as a speech genre is often perceived as universal, "steered" among others by Grice's (1975) conversational

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maxims and Brown&Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies. On the other hand, Gumperz (1982), among others, has suggested that the process of oral communication is influenced by ethnic-specific contextualisation strategies (both verbal and non-verbal). Nonetheless, other scholars have not followed in his footsteps in providing descriptions of what the specificity of linguistic practices in various languages entails. This dissertation aims to fill this knowledge gap, by suggesting a framework for analysing ethnic communication pattern (henceforth ECP), which constitutes an ethnic complement to Gricean maxims in describing the "rules of conversation" in a given language.

As concerns Norwegian as a second language, there have been pedagogical attempts to depict the features that can be considered "good enough Norwegian" for N2-users. Tenfjord (2006) provides a description of the *Godt nok* (Good enough) project, which aims at investigating the features of N2-performance that have been found sufficient for passing the so called *Bergenstesten* (*Norskprøve for voksne innvandrere 3*, Test in Norwegian for adult immigrants, level B1). Within the project, only one study was devoted to describing conversational skills (Dregelid, 2002). Besides, the project can only state what *is perceived* by the sensors to be sufficient for a N2 communicative success, and does not investigate *the real-life impact* of the linguistic factors on N2-users' interactions. Other studies depicting N2 conversational skills include Bakkefjord (1989) which is based on interviews conducted with participants of a N2-course, and focuses on their communicative strategies. Yet Bakkefjord was interested in analysing the strategies belonging to the universal interlanguage discourse (see chapter 2.2.2 for a discussion of the terms) rather than exploring the cultural preconditions of talk. Moreover, the informants in her study showed relatively poor command of Norwegian, which made them dependent on their conversational partner for constructing the talk. A different approach is presented by Engen (2004), who analyses the impact of culture on the communication process, providing examples of four institutional dialogues involving rather advanced N2-speakers. However, in her study she focuses on the "implicit cultural habits" (ibid: 90)

and the misunderstandings caused by different “beliefs” (ibid: 81, my translation, PH) rather than linguistic practices (which may well be connected to habits and beliefs). Moreover, she bases her analysis on the conversations’ content, and not on how the process is organised and the results of it achieved. Although insightful and important, the studies mentioned above fail to notice both the grounding of communicative skills in ethnic-specific constraints, and the methodological requirements connected to the rigorous analysis of real-life data. Therefore, the study of native-non-native (henceforth NS-NNS) conversations using CA-methods presented in this dissertation complements the existing studies and contributes to rendering a more detailed picture of Norwegian interethnic conversation.

## 1.2 Methodology

As already stated, the present study belongs to the field of CA. However, a pure CA-study is unable to provide an explanation for some linguistic phenomena, which need to be analysed in a broader context of social and cultural patterns. In this dissertation a model for analysing ethnic communication pattern (ECP) and its cultural background is proposed and exemplified on Norwegian.

### 1.2.1 Studying culture in interaction

The main methodological assumption, as well as the main goal of the study, can be well illustrated by a quotation from Barnlund:

“Man and society are antecedent and consequent of each other: every person is both a creator of a society and its most obvious creation. Individual acts are framed within cultural imperatives, but cultures derive their imperatives from the acts of individuals. Perhaps for this reason there are essentially two modes of inquiry that have been used in the study of culture.” (1975: 427)

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The two modes of inquiry are as follows: the first one is to determine the culturally predetermined constraints that regulate behaviour in a given culture, whereas the second one is to study the patterns of actual behaviour in order to discover the dialectics that govern them. Both methods have their drawbacks:

“The risk of the former is of reifying abstractions that do not actually regulate behavior, the risk of the latter is of becoming lost in a multiplicity of irrelevant detail. Yet, when sensitively employed, both methods should wind their way back to the same reality. Individual acts are no more than social beliefs particularized, and cultural premises are no more than a multitude of individual acts generalized.” (op.cit: 427)

In the dissertation, the cultural constraints are labelled **FRAMES**, whereas patterns of behaviour<sup>1</sup> are called **PRACTICES**. Practices belong to the reality of linguistic expression, whereas frames constitute the underlying, and hence abstract, cultural premises for the process of conveying meanings in interaction.

The study is an attempt to implement what Barnlund calls sensitive employment of both modes of study. Firstly, possible frames that are constitutive for the social act of Norwegian conversation are suggested, and linked to specific practices identified on the micro-level of conversation. In order not to “become lost in a multiplicity of irrelevant detail” (op.cit.), the scope of the study is limited to practices found in Norwegian casual conversation.

Although the connection between cultures and various aspects of conversation is indisputable, there is ongoing debate as to what the cultural differences account for. Moerman (1988)

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<sup>1</sup> There is an interesting dichotomy, suggested by Kroeber and Kulckhohn (1963, after Gullestad, 1989: 36), where “patterns of behavior” are contrasted with “patterns for behavior”, with the former referring to actual conduct and the latter depicting its underlying premises. However, as Gullestad (ibid.) claims, the suggestion is by no means clear-cut and unanimously shared by scholars within the field of anthropology.

suggests after Geertz that the connection lies in the interpretative processes that conversations are both the source of and subject to. In other words, it is in the socio-cultural context that interactions are interpreted, but their interpretation is constrained by the internalised meanings that are attached to various elements of the process. Goddard&Wierzbicka (1997) see the differences between societies not only in which linguistic code is used, but also in how the code is employed in talk. Thus, the process of coding and decoding messages is influenced by several factors:

“At the functional or illocutionary level of discourse, important parameters of variation include how often and in what fashion the speaker expresses his or her wants, thoughts and feelings, how often and in what fashion the speaker attempts to influence the interlocutor’s wants, thoughts and feelings, whether or not it is alright to draw attention to differences between speaker and interlocutor, and the place of spontaneous as opposed to regulated expression. Cultures also differ markedly in their conventions for how people participate in the work of conversation, for example by turn-taking, overlapping, or even joint construction of sentences, and in their range of linguistic routines.” (ibid.: 254)

Goddard&Wierzbicka suggest two areas of language use that exhibit differences among societies: constructing the conversation’s meta-communicative structure, and expressing one’s attitude towards the contents of talk. This study serves the very purpose of examining, among others, Goddard&Wierzbicka’s suggestion with regard to diverse practices adopted in Norwegian conversation, in order to scrutinise the Norwegian ethnic communication pattern.

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### 1.2.2 Conversation analysis

The methods employed in the study are mainly borrowed from the apparatus of conversation analysis (CA)<sup>2</sup>. Such a decision was a natural one, due to the great achievements in the field of analysing spoken discourse that CA can take pride in. At the same time, CA employs a very consistent methodology, which allows studies to be compared with one another and in this way, constantly verified.

Nonetheless, the study differs to some extent from what is perceived as a “pure” CA-study, characterized by strict inductivism, empiricism and rejection of *a priori* statements (Svennevig, 1999a: 65). The explanatory character of the study made it necessary to develop hypotheses and verify them in the subsequent analysis. As such, it is a heterogeneous approach, integrating CA-methodology with a pragmatic and an intercultural account. Such a stance is claimed to be characteristic of the CA-oriented research in Sweden and Norway (Lindström, 1997).

When it comes to conversation analytical studies of interaction involving non-native speakers in Scandinavia, there prevails data acquired from institutional discourse. To such studies belong for example Svennevig (2002, 2004), and Andersson & Nelson (2005). Kurhila (2003) includes both what she calls institutional encounters (a university office dealing with Finnish as a second language courses, reception desk at a hotel, information desk on a bus station) and everyday conversations (between two friends). Similarly, Brouwer *et al.* (2004) include both telephone conversations at work and “daily life conversations” in their corpus, and focus on embedded corrections in the NS-NNS discourse. Brouwer (2004) is a study of solely private everyday conversations between Dutch and Danish native-speakers in Danish, devoted to repair strategies on the phonetic level. Plejert (2004) focuses also on repair strategies, but she studies advanced learners of Swedish, and looks on repair strategies on the level of a whole utterance rather than

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<sup>2</sup> Since the characteristics of CA have been repeatedly addressed, there exists a great deal of literature on the topic in both English, Scandinavian and Polish languages (e.g. Seedhouse, 2005; Cameron, 2001; Svennevig, 1999b; Scheuer, 2006; Rancew-Sikora, 2007) which the reader may refer to.

one word. Her study shows how understanding is facilitated by NNSs' initiating repairs of their own turns. Brouwer (2003) focuses on word searches in Danish NS-NNS discourse, and analyses their role in language learning through interaction. Plejert's (2004) and Brouwer's (2003) studies seem the only Scandinavian studies that focus on NNSs' interactional skills in casual conversation<sup>3</sup>. As the aforementioned studies deal with Swedish and Danish discourse respectively, the present dissertation serves the function of filling the gap in knowledge about the Norwegian casual interaction involving non-native speakers.

### 1.2.3 Casual conversation

The data studied in this dissertation belong to the genre of CASUAL or EVERYDAY CONVERSATION. Scholars often equate this term with everyday talk and do not devote much attention to analysing what kind of language data they use (Wilson, 1987, 1989). Linell claims that conversation is not just one type of communicative activity:

*“Ordinary or casual conversations, i.e. informal talk in various settings, also form communicative genres, although it is often less clear what these are. Yet, it is quite clear that there is not just one unmarked activity type of ‘ordinary conversation’, in spite of the fact that this is often used as something like an unquestioned category within e.g. CA (...)” (Linell, 1998: 241, my italics, PH)*

Hence, Linell understands conversation as an ‘umbrella’ notion for several sub-types of specific communicative activities, defined by their settings. Even though the social and physical environment in which the discourse takes place does not by itself define a specific communicative genre, “everyday experience tells us that people

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<sup>3</sup> The notion of casual conversation is explained below (section 1.2.3). It is vital to state here that the studies using data from institutional conversation can also be found useful when studying casual conversation. The aim of presenting the scope of existing studies on casual conversation was to demonstrate the need for more research on this topic.

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often do enact specific communicative activities in different kinds of situations" (op.cit.). He enumerates nine features of conversation: obligatory, casual, non-task-oriented, non-work-related, opportunistic with respect to topic development, 'organic', mundane, informal and face-preserving. Yet later he states that "many talk activities meet the characteristics only to some degree" (ibid: 242) and suggests that there exist mixed categories (for example conversation between colleagues at work violating the feature 'non-work-related'). The definition of 'conversation' as suggested by Linell (1998) is rather vague and somewhat difficult to use.

Within the field of psychological studies on the nature of conversation, Clark (1996) distinguishes between spoken and written settings of language use. By setting he understands a combination of the scene ("where language takes place") and the medium:

"Conversations may be devoted to gossip, business transaction, or scientific matters, but they are all characterized by the free exchange of turns among two or more participants. I will call these *personal settings*." (Clark 1996: 4, author's italics)

Subsequently, conversation is presented as the most common, and thus most basic, spoken setting of language use, as: "It is universal, requires no special training, and is essential in acquiring one's first language" (Clark, 1996: 11). Face-to-face conversations are characterised by ten features: co-presence, visibility, audibility, instantaneity, evanescence, recordlessness, simultaneity, extemporaneity, self-determination and self-expression. When one or more of those features are lacking, we are dealing with a non-basic setting of language use which requires special skills from the participants. Of all those features the two latter are the most interesting, as they serve the function of distinguishing ritual interaction (for example the act of making wedding vows violates the rule of self-determination) and theatre dialogues (violating the rule of self-expression) from ordinary conversations. Yet, Clark's suggestion does not provide any means of distinguishing a chat between

friends in a café and professional partners discussing a business transaction in the same place. Wilson's theory (1987, 1989) offers a solution to this problem, even though his definition of the term 'conversation' is based on a feature resembling Clark's 'self-determination'. He defines conversation as an individual speech activity type characterised by equality of speaker rights, which means that all "speakers have an equal right (within conversation) to initiate talk, interrupt, respond, or refuse to do any of these" (Wilson, 1989:20). This is visible in the topic initiation sequences (1987), topic construction and what he calls "in and out of conversation" (1989). In a business transaction, the topic would probably be explicitly stated, and the changes of topic would not occur by means of topic shading or topic drift, but rather as an overt statement. Hence, in Wilson's view, a business encounter would not exemplify the speech activity of 'conversation' (cf. also Donaldson, 1979).

So far the most precise definition of conversation as a speech activity has been offered by Warren (2006), who, drawing on the work of several scholars within different fields of expertise, defines conversation as:

"A speech event outside of an institutionalised setting involving at least two participants who share responsibility for the progress and outcome of an impromptu and unmarked verbal encounter consisting of more than a ritualised exchange." (ibid.:21)

The postulate of shared responsibility includes the equality of speakers' rights in Wilson's (1987, 1989) view. The feature of unmarkedness serves the function of distinguishing conversation and such discourse types as telephone conversations<sup>4</sup> that are highly predictable in their openings and closings (Warren, 2006: 20). Finally, ritualised exchange does not constitute a conversation in that a conversation must involve information exchange

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<sup>4</sup> In the light of the suggested argument, the term 'telephone conversation' is at least misleading, if not self-contradictory. Yet Warren (2006) does not propose another name for this speech event.

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(Donaldson, 1979). In the present study, Warren's definition of the term 'conversation' is adopted with regard to the obtained data.

Since there are numerous studies dealing with native everyday conversations, only a short review of the Scandinavian studies devoted to this topic will be provided here. One of these is Lindström (1999), which applies to Swedish and analyses telephone conversations and dinner conversations among family members. When it comes to Norwegian studies of conversation, Svennevig (1999a) is a study of six conversations during which participants get to know one another. Moreover, there exist both in Sweden and in Norway corpora consisting of everyday conversations as data. The Swedish Gruppsam project, which data corpus consists of 14 hours of participant-made recordings of conversations between good friends, is reviewed in Norrby (2004). The Oslo Corpus of Spoken Norwegian (NoTa-korpuset) is a corpus of around 80 everyday conversations audio- and video-taped, the studies of which, devoted to various phenomena and not exclusively to interactive features, can be found in Johannessen&Hagen (2008). Nonetheless, from the number of the studies conducted on the topic one can say that casual conversation in Scandinavian languages is not a thoroughly described phenomenon.

### 1.2.4 Casual conversation and non-native speakers

Casual conversation is sometimes perceived as universal for all humans, and thus, does not require special training (cf. Clark, 1996: 11). Language teachers tend to regard it as "unstructured and therefore unteachable in any explicit sense" (Eggins&Slade, 1997: 315). However, it is casual conversation that poses most problems for language learners (Kaplan, 1997), which makes it a vital topic of study for second language scholars. Some researches however, argue against focusing on interactive features of conversations between native and non-native speakers of a language (henceforth NS-NNS CONVERSATION), claiming that there exists no such thing. For example Wagner (1996: 230) says: "There is no general rule about how NS and NNS converse (...)". He then proceeds to argue that language users orient themselves to different social roles that

are being imposed on them in a conversation, and that being a non-native language user is not always the predominant role. Instead, the role of a client might predominate and hence, possible linguistic incompetence will not be oriented towards by any of the conversations' parties. Similar arguments are proposed by Sarangi (1994), where he suggests that for instance power asymmetries originating from the social context (e.g. the relation employer-employee) may influence the communication process to a greater extent than the asymmetry native-non-native.

Although one certainly would agree with such arguments, there is no denying that interactions exist where the role of a non-native speaker is either imposed on a foreign language user, or at least oriented to in the interaction. In such cases one can identify TYPICAL INTERACTIVE FEATURES of NS-NNS COMMUNICATION, with focus both on native speaker's and non-native speaker's language use. Such an identification is vital for language teaching, and only after it has been made can one design proper communication training for second/foreign language classroom. It seems vital for scholars to study native-non-native, real life conversations for other reasons:

“(...) casual conversation is a highly structured, functionally motivated, semantic activity. Motivated by interpersonal needs continually to establish who we are, how we relate to others and what we think of how the world is, casual conversation is a critical linguistic site for the negotiation of (...) important dimensions of our social identity (...) casual conversation is concerned with the joint construction of social reality.” (Eggins&Slade, 1997: 6)

Hence, the studies of NS-NNS CONVERSATION reveal aspects of language learning and language use that have consequences for the learner's social identity.

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### 1.2.5 Focus of the study

The focus of the study is predominantly qualitative<sup>5</sup>. It is a case study of a group of Poles living in Norway, who have acquired competence in Norwegian after the critical age (as adults). The sampling is purposive and to some extent convenience-dependent, due to practical reasons such as limited time-span. Such choice of study focus has been dictated by restrictions inherent in the design of the study, namely the limited amount of data that can be collected and analysed over the given period of time. Moreover, qualitative analysis is claimed to be inseparably linked to CA (Femø&Beck, 2005), the apparatus of which is used in this study. At the same time, it is not with sorrow that these methods are applied by the author, who believes that only employing qualitative analysis on longer stretches of talk can shed light on the problems dealt with in the dissertation. By approaching the data using a qualitative method, the author is hoping to exemplify the practices that realise the Norwegian communication pattern, without making claims about their incidence in the conversations:

*“Kvalitativ analyse interesserer sig ikke for repræsentativitet på samme måde som kvantitativ analyse, men derimod for den grundige beskrivelse af de enkeltstående tilfælde, således at repræsentativiteten ligger i det gode dækkende eksempel på det givne fænomen.” (Femø&Beck, 2005: 217)*

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Qualitative analysis is not interested in representativity in the same way as quantitative analysis, but [aims at] a precise description of singular instances instead, so the representativity lies in [providing] a good example of the given phenomenon.

At the same time, quantitative measures are employed in order to compare the occurrence of the studied phenomena in the NSS' and NNSs' talk. Thus, the study can be said to be constructed according

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<sup>5</sup> For a detailed discussion of various aspects of the qualitative approach see e.g. Alasuutari (1995) and Silverman (1997).

to the rule that qualitative analysis is the antecedent of quantitative study, as “a phenomenon cannot be counted before it is identified, and it cannot be identified before being investigated” (op.cit.: 213, my translation, PH).

### 1.2.6 Data type

Two types of data have been collected for the purpose of this dissertation. The main corpus consists of behavioural data, that is audio- and video-taped conversations which can roughly be labelled as two-party, casual conversations involving one native and one Polish speaker of Norwegian, which have been transcribed according to the so called Jeffersonian Transcription system (see appendix 1). For practical reasons, the corpus is attached on a CD to this dissertation. This corpus is supplied by self-report data, collected after the recorded conversations. The corpus of self-report data consists of interviews (in the case of Polish participants) and questionnaires (Norwegian participants), including commenting on the recorded conversation and speculating on the nature of Norwegian spoken discourse (see appendix 2 and 3). For practical reasons, the corpus of self-report data has not been thoroughly studied, and is referred to only in individual cases. A preliminary comment on the questionnaires and interviews is rendered in appendix 4. A precise description of the process of data collection and participants variables, as well as the influence of the project design on results obtainable from the analysis, are presented in chapter 4.

### 1.2.7 Ethical considerations

The informants have been notified what participation in the project implies. The Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD, *Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste*) have given their consent to the realisation of the project, provided that the directly identifiable personal data (such as names) is made anonymous in the transcriptions, whereas the indirectly identifiable data (video recording)

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is not to be made available to anyone else except the researcher<sup>6</sup>. For a more detailed discussion of ethical considerations connected to collecting conversational (and other socio-linguistic) data see for instance Grung&Nagell (2003).

### 1.3 Summary

The present study is an attempt to understand and describe the premises and manifestations of the Norwegian communication pattern. The data obtained for the study consists of conversations involving non-native speakers of Norwegian, of Polish origins. Such a choice has been made for two reasons. Firstly, ethnic communication patterns prove more visible in interethnic interactions, in which misunderstandings and breaches of expectations on both sides are more likely to occur than in conversations between native speakers. Secondly, the study is supposed to shed light on those aspects of communication that deserve extra attention in language learning, simply because of their function and form being either difficult to understand and acquire, or even fully “transparent” for second language users. Hence, one can say that this study consists of both a descriptive and an applied part. Ochs (2002) claims that analysing the relation of language to culture in human development is best obtainable through “long-term, rigorous ethnographic observation, recording, description, and analysis of the displayed preferences and expectations for encoding and displaying psychological stances and social actions” (ibid.: 115). Although this dissertation is not based on a long-term data collection process, it can be said to realise Ochs’ postulate at least to some extent, as it is a meticulous description and analysis of the practices employed in the social act of conversation and the premises constraining their employment.

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<sup>6</sup> Application to NSD, ref.no. 17369/2/SF

The theoretical background of the study is presented in chapters 2 and 3, focusing on frames and practices in conversation respectively. Chapters 4-8 constitute the analytical part of the study, with chapter 4 focussing on identifying features of semi-elicited data, chapter 5 devoted to the studies of general interethnic practices, and chapters 6-8 providing the main study of Norwegian ethnic communication pattern and its realisation by the non-native speakers. Finally, chapter 9 presents the conclusions, possibilities of implementing the study's findings in second/foreign language teaching and suggestions for further research of the topic in different fields.



## Chapter 2.

### Cultural frames

#### 2.1 The notion of frame

##### 2.1.1 Origins and applications

'Frame' is a term widely accepted and used among scholars from different fields. It has also played a vital role in communication studies: "frames and framings evidently belong to the most central concepts in communication theory" (Linell, 1998: 130). One of the first to use the term was Marvin Minsky, a scholar dealing with Artificial Intelligence<sup>7</sup>. Minsky was mainly interested in how understanding is facilitated by pre-existing knowledge, which is stored in the mind in frame-systems:

*"A frame is a data-structure for representing a stereotyped situation, like being in a certain kind of living room, or going to a child's birthday party. Attached to each frame are several kinds of information. Some of this information is about how to use the frame. Some is about what one can expect to happen next. Some is about what to do if these expectations are not confirmed"* (Minsky, 1975 [1974]: 212)

Almost simultaneously with Minsky, the sociologist Erving Goffman proposed his frame analysis for analysing social

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<sup>7</sup> Minsky himself claims that the notion of frames is not a novelty, being in line with the tradition of "schema" suggested by Bartlett (1967) and "paradigm" of Kuhn (1970, both after Minsky, 1975).

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structures, and it is probably thanks to his usage that the notion has gained much ground in humanities:

"I assume that definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events [...] and our subjective involvement in them; frame is the word I use to refer to such of these basic elements as I am able to identify." (Goffman, 1974: 10ff)

In other words, a FRAME was seen by both Minsky and Goffman as a set of cognitive rules that structure the social situations people are involved in and help their participants in interpreting the signals constituting a given situation. When we are able to identify the frame of an activity, we know how to understand the elements of what is going on, and what we can expect to happen. However, frames are not constructed by individuals, but rather subconsciously re-used by them while participating in a given activity:

"Organizational premises are involved, and these are something cognition somehow arrives at, not something cognition creates or generates. Given their understanding of what it is that is going on, individuals fit their actions to this understanding and ordinarily find that the ongoing world supports this fitting. These organizational premises - sustained both in the mind and in activity - I call the frame of the activity" (Goffman, 1974: 247)

Goffman's frame theory has been criticized (cf. Fisher, 1997 for an overview) among others for not acknowledging that the social reality is dynamic and constantly reconstructed by individuals. As a result of this criticism, the term 'frame' has been replaced by 'framing' that stresses a more dynamic understanding of the notion, as can be observed in the following definition by Entman:

“To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.” (1993: 52)

Entman suggests, contrary to Goffman, that frames can be consciously used by individuals to construct “realities”, which makes the term somewhat closer to Goffman’s KEY<sup>8</sup>. The discussion about the theoretical implications of such a standpoint will not be pursued here. The author’s understanding of the notion is closer to the original idea of Goffman, that frames are rather imposed on individuals and used by them subconsciously, which at the same time does not imply that individuals are enslaved by them (cf. notes on cultural prepatterning, section 2.3.1). It is in this meaning that the term is used in the present study.

### 2.1.2 Frames vs. other terms

Although FRAME has been commonly applied in communication studies, other terms exist that to some extent overlap with this notion. One of the most popular is SPEECH GENRE, or COMMUNICATIVE GENRE. Originating from classical rhetoric and poetics, the term has also gained ground in linguistic anthropology and the studies of oral communication (Günther&Knoblauch, 1995), defined as: “historically specific elements of social practice, whose defining features link them to situated communicative acts” (Hanks, 1987: 668). Wierzbicka claims that: “every culture has its own repertoire of characteristic speech acts and speech genres”, and gives them the common denomination of “culture’s forms of talk” (2003: 149). Then she proceeds to identify culture-specific speech-act verbs (as for example Australian English *shout* and *dob*),

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<sup>8</sup> In Goffman’s view, ‘key’ is a signal consciously produced by the participants of a given social situation in order for others to understand how they themselves perceive the activity they are involved in. One can distinguish between ‘up-keying’, that is introducing a new understanding of the activity (for example as a joke) and ‘down-keying’, removing such understanding (as “no, honestly” to leave the joking mode, cf. Goffman, 1974)

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and speech genres, which include the Black English *dozens* as well as the Polish *kawał* ('joke') and *podanie* ('application'). Thus, the concept of forms of talk involves both exclusively oral genres (*dozens*), and exclusively written forms (*podanie*). Still, in Wierzbicka's work one lacks a definition of a speech genre more precise than that they "present linguistically codified modes of social interaction" (ibid: 196). From the examples she uses one can derive a working definition of speech genre as a fragment of a social situation that has a specific, culturally predefined function and specific linguistic (and possibly also non-linguistic) features. However, Wierzbicka also suggests that such speech genres are identifiable by native speakers as "forms of life typical of their society" (ibid.: 196), which may imply that there are other speech genres which are typical for bigger social groups, possibly even universal, and that they are not framed in different way in different societies. Although it is difficult to see that Wierzbicka could raise such claims, one misses a clearer explication of the terms used in her work.

Linell (1998) offers a definition of the notion of communicative genre as a set of suggestions on how to achieve various communicative goals:

"[...] communicative genres involve 'routinized' ways of coping with communicative tasks. This does not mean, however, that actions simply follow predefined patterns and rules. [...] But - most genres involve actors in creatively reconstructing the activities." (ibid.: 254)

Examples following this definition include admission of guilt in court trials, "or whole speech events, such as calls to emergency dispatch centers" (op.cit). This shows that Linell also regards speech genres as merely a component of a speech event, which is actually in line with Hymes' (1974, after Günther&Knoblauch, 1995) initial view on the notion of communicative genre. There is however a broader definition of the concept, provided by scholars from the field of sociology of knowledge. Luckmann (1992a, after Günther&Knoblauch, 1995) claims that communicative genres

have an important function of constructing the social reality and transmitting social stocks of knowledge:

“Communicative genres fulfill important functions with respect to the coping with, transmission and traditionalization of intersubjective experiences of the lifeworld. On one hand, they facilitate the transmission of knowledge by guiding the interactants’ expectations about what is to be said (and done). On the other hand, they are the sediments of socially relevant communicative processes, as only those processes may be expected to be fixed into genres which are of some relevance to social actors” (Günther&Knoblauch, 1995: 5)

Speech genres play a crucial role in “relieving” the social actors from the need to process all information a new; instead, they are able to rely on the routinized understanding of a given activity, in order to pursue other communicative tasks. Such definition of a speech genre brings it closer to Goffman’s frame, but also resembles the concept of UNIVERSE OF DISCOURSE, introduced by Barnlund (1975) which seems not to have gained much ground, possibly because of its vast span. Barnlund (ibid: 428) defines a universe of discourse as a partly conscious, partly unconscious knowledge of what is regarded as “sensible behaviour” in a given society, transmitted in the process of socialization.

Within the terminological discussion one cannot forget about a notion that is extremely popular among researchers on natural language and natural interaction, namely CONTEXT and CONTEXTUALISATION, the other again preferred by scholars who wish to stress the dynamics of the processes involved (Auer, 1992). The first to use the term was John Gumperz, who developed it further in the now classical work of Gumperz (1982). Contextualisation can be defined as:

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“all activities which make relevant, maintain, revise, cancel... any aspect of context which, in turn, is responsible for the interpretation in its particular locus of occurrence. Such an aspect of context may be the larger activity participants are engaged in (the “speech genre”), the small-scale activity (the “speech act”), the mood (or “key) in which this activity is performed, the topic, but also the participants’ roles [...]” (Auer, 1992: 4)

Contextualisation then, refers to the “machinery” (contextualisation cues) of the understanding and providing understanding in specific social situations<sup>9</sup>, whereas the notion of frames (or genres in a broad sense) builds on the underlying general rules that are considered culture-specific, or culturally predefined. That does not mean that contextualisation cues are not prepatterned in culture; on the contrary, Gumperz (e.g. 1992: 51) argues that the ethnographic study of contextualization conventions is indeed a study of culture manifesting itself in the course of interaction. However, in studying contextualisation cues one can only speculate on their origins, whereas while studying frames one approaches the problem from both sides: by hypothesising on the rules governing social behaviours in various encounters, and at the same time by looking at the linguistic manifestation of them.

Yet another notion that should be mentioned in the terminology discussion is CULTURAL SCRIPT, suggested by Wierzbicka (cf. 2003: v-XXVII) and widely used by scholars representing similar backgrounds<sup>10</sup>. The notion refers “to complexes of shared understanding” (ibid.) and in many ways reflects the concepts of genre (in Luckmann’s understanding) and frame. What differentiates the concept from the previously mentioned is the methodology behind it: cultural scripts are to be explicated by means of Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM), that is a set of

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<sup>9</sup> Contextualization theory is also discussed in the section 2.2.2.

<sup>10</sup> Notably, Wierzbicka is not the author of the term SCRIPT, as it has been already used in 1970s by another scholar from AI-field, Roger Schank (cf. Schank&Abelson, 1977). Moreover, script is a widely acknowledged concept in the field of psychology. Wierzbicka has extended the notion by adding the attribute CULTURAL.

linguistic (“words or word-like”) elements universal for all languages of the world.

In the following chapter, the term FRAME is used to refer to a *complex communicative pattern of elements that is grounded in values predominant in the given society and mediated through practices of everyday interaction*. Frame as a notion operates on a higher level than speech genre and context(ualisation), which by many are perceived as characterising only one type of verbal interaction, as for example courtroom discourse. Distinguishing between various activity types is of course vital for precise studies of interaction, and the data studied in this dissertation can also be classified as examples of a specific genre, namely casual conversation. However, the frame of “being Norwegian in talk” seems to be operating on the general level of all discourse in this language, precisely because of its roots in culture.

### 2.1.3 Frames vs. practices

The notion of PRACTICE requires some preliminary explanation here, although the following chapter is devoted to presenting it in all its aspects. Nonetheless, it is vital to comment on the notion in this place, since one can find examples of scholars treating context and practices as existing on the same level, as Linell:

“[...] one can argue that terms like ‘context’ and ‘frame’ serve to reify dynamic processes. This is the reason for some researchers [...] to prefer terms like ‘framing’. I shall, however, continue to use the term ‘context(s)’, even though I also, at the same time, would stress more dynamic terms such as *recontextualizing processes and practices*”. (1998: 132, author’s italics)

In this passage Linell CONTEXT or CONTEXTUALISATION is tantamount with RECONTEXTUALISING PRACTICES. Such examples serve as a validation for using the term frame, as otherwise the prepatterning of conversation is seen only as a set of practices, the use of which is guided solely by communicative goals one wishes

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to achieve. This, in turn, leaves scholars unable to investigate why there exist differences in means of achieving goals. Such explanation is seen by some scholars, and the author of this study therein, as the most vital task for the study of interaction:

“It seems to me therefore, that it is very important to try to link language-specific norms of interaction with specific cultural values, such as autonomy of the individual and anti-dogmatism of Anglo-Saxon culture or cordiality and warmth in Polish culture” (Wierzbicka, 2003: 64).

In order to link culture with language-specific practices manifesting themselves on the level of discourse, one needs to design a tool for describing the cultural frames and their manifestations. Such a tool is the model of ethnic communication pattern, suggested in this study (chapter 3).

## 2.2 The frame of conversing

The speech activity of casual conversation has been already defined in chapter 1. The aim of this section is to render the ongoing discussions concerning the universal or culture-specific premises of the act of conversing, as well as to present the field of interethnic conversation studies.

### 2.2.1 The rules of conversing – universal or culture-specific?

One of the first and most renowned scholars to write on the topic of oral communication was Paul Grice, who studied the inference processes and suggested the notion of *IMPLICATURE*, which operates on a very basic level and constitutes a premise for any communication act to take place. *Implicature* describes the process of inferring meanings from what is being said and contrasting it with one's expectations. The key concepts in Gricean theory include *COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE (CP)*, that is a “shared presumption

that speaker and hearer are interacting rationally and cooperatively to reach a common goal" (Strazny, 2005: 680), and four maxims complementing the CP: of quantity, quality, relation and manner (Grice, 1975). According to Grice, the maxims are presupposed in any conversational activity (in any language) and cannot be "avoided"; at the same time, they can be flouted in order to convey a certain meaning<sup>11</sup>. The postulate of the theory's universality has been accepted by some scholars, including Brown&Levinson (1987), whose work on politeness is often considered, after Grice's work, another pillar of post-Austinian pragmatics. In Brown&Levinson's theory, politeness equates to FACE WORK, that is certain linguistic practices that are related to the management of two face-types: positive and negative. POSITIVE FACE refers to an individual's desire that his/her self-image is appreciated and upheld, whereas the notion of NEGATIVE FACE depicts an individual's need to act without being imposed upon. Politeness phenomena have been claimed to belong to the linguistic universals. This view has met with considerable criticism (cf. Asher, 1994; also Pikor-Niedzialek, 2007: 35ff), among others for not taking intercultural issues into account:

"The problem is that the most powerful theories of pragmatics, including Gricean (1961) approach, Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, and Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory, presuppose that rules of communication, communicative principles, and interpretation and production processes are basically the same or very similar no matter what language we use. However, a close look at bi- and multicultural language production demonstrates that this is not exactly so." (Strazny, 2005: 371)

Several scholars have called for pragmatics studies to take the aspects of culture into account. One of the most severe critics of

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<sup>11</sup> Adopting the concept of markedness (as developed by Prague School, cf. Asher, 1994) for the field of pragmatics, it could be said that the utterances flouting Gricean maxims are marked, whereas the ones that follow the rules are unmarked, with the marked utterances attracting more attention of the interlocutor.

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Brown&Levinson's work is Anna Wierzbicka, who points out their English bias (Wierzbicka, 2003: 67-68), and argues for a culture-sensitive description of oral communication. She pursues her argument by developing sets of rules, concerning for example attitudes to emotions, directness and autonomy of the speaker, which govern oral communication in different language. This in turn implies that politeness rules are not universal in all languages, as speech communities attach different values to the goals of communication, for example in some cultures a free expression of emotions may be valued more than the rules emerging from the principle of keeping up one's negative face.

A less extreme standpoint is held by scholars from the school of contextualisation studies, with John Gumperz being the pioneer in the field. In general, Gumperz postulates that there is a need within sociolinguistic theory to study discourse strategies:

"A speaker oriented approach to conversation (...) focuses directly on strategies that govern the actor's use of lexical, grammatical, sociolinguistic and other knowledge in the production and interpretation of messages in context. Linguistic rules and social norms, when seen from this perspective, can be regarded as constraints on message form and content which, when not observed and violated, may lead to interspeaker differences in interpretation and otherwise interfere with the quality of interaction."

(Gumperz, 1982: 35)

Through his analysis of contextualisation cues, such as prosody and word stress, as well as communication patterns in English NS-NNS conversations, Gumperz (op.cit.) shows that realisations of discourse strategies often vary between languages, and when copied from one language to another, they might result in misunderstandings. Hence, Gumperz does not question the universality of principles suggested in politeness theory, only the universality of its realisations. Likewise, in her study of communicative styles in a multiple party conversation, Tannen (1984) suggests that differing cultural and/or social background,

even within the same nationality (American, in this case<sup>12</sup>) may result in misunderstandings, since the participants attach different values to the conversation's goals and use different methods to achieve them. She shows examples of utterances that can be attributed two contrary interpretations. For instance overlapping, which in one participant's view signal involvement and polite interest, is interpreted by the other participant as means of dominating the discourse (ibid: 16).

In the present study there is little focus on politeness phenomena *per se* (e.g. studying realisation of speech acts). Hence, the issue of (non)-universality of politeness principles will not be addressed in any broad sense. At the same time, the author agrees with the view that values attached to given conversational phenomena are possible sources of misunderstandings or misjudgments in interethnic conversations.

### 2.2.2 Interethnic vs. intercultural conversation

The subtitle of the dissertation adopts the term INTERETHNIC while referring to the study data which consists of interactions involving one native and one non-native speaker of Norwegian. The term was suggested by Gumperz (1982), and its strength comes from the fact that it uses a concept of ethnicity, which puts focus on the individual engaged in interaction and his or her own perception of their ethnic belonging:

"Taking the individual communicator's point of view, the author regards a communication event to be an interethnic one whenever the communicator perceives himself or herself to be different from the other interactant(s) in terms of ethnicity, ethnic group membership, and/or ingroup identification." (Kim, 2005: 327)

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<sup>12</sup> Of course, one can say that American society is one of the most multi-cultural in the world. Hence, one might speak of interethnic conversations even when all participants speak the same language, which in the same time is their mother tongue.

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Kim's definition brings up one important premise – in order for a verbal encounter to be called interethnic, the speakers must, in one way or another, orient themselves to their differing ethnicity. This orientation does not need to be stated explicitly; on the contrary, the speakers often refer to it implicitly, through the use of excluding and including pronouns (we vs. you), the choice of topics or even grammatical devices (Kurhila, 2005: 156). This orientation is not necessarily shared by all participants of a given conversation. As Wong (2005) and Kurhila (2005) show, NNSs focus more frequently on the grammatical correctness and hence display themselves as incompetent, if only slightly, users of a given language, whereas NSs tend to sidestep grammar, possibly in order not to stress the asymmetry between them and their non-native interlocutors.

However, there are other possible denominations of verbal encounters involving non-native speakers of a given language. The term that seems most neutral, though slightly heavy in its form, is NATIVE – NON-NATIVE (NS-NNS) CONVERSATION. It is used extensively in second language acquisition studies. Another similar term that can be considered in a certain respect “safe” is SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE CONVERSATIONS (S/FL conversation)<sup>13</sup>. Understandably, it is most commonly used by scholars studying the role of interaction in language acquisition, and the most common situational context for this interaction is the language classroom. However, it seems that the frequency of using both terms is increasing, as they escape the dangers of falling into traps that using other terms might lead to – that is, the trap of embarking on defining such concepts as culture (in case of intercultural, discussed below) and ethnicity (interethnic). But just as the term escapes one danger, it fails to depict the mental challenge that a

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<sup>13</sup> The terms *second* and *foreign language* are sometimes used interchangeably, even though a distinction has been drawn between them, the former one describing language taught in natural environment, whereas the latter referring to language taught abroad, most often on various courses and classes (Asher, 1994: 3715). Even though instinctively one would agree that such distinction should be made, there does not seem to be enough evidence for the differences between those two ‘types’ of language skills.

conversation in a non-native language is for a S/FL-user. This term deprives the interaction of its social context, which both culture and ethnicity provide. Of course, this context can either be oriented to or neglected (consciously or not), so it does need to be present in every situation when we are dealing with a S/FL-user (cf. Sarangi, 1994). Yet, another argument against using the term S/FL conversation is that it focuses only on the perspective of the non-native speaker, leaving out the native speaker's perspective<sup>14</sup>. If, on the other hand, we are dealing with two non-native speakers interacting with one another using a third language, such a conversation should be labelled LINGUA FRANCA CONVERSATION.

Although the term INTERLANGUAGE<sup>15</sup> is seldom put together with conversation, it is quite frequently used as INTERLANGUAGE COMMUNICATION (cf. Færch&Kasper, 1983). The use of this term suggests that there exists a fossilized language which is a hybrid form of the first and the target language, as suggested by Selinker (1972). Since it is beyond the scope of this study, the notion of interlanguage will not be further addressed. However, as in the case of S/FL conversation, the term interlanguage brings the focus to the non-native speaker(s) only, which disqualifies the term from being used to label the conversation as a whole.

Within the field of communication studies, the term INTERCULTURAL is extensively used. It is often contrasted with CROSS-CULTURAL, the latter labelling studies that compare native patterns of interaction characteristic of one culture with patterns of another culture<sup>16</sup>. Yet, one should be aware that this term is undermined by a certain degree of ambiguity. Wierzbicka (2003) uses the term cross-cultural pragmatics to depict studies of culture-specific

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<sup>14</sup> Defining the term 'native speaker' is not an easy task either, as it is more a theoretical construct than a reality (cf. Asher, 1994: 2719ff, see also the intriguing contribution by Paikeday, 1985, entitled "The native speaker is dead!"). Similarly, bi- and trilingual individuals are also difficult to place in this classification.

<sup>15</sup> An alternative to interlanguage theory has recently been suggested, namely *dual language theory* (DLT) which focuses more on the cognitive aspects of developing a second language competence (see Kecskes in Strazny, 2005: 373).

<sup>16</sup> For a review of cross-cultural studies within the field of pragmatics see Kasper&Blum-Kulka (1993)

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patterns in different languages, not only comparing them with one another.

Intercultural has become almost a fashionable attribute which is in the author's opinion a flaw rather than an asset. The field of intercultural studies has grown considerably in the recent years, embracing very different approaches, many of which deal with linguistic aspects of communication on a very general, at times even anecdotal level. Interestingly enough, studies labelled as intercultural seem to focus on languages and cultures that show considerable discrepancies. The most common example is comparing (American) English with Japanese or Chinese, or other Far East cultures<sup>17</sup>. Undoubtedly, strong business connections between the United States and Far East countries result in a need to study language patterns in order to facilitate business communication. Additionally, the term intercultural is applied in many fields of study other than linguistics, for example in management, conflict solving and others. This application has blurred the notion to a certain extent.

It is impossible to state once and for all which term one should use, without referring to one's own data. The data used in this dissertation will be labelled INTERETHNIC CONVERSATIONS for two reasons. Firstly, there are numerous examples in the data in which the participants orient themselves to their own or their partner's ethnicity. Part of it may be attributed to the fact that the design of my data was such that it stressed the differences between the participants<sup>18</sup>. Secondly, the term interethnic is in the author's opinion largely synonymous with the terms intercultural and cross-cultural, but at the same time, it avoids the "fuzziness" that these terms exhibit. This decision does not imply a criticism of using the term CULTURE *per se*, but rather the excessive application of the term INTERCULTURAL. Hence, terms like CULTURE-SPECIFIC

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<sup>17</sup> See for example the beginning of Scollon&Scollon (2000). This fact may be to some extent justified in Hall's theory of low- and high-context cultures, which have been exemplified on American and Chinese culture (see section 2.3.4). Thus, other scholars might have followed in Hall's footsteps in focusing on the dichotomous view of cultural differences.

<sup>18</sup> See chapter 4 for the description of the study design.

and CULTURALLY PREPATTERNED, will be used in the following study, according to the prevalent practice.

### 2.2.3 Criticism of studying interethnic encounters

There are criticisms directed at many and various aspects of interethnic communication studies, including both methodology and theoretical assumptions (cf. Meeuwis, 1994). One of them is the possibility of “reifying abstractions that do not actually regulate behavior”, as put by Barnlund (1975, see chapter 1). Sarangi (1994: 413) criticises exactly such a tendency, characteristic in his opinion of some scholars (among others Gumperz and Tannen), to attribute all misunderstandings in interactions between native and non-native speakers of a given language, to cultural mismatch:

“Rather than studying miscommunication in its own terms or for the undoubtedly valuable sake of coming to grips with communicative success, studies (...) use ‘miscommunication’ to reify cultural differences. Put very strongly, it is through the occurrence of miscommunication that cultural differences become real and take on a life of their own. This leads to what I call ‘analytic stereotyping’ of intercultural events. Analysts operate with a prior definition of the situation and its participants as (inter)cultural and subsequently play upon a principle of cultural differences in accounting for instances of miscommunication”.

He suggests possible other re-analyses of the situations of communication breakdown in intercultural settings, based on the existing situational or institutional constraints.

It is hard to argue with Sarangi’s clear and sensible logic. However, the key to putting through a different view of events might be to suggest that the criticized scholars actually pursue a different goal in the analysis of interethnic encounters than what Sarangi suggests. Of course, one can be interested in showing how understanding is dialogically achieved in spite of possible mis-

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matches, or even because of them, as Sarangi is. Yet, Gumperz and numerous other scholars from the field of interethnic communication seem more interested in describing typical features of spoken interactions in a given language, and analysing how the lack of knowledge about these features may lead to miscommunication. In order to do that, they study conversations between native and non-native speakers, as it is likely they will exemplify practices that are less expected by NSs in conversations in their own language<sup>19</sup>. Such breaches of expectations may have an impact on the interaction, because interactants internalise the rules of communication they learned through socialization process: “(...) rules as so well-learned and so grounded in our emotional reaction that knowledge is not enough to stop the gut reaction to violation” (Harré&Secord, 1972: 39). It does not necessarily mean that a complete communication breakdown must take place in order for differences to show. CA offers other possible means of studying breaches of expectations, even without the participants consciously orienting to them. One of those means is e.g. the length and placement of pauses, or the position of laughter sequences.

Even more so, one can identify ethnic features of a conversation in a given language, by analysing which practices are not employed, or employed less frequently or unsuccessfully by non-native speakers. One can also study practices that are used only by non-native speakers, as examples of pragmatic transfer from their mother tongue<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> This is what in the author's opinion Gumperz (1982) does in his example of communication breakdown in case of Pakistani employees speaking English with 'wrong' intonation: he shows that there is an expected pattern of intonation used by service employees, and the breach of such expectations can (but does not have to) lead to severe consequences for the non-native speaker.

<sup>20</sup> One has to be careful while claiming the origins of a given practice, as this point may be subject to intense discussions. However, one could construct settings in which such pragmatic transfer is an undisputable fact.

### 2.3. The frame of „being Norwegian“

In order to answer the question posed in the introduction, regarding what it means to be Norwegian in conversation, one should consider what it means to be Norwegian in general: does it imply belonging to the society by means of birth, cultural affiliation or simply through following others' practices? As it is dubious if one can once and for all find an answer to this question, the following analysis depicts the implications of both Norwegian culture and the membership in Norwegian community of practice, for communication.

#### 2.3.1 Culture and frames

The term CULTURE was originally developed by Romans to refer to agriculture at first, and then to any kind of activity that had as purpose in refining one's character and intellect (Cicero's *cultura mentis*). Since then, the notion of culture has been further "metaphorised" to mean artefacts produced by a given society, be it literature, fine arts or products more abstract like traditions and beliefs. The above mentioned phenomena, including beliefs, values, traditions, taboos and symbols, among others, are often called immaterial culture, in contrast with material culture, which consists of all the concrete artefacts created by a given society (such as literature and fine arts). In the twentieth century the concept has gained an even broader meaning, embracing also patterns of behavior: "A culture is a configuration of learned behaviors and results of behavior whose component parts are shared and transmitted by members of a particular society" (Linton, 1945: 5)<sup>21</sup>.

Together with the expansion of culture's references a field of studies grew devoted to describing and problematising the concept. Among the pioneers in this field, the Birmingham School, the concept of culture refers to "something like *collective subjectivity*" (Alasuutari, 1995: 25), which can be studied through analysing different cultural products. Moreover, "culture consists

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<sup>21</sup> Giving a more detailed description of the history of cultural studies is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

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no longer merely in these products and the implicit values they carry, but also «the wider life they live» (ibid.), that is their function in society. Such conceptualization of the term is also found in Hofstede (1994), who calls culture “the software of the mind”, using a computer<sup>22</sup> metaphor. However, as he himself claims:

“This does not mean, of course, that people are programmed the way computers are. A person’s behavior is only partially predetermined by her or his mental programs: (s)he has a basic ability to deviate from them, and to react in ways which are new, creative, destructive, or unexpected. The ‘*software of the mind*’ this book is about only indicates what reactions are likely and understandable, given one’s past” (Hofstede, ibid.: 4)

As already mentioned, culture is a collective phenomenon, shared by people who live or lived within the same social environment. Following this definition, one can distinguish between cultures of different social group: nations, social classes, gender groups *etc.* Such a view on culture is close to Bourdieu’s notion of HABITUS, that is, a given group’s or community’s way of life and outlook on the world (see also chapter 3).

Culture can be understood both as a force that influences one’s actions, and as a context to understand these actions in, and it seems that those two understandings complement each other to form a full view of culture. However, calling culture a force does not imply a deterministic standpoint:

“At tankemønstre, symboler og ideer faktisk har betydning for sosialt liv innebærer ingen kulturell determinisme. Sosialt liv følger visse mønstre fordi menn og kvinner med karakteristiske handlingsskjemaer uten stans skaper og gjenskaper disse mønstrene, og ikke fordi mønstrene er en realitet som tvinger seg på dem.” (Gullestad, 1989: 37)

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<sup>22</sup> An analogous simile is used by Hall&Hall (1985, after Kim, 1993: 134).

Patterns of thinking, symbols and ideas do actually have influence on the social life, but it does not imply cultural determinism. The social life follows certain patterns, because men and women with characteristic patterns of behaviour continually create and re-create those patterns, and not because the patterns themselves are a reality that imposes itself on them.

Gullestad's view as presented above suggests a conceptualisation of culture as a frame that is continuously re-created by the members of a given society. This fact supports the terminology used in this study, namely the notion of cultural frames influencing the process of communication.

### 2.3.2 Culture and communication

One of the most prominent American anthropologists of the twentieth century, Edward T. Hall, suggests in the title of one of his essays that "culture is communication" (Hall, 1990: 94-101). There are two reasons for seeing communication as an element of culture:

1. it is a *process* accomplished through language;
2. it is a *product*, influenced by the values we hold as predominant.

Language in itself is a cultural product, conveying messages by means of a conventional code through written and spoken channel. Undisputedly, the non-verbal channel, that is gestures, gaze, and proxemics, is prepatterned by different cultural norms<sup>23</sup>. What is more, "(...) cultures are different not only in the rules they apply in a situation, but also in the people and roles they apply to them" (Gallois&Callan, 1997: 37). So even the social "fabric" of a given situation, namely its participants and order is structured according

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<sup>23</sup> Kurcz (2005) suggests that one should speak of non-linguistic channels, rather than non-verbal, pointing to the fact that for instance sign language, though undoubtedly non-verbal, is not included (and rightly so) in the studies of non-verbal communication forms. Yet Kurcz admits that due to the strong position of the term in the literature of the subject, using it is almost unavoidable.

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to some culture-dependent rules. Yet, one can expect that the verbal part of communication can also be perceived as a cultural product. Such a fact is obvious for idioms and proverbs, naturally being recognised as parts of culture:

"Language - and in particular, vocabulary - is the best evidence of the reality of 'culture', in the sense of historically transmitted system of 'conceptions' and attitudes. Of course, culture is, in principle, heterogeneous and changeable, but so is language." (Wierzbicka, 1997: 21)

However, if language on the lexical and syntactic level is a cultural artefact, so are ways of putting certain meanings through in a verbal interaction. The message produced in the course of a given interaction needs to be congruent with its social setting; yet such congruence is often difficult to explain, as its roots lie in one's internalised, and hence subconscious, set of rules. The rule of congruence "pervades (...) all kind of communication", according to Hall (1990: 135, who at the same time calls such rules "«style» in the broadest set"). What is more, the message form has to be congruent not only with the social situation *per se*, but also with the way it is interpreted in culture. This is where values "step in", as they "help us understand how people behave and predict how they might behave in the future" (McLaren, 1998: 53). Adjusting to a situation must necessarily be anteceded by an interpretation of this situation as being of a certain kind. Only after one has gained an understanding (right or wrong) of what is going on, can one react in a way that is congruent with the meaning one wishes to convey. An individual is not blindly following the rules without being able to choose; yet, the possible choices are restricted not only by language-internal rules, but also by the goals that one wishes to achieve by constructing (or re-constructing) a given pattern. These goals, on the other hand, are shaped by cultural values.

### 2.3.3 Comparing cultures. Cultural values surveys

One of the first scholars to attempt comparing cultures was the already mentioned Edward Hall, who proposed the dichotomy high-context (HC) vs. low context (LC) cultures (Hall, 1976), based on the value attached to the context (contextualisation?) in encoding and decoding messages. In HC-cultures, the communication is to a great extent implicit and coded outside the verbalised message, whereas in LC-cultures the interpretation of an utterance is derived predominantly from its propositional content. As examples of the two types of cultures Hall used Chinese and American culture, respectively. As a result, there is tendency to regard the so called Western cultures as predominantly LC, and the cultures from Far East as HC-cultures. Such a view, however, argues for a somewhat simplified view on cross-cultural distinctions.

Following the definitions presented in section 2.3.1, any group of people, bound together for any reason, can be said to constitute a culture of its own. Hofstede (1994: 10) lists several levels of culture, including national, regional, ethnic, religious, gender, generation and social class level. The mental programs originating from these communities of belonging overlap each other, and sometimes stand in conflict with one another. Unlike many sociological studies devoted to analysing cultures of a given social class or religious groups, Hofstede's study focuses on distinctions between what he calls NATIONAL CULTURES. Though he is aware of the risks that it implies (the non-homogeneity of nations), he admits that it is often the only possible criterion for classification, if one wishes to promote international understanding (ibid: 12). Additionally, he justifies his choice by the fact that people themselves often label, rightly or wrongly, certain behaviours as typical for given nations.

Hofstede identified and studied four basic dimensions of national cultures, and suggested a fifth dimension that could be

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used to uncover cross-national value differences<sup>24</sup>. The dimensions were chosen on the basis of psychological and sociological studies, previous to Hofstede's project. Using these dimensions, he developed a questionnaire whose purpose was to identify values predominant for an average individual member of the studied nations. The chart presented here is mainly meant to present Norwegian culture, yet the numbers themselves do not have a meaning unless used comparatively.

Country Dimension	Poland		Norway		Sweden	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank
Power distance	68	27-29	31	67-68	31	67-68
Individualism/ collectivism	60	22-24	69	16-17	71	13-14
Masculinity/ femininity	64	14-16	8	73	5	74
Uncertainty avoidance	93	9-10	50	57	29	70-71
Time orientation	32	24	44	13-14	33	23

Table 1. Values of Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures for Poland, Norway and Sweden. Sweden is added since in section 2.3.5 arguments for a close relation between Sweden and Norway will be given. Poland has no similar 'brother-country'. The presented data come from Hofstede (2005), being the second and thoroughly revised edition of the original publication (1994), as only this study was also conducted in Poland.

Naturally, the presented table requires extensive comments. While the values give the objective "score" of a given nation in a given dimension, the ranks provide a reference frame, showing where in the continuum of in total 74 countries a given country is situated.

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<sup>24</sup> The fifth dimension of time orientation was suggested in the second edition (Hofstede, 2005) in order to compensate for the lack of expression of typical 'Far East' values in the first conducted survey.

1. Power distance (PDI) scores “inform us about dependence relationships in a country. In small power distance countries [i.e. scoring low on the scale] there is limited dependence of subordinates on bosses, and preference for consultation.” (Hofstede, 1994: 27). In large power distance countries such dependence is considerable (and can be labelled counter-dependence, which means it is realised either as complete identification or as complete rejection).
2. Individualism/collectivism (IDV) measures the importance of relationships and ties in constituting an individual’s identity. In countries with high scores “the ties between individuals are loose, and everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family” (ibid.: 51).
3. Masculinity/femininity (MAS) refers to the extent of defining gender roles in a society. High score countries are characterised by clearly distinct gender roles, where “men are supposed to be assertive, tough and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life” (Hofstede, 2005: 120). In the low scoring countries, the gender roles overlap<sup>25</sup>.
4. Uncertainty avoidance (UAI) depicts a society’s ability to handle ambiguous situations. Countries that score high on this index “look for a structure in their organizations, institutions and relationships which makes events clearly interpretable and predictable. Paradoxically, they are often prepared to engage in risky behavior in order to reduce ambiguities” (Hofstede, 1994: 116). So, a high score on the index does not necessarily mean a given country is “in perfect order”, but it reflects the individuals’ need for it.
5. Time orientation (LTO) shows which values predominate in a given society. The higher the score of a given country, the more the country orients itself to the future, whereas countries of low score tend to foster virtues related to past and present.

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<sup>25</sup> Hofstede refers more precisely to “emotional gender roles”, that is not necessarily to the social expectations imposed on individuals but rather the individuals’ own perception of their role and hence to values attached to being a man/a woman.

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As we can see from the chart, Poland and Norway are in many cases far from one another, when it comes to their relative place on the list. The greatest difference is observed in the case of MAS-index, with Poland clearly being a strong masculine country and Norway (together with other Nordic nations, especially Sweden) the most feminine of all studied nations. The UAI-index also displays considerable discrepancies. Had it not been for the IDV-index, where Poland is located closer to the top than the bottom, Norway and Poland would differ to a great extent on all value charts. However, on the individualism scale Poland is an exception in the group of central-European post-communist countries. In many ways then, one could say that when it comes to predominant values in a society, Nordic and central-European countries differ considerably.

Such a view is also reflected in a similar cross-national study, which started in the 1970s as the European Value Study (EVS, Pettersson, 2002). Over the years it has grown to become the World Value Study (WVS), with its fourth, and most recent measurement taken in 1999/2000. The study aims at achieving similar goals to Hofstede's study, namely comparing values predominant in different countries. However, it is based on personal interviews of a representative group of society members, and not questionnaires used on a group of employees of one international company, as in Hofstede's case<sup>26</sup>. Interestingly enough, Hofstede does not acknowledge religion's role in forming values that predominate in a given nation (cf. Hofstede, 1994: 16), whereas WVS refers to religion as a value-shaping factor. Nonetheless, both studies present similar results when it comes to the position of Poland and the Nordic countries in relation to one another. The findings of WVS are often presented on a cultural map, which shows the location of countries on two basic bipolar value dimensions. Inglehart&Welzel suggest possible grouping of the

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<sup>26</sup> The issue of representability in Hofstede's study is not addressed here, as he himself does not claim that participants in his study are representative of the society. They represent however, from one country to another, well matched samples, differing only in terms of nationality, which allows for the comparison (cf. Hofstede, 1994: 13).

countries involved, though such division may sometimes seem far-fetched, as in case of the amoeba-like Catholic Europe. However, the Nordic countries and Protestant Europe generally do seem more homogeneous:

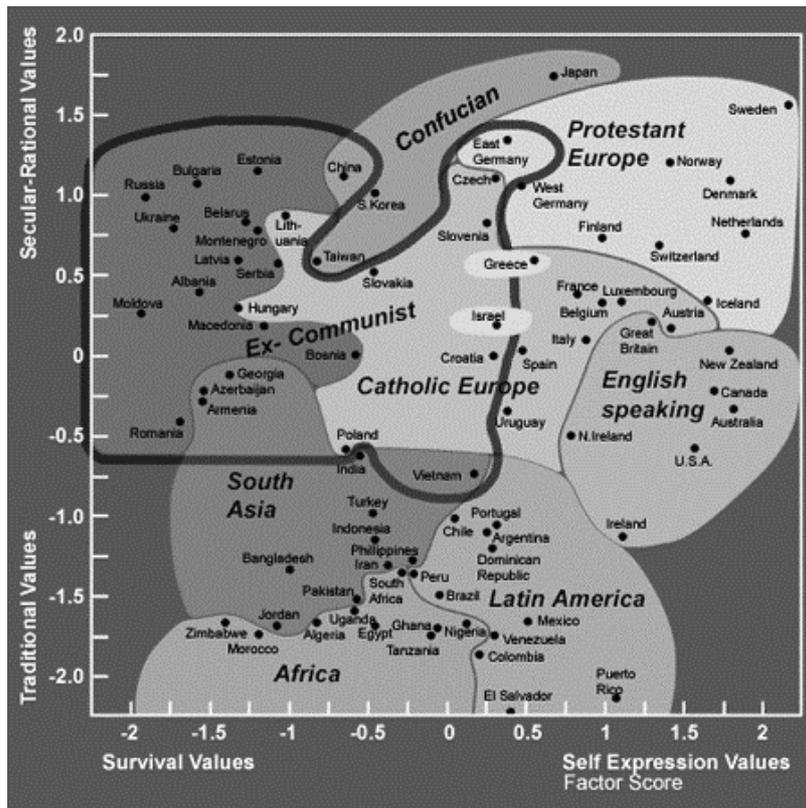


Figure 1. Inglehart-Weltzel cultural map of the world<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Downloaded 21/11/2008, from the Swedish webpage of the WVS-project:  
[http://margaux.grandvinum.se/SebTest/wvs/articles/folder\\_published/article\\_base\\_54](http://margaux.grandvinum.se/SebTest/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_54)

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In figure 1, the horizontal axis stands for the social capital: “social trust and trustworthiness, together with peoples’ active involvement in formal and informal relations” (Pettersson, 2002: 169). The vertical axis reflects the importance of values connected to religion and family. Hence, countries located in the right upper corner, such as Nordic countries, are characterized by values connected to secular ethos, and a society based on a high level of social trust, whereas in the countries located in the middle of both axes (e.g. Poland), comparatively more conservative values prevail.

Both studies presented here show that Poland and Norway differ greatly when it comes to values predominant in their societies. In the following section possible implications of this state of facts for oral communication are suggested.

### 2.3.4 Cultural values in oral communication

How can values, identified as predominant in a given culture, influence oral communication? Attempts to gain insight into origins of communicative strategies by relying on cultural rules have not been frequent (Kim, 1993: 133). In order to fill this knowledge gap, Kim proposes the notion of interactive constraints<sup>28</sup>, based on cultural values held by a given society:

“To account for cross-cultural similarities and differences in the choice of conversational strategies affecting perceptions of strategic competence, it is necessary to have available a limited set of shared interactive constraints (or conversational concerns). A culture-based interactive constraint is a collection of shared background knowledge that influences the overall choice of strategies across primary interaction goals.” (Kim, 1993: 137)

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<sup>28</sup> The term has also been used by Gumperz, though he has not elaborated on the topic more than equating strategies to constraints: “interactive strategies, the constraints that govern participants’ strategies” (1982: 35).

Consequently, Kim suggests linking cultural orientations of individualism and collectivism<sup>29</sup> with interactive constraints of clarity and face support, respectively. However, this proposition argues for a simplified view of cultures. Firstly, the dichotomy individualism-collectivism is a continuum, on which several countries are “placed” in relation to one another. It is impossible to absolutely label a country as INDIVIDUALISTIC or COLLECTIVISTIC; what one can do, however, is to say for instance that individualistic orientation is more dominant in one society than in another one. Secondly, since several dimensions have been identified across which cultures differ from one another, it would seem unreasonable to reduce the differences to only one of those dimensions. And finally, as we will see in the following section (2.3.5), Norwegian culture, even though displaying a considerably individualistic orientation in comparison to other countries’ cultures, includes a great deal of phenomena typical for collectivist countries (as for example concern for norms and face needs). Kim’s proposition must be seen as interesting and promising for the further research, if it takes into account other cultural dimensions beside individualism and collectivism. One could suggest following hypotheses on interactive constraints originating from Hofstede’s national culture dimensions:

1. Power distance orientation affects the rules of taking initiative in a conversation, showing respect (honorifics) and displaying assertiveness. Moreover, it affects the existence of code variation in a given society, with large power distance countries having numerous codes for different kinds of situations (formal, semi-formal, casual, intimate and so on).
2. Individualistic/collectivistic orientation, apart from affecting the level of directness (collectivistic countries preferring less imposing strategies), impacts on the role and perception of silence and so-called “small talk”.

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<sup>29</sup> Interestingly enough, also other scholars have used only this dichotomy in their suggestions for linking culture with communication (for example Triandis, 1994). This might result from the fact that the division individualism-collectivism has long existed in the social and cultural studies, and can be linked to Hall’s theory of high- and low-context cultures.

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3. Masculine/feminine orientation affects “the mood” of a conversation, that is orientation towards either struggle or harmony, with masculine countries being more competitive and focused on achieving domination.
4. The level of uncertainty avoidance influences, together with power distance, the formality of discourse. In countries that score high on uncertainty avoidance scale, the rules of proper behaviour are strictly defined, as members of those cultures shun ambiguous situations.

The suggested dimensions are naturally interrelated; moreover, it would be interesting to study a situation when a given country's values create interactive constraints that challenge one another. The analysis of such a case might then lead to establishing a more general interactive constraint. The suggested constraints are only a preliminary look on the phenomenon, and require further studies.

Deriving interactive constraints from culture description would undoubtedly be strengthened if qualitative anthropological studies were applied besides quantitative. Such an attempt is made by Daun (2005), who describes the features of Swedish culture that can influence Swedes' intercultural competence. It is interesting to see that the very title of the article, “Swedishness as an obstacle in cross-cultural interaction”, suggests that there might be a difficulty connected to communication, originating from Swedish cultural pre patterning, a difficulty that both Swedes in intercultural settings, as well as foreigners in Sweden, experience. Daun claims that “Swedish customs and *values* are difficult to adjust to for a great many immigrants” (ibid.: 150, my italics, PH). As such values and customs he identifies:

1. Separating the private from the public, affecting establishing social contacts (Swedes do not socialize privately with their colleagues, even if they consider them friends), and resulting in negative attitude towards “small talk” (for instance in a business setting);

2. Lack of emotions, which is often perceived as “coldness” and lack of involvement. Being rational and keeping emotions under control is a feature viewed positively in Sweden (and indeed in many other western cultures, especially Lutheran). Moreover, this norm is reinforced by the tendency not to engage oneself in any sort of conflict:

“(...) Swedes steer clear of sensitive topics of conversation. «Don't talk politics», goes the saying. It can lead to argument (being «osams» with the other person), and a situation in which people are being «osams» (in disagreement) is considered by probably most Swedes to be difficult to take. A common solution is to break off the conversation, stop speaking to each other.” (Daun, *ibid.*: 154)

Such agreement-seeking behaviour might easily be interpreted by foreigners as indifference, whereas in fact it is the Swedish way of being considerate, by not running the risk of hurting a stranger's feelings. The conflict avoidance rule, together with the importance placed on words, leads to valuing silence and calm tone in social situations. Respect one is supposed to show to others also makes it impolite to interrupt them while they are speaking;

3. Tension in social relationships, originating from the emphasis put on rationalism, emotional control and responsibility for one's own words. This results in strict rules on what should and should not be said, and in a slower pace of speech which is filled with frequent pauses. The “lazy” progress of conversations can also be interpreted as keeping distance between interlocutors;

4. Social roles and institutions, which have undergone a great deal of change in Sweden, compared with other countries. The Swedish attitude towards child-raising, gender roles, education, relationships with the elderly, and sexuality might come as a shock to foreigners and call for restructuring of one's own expectation as to the social construction of certain situations.

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Looking back on the suggested constraints based on Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions, some of the features identified by Daun for Sweden seem to agree with the proposal. The Swedish dispreference for conflict may be linked to the value of femininity, stressing harmony in human interactions. Keeping distance, on the other hand, could be connected with small power distance, which results in less clearly cut distinctions between different contact types. Individuals might therefore want to "stay on the safe side" and keep the distance between themselves and their interlocutors so as not to run the risk of being too familiar and imposing on them. At the same time, it is also a means of staying uninvolved and not affected emotionally by the conversation, which seems to be an ideal in Lutheran societies.

If such a description has been made for Swedish, it would be interesting to see if one could propose a similar analysis for Norwegian. In order to do that one should also take into account the anthropological descriptions of Norwegian culture, and see how, if at all, it differs from Swedish.

### 2.3.5 Norwegian culture

Many people have their own opinion as to what is "typical Norwegian", both when it comes to assets and flaws. Gro Harlem Brundtland, a renowned Norwegian politician and a former prime minister, also called "the mother of the nation" said once that it is typically Norwegian to be good (*Det er typisk norsk å være god*). One can also point to numerous competitions in mass-media devoted to choosing which product of Norwegian culture is the most Norwegian. In their attempts to describe Norwegian culture, many scholars have fallen for the temptation to describe culture or national identity through the prism of its peculiarities (*kulturens særpreget*), as for example stave churches, or national costumes. Johansen (1995) seems not to have fallen into this trap, and in his pamphlet he accuses researchers of not being able to keep a professional distance to their own object of study, and of describing stereotypes about a given culture rather than the culture itself. He argues for a broader understanding of Norwegian culture

(and all other national cultures in Europe) as a product of greater, pan-European intellectual forces, *i.e.* the enlightenment movement, religious affiliation and so on. He does not reject the idea that there exist culturally preconditioned differences in “patterns of reactions”, and that they can be substantial enough to “inhibit mutual understanding” (ibid.: 21). These differences, however, seldom follow national borders, but rather borders between “bigger cultural regions (...), differences between historical periods (...), urban and rural lifestyle, social classes and sex” (ibid.: 22, my translation, PH). An example of such differentiating features that cannot be “trapped” within only one country, is the so called “drinking belt” (*fyllebelt*), that is the region where there is a problem with alcohol abuse. Johansen claims that this culture characteristic stretches itself from Poland and Russia through Scandinavia and Greenland to reach Indian reserves in North America. This may well be true, but what he does not seem to acknowledge here is that “drinking culture” in those countries differs in many ways, and can be used as an example of a feature common to a larger geographical region only on a very general level.

A renowned Norwegian anthropologist, Thomas Hylland Eriksen in “The myth of a homogenic Norway” (1993) argues for exactly the same as Johansen, that is, the necessity of giving up the understanding of national cultures as homogenic and complete entities. In his opinion, generation differences are equally valid as ethnic differences, but for some mystic reasons the former ones are seldom labelled as cultural differences (ibid: 24). However, it seems that Eriksen is not ready to give up analysing national Norwegian culture without further ado, as in another essay, “Typically Norwegian? Research proposal” (*Typisk norsk? Forskningens forslag*), he enumerates seven components that characterize the Norwegian way of being (*væremåte*, 1993: 84-85):

1. egalitarian individualism (*egalitær individualisme*): although everyone has the right to be their own masters, everyone has to resemble one another;

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2. objectivity and correctness (*saklighet og oppriktighet*): Norwegians are serious, to the point and will dispute until an agreement is reached;
3. "parcel solutions" (*pakkeløsninger*): there is only a limited number of «types» of Norwegians, and they are supposed to be put together in a proper way;
4. rural life (*bygda*): even when living in a city, Norwegians see themselves as a rural nation;
5. simplicity (*enkelthet*): what is simple has a value of its own;
6. nature (*naturen*): nature is considered untouched by humans, and therefore pure and simple (see point 5). As such, it is seen as an asylum in a hectic world;
7. puritanism (*puritanisme*): Norwegians have always been busy finding "the only true truth" and they have always been moralists (see point 2).

Those features, presented in a slightly humorous way have been identified on the basis of anthropological studies of both Norwegian and foreign scholars and writers, including the pioneer publication in the field by Klausen (1984). There seems to be a common denomination for all "examples of Norwegianness" after all:

"Stort sett henger hypotesene intimt sammen, og skaper til sammen en kraftig pakke av nøysomhet, likhetstrang, bydgeromantikk, moralisme, idealisering av det enkle og en dyp skrekk for alle slags forskjeller, selv de kjønnsmessige." (Eriksen, 1993: 84)

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All in all, those hypotheses are closely interrelated, and together they form a powerful package of thrift, need for similarity, romanticizing of the rural life, moralism, idealising of simplicity and a deep fear for all kinds of differences, even the ones connected to sex.

At the same time, Eriksen notes that such deconstructing of the Norwegian identity does not guarantee that we will find at least one person in Norway who exemplifies all these features.

Marianne Gullestad, another acknowledged Norwegian anthropologist, naturally shares Eriksen's and Johansen's view that Norwegian culture is not unique, but is rather a product of movements that have influenced the whole western world:

"Norge kan sees som en versjon av moderne vestlig sivilisasjon. Den vestlige sivilisasjon er blant annet karakterisert ved at individet ideologisk sett er i forgrunnen og den sosiale helheten i bakgrunnen, og ved sterke egalitære idealer. Likeverd er et sterkt og viktig ideal i hele den vestlige verden." (Gullestad, 1989: 109-10).

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Norway can be seen as one version of the modern western civilization. The western civilization is among other things characterized by the ideological positioning of an individual in the foreground and the society in the background, and by strong egalitarian ideals. Equality is a strong and important ideal in the whole western world.

At the same time, however, she acknowledges the fact that every community, be it nation, social or gender group, has its own specificity, which contributes to the way social processes are realised. Hence, what happens in one country is not just a simple repetition of what happened elsewhere; instead, the processes receive different, ethnic-specific realisations. For instance, even though the ideal of equality is common for the whole of western world, in Norway it has gained some additional meaning, namely "sameness", defined as "being available to one another" (ibid.: 117)<sup>30</sup>. More than actually meaning being "the same", the Norwegian version of equality labels an interaction style (*samhandlingsstil*) which stresses similarities, and politely avoids differences.

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<sup>30</sup> A similar process has been observed in Sweden, where "jämlighet" (equality) nowadays means being the same as others in my group (Kubitsky, 1987: 225).

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However, when the differences are experienced as too significant, the interaction comes to a stop, as it is perceived more preferable to resign from the contact completely than to confront the differing individual openly. Conflict avoidance is identified by Gullestad as another “typically” Norwegian cultural value, seen in the expression *fred og ro* (peace and quiet)<sup>31</sup>. The strategy of avoidance is closely linked with the symbolic forms of interaction in a society. According to Gullestad, the Norwegian pattern of human interactions has in recent years evolved from being primarily a pattern of TERRITORIALITY to what can be called a pattern of DISTANCING (terms borrowed from Suttles, 1972, after Gullestad, 1989: 113-4). Territoriality is characterised by a polarity of interactions: with people identified as “strangers” one keeps distance, whereas with “insiders” there is a very close relationship. In the pattern of distancing, there is much less polarity, resulting in moderately distanced relationships in both cases. Distancing does not eradicate social borders, but it makes them more subtle, as if hidden under the surface. This, in turn, demands certain competences from participants of an interaction:

“For den norske kulturen som helhet (...) er det et typisk trekk ved regler for utveksling og samvær i Norge at mye foregår underforstått. Dette gjør at det er helt avgjørende å kjenne koden. For å kunne etablere og utvikle sosial kontakt, er det viktig å kunne ta andre menneskers perspektiv og dermed forstå forventninger som ikke uttrykkes direkte.” (op.cit.: 114)

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A typical feature of Norwegian culture is that a lot of exchanges and interaction happens implicitly. Hence, it is crucial to know the code. In order to establish and develop social contact, it is vital to be able to see things from others’ perspective and in this way understand expectations that are not spelled.

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<sup>31</sup> Elster (2006) claims Norwegian norms of politeness and conflict avoidance have an inhibiting impact on scientific development in this country. Needless to say, his utterance provoked much debate among Norwegian scholars (cf. Hegre, 2008)

This statement includes two vital implications for the process of communication. Firstly, Norwegian communication is presented as a high-context culture, which is to some extent surprising, as the western European nations tend to be perceived as belonging to low-context cultures. Secondly, an obligation of being empathetic towards one's interlocutor seems to exist. Empathy is closely linked to the implicitness of discourse: in order to understand the implicit meaning of an utterance, interactants need to show a great deal of sensitivity and ability to place themselves "in someone else's shoes".

Gullestad connects the evolution of interaction form with Norway's becoming more modern and bureaucratic<sup>32</sup>:

"Både økonomiske og kulturelle faktorer bestemmer endringsprosessene som fører til unngåelse som strategi og til at avstandsskaping blir mer framtrædende som symbolsk form. Sosiale grenser mellom mennesker forsvinner ikke, men blir mer og mer subtile og skjulte, knyttet til komposisjon og forvaltning av identitet. Byråkratiseringen av samfunnet omfatter i økende grad også personlige relasjoner." (op.cit.: 122)

Both economic and cultural factors influence the processes of change that lead to development of the strategy of avoidance and to the growing importance of distancing as a symbolic form. The social boundaries between individuals do not disappear, but become more subtle and hidden, linked to composing and management of identity. The 'bureaucratisation' of a society also affects personal relations to an increasing degree.

When one compares the above mentioned features to the Swedish interaction model, several similarities arise. Not unlike in Sweden, in Norway there is a focus on maintaining harmony and avoiding

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<sup>32</sup> Interestingly enough, Wasileski (2006) lists keeping distance as one of domination strategies in non-verbal communication, besides unavailability, lack of involvement and relaxed way of being.

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conflict in interaction, which can be linked to the high degree of the society's femininity. Harmony is achieved by means of stressing similarities and ignoring differences between interactants, a fact closely linked to the egalitarian ethos prevailing in the Norwegian society, reflected in Hostede's study as small power distance. At the same time, equality does not necessarily imply that everyone is equal, but that everyone is similar and hence, equally available to one another. However, even though people are available to one another, one is also supposed to keep distance and not get excessively involved in conversations, as it might put the interaction out of balance and lead to imposing on our conversational partner, which should be avoided at all costs. Involvement can be manifested by the pitch of voice, excessive gestures and vivid mimic, and all those strategies are hence dispreferred.

### 2.3.6 Norway as a community of practice

Culture may seem a very broad notion to use for identifying differences in verbal interaction. When speaking about the reality of oral communication, it is also important to analyse a term somewhat narrower than culture, namely COMMUNITY OF EXPERIENCE or PRACTICE<sup>33</sup>:

*“Norge er et erfaringsfellesskap. Nordmenn er sammen om en viten som utlendingene ikke har anelse om. Den er underforstått premiss for det vi sier til hverandre, og assosiativ klangbunn for det vi hører. Justers «mot normalt» tilhører denne referanserammen, Olav Tryggvassons «hva bra brast så høyt», Liv Finstads «sævvver er åltreite dyr», Kuppernes «to indre og vekk me'n», Kiellands «flere byer i Belgia», grevinnen og hovmesterens «same procedure as last year». Felles og hemmelig viten – om episoder, replikker, dialekter, sjargonger – gir en sterk opplevelse av at «vi» er «oss»”. (Johansen, 1995: 30)*

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<sup>33</sup> The notion bears resemblance to the term SPEECH COMMUNITY, or LINGUISTIC COMMUNITY (for an overview of the definition of this term see Hudson, 2007). However, a more general term, namely COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE is appropriate here, since not only linguistic patterns are taken into consideration.

Norway is a *community of experience*. Norwegians share knowledge that foreigners do not have a clue about. This is an underlying condition for everything we say to one another, and an associative resonator for everything we hear. (...) Common and secret knowledge – about episodes, replies, dialects, jargons – gives us a strong experience of «us» being «us».

Here, Johansen gives several examples of what it means to be a member of a Norwegian community of experience; such membership includes understanding quotations originating from the political life, literature and films. Those features, as well as political institutions, celebrities and mass media unify all Norwegians: “Norway is a communication community. The country of Norway has, lately, brought us together” (Johansen, 1995: 29, my translation, PH). Svennevig states that “(...) by the mere fact of sharing nationality, Norwegians have mutual knowledge of such things as how the national holiday – the 17<sup>th</sup> of May – is celebrated, what the Prime Minister’s name is, and why Norway is not a member of the European Union” (1999a: 56). However, it is important to distinguish culture from what is merely a manifestation of common experiences:

“Allikevel er det ikke dette vi mener med en «kultur». (...) Felles fortrolighet med diverse innhold er noe *annet* enn denne gjennomgående måte og form som vi tar for gitt – men gir til stadighet erfaringer som er egnet til å underbygge *troen på* at den finnes.” (Johansen, 1995: 30)

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 However, this is not what we mean with a «culture». (...) Common intimacy with diverse meanings is something *different* than this comprehensive method and form that we take for granted – but it keeps giving us experiences that serve to build up *the belief that* it exists.

Becoming a member of a culture is probably impossible for those who were not born in this culture; one should however be able to become a member of a community of practice, by virtue of time

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spent with other members of this community, and through adopting, among other practices, their communicative behaviour.

The linguistic situation of Norway, with the strong position of dialects and no norm for oral language use<sup>34</sup>, may serve to question the legitimacy of generalisations about “being Norwegian in talk”. However, to our knowledge no one has clearly shown that the dialectal distinctions also stretch to the level of discourse (the differences are to be found on the phonological, morphological and syntactic level). Therefore, there is no reason for dismissing the concept of common Norwegian conversational pattern:

“Most groups of any permanence, be they small bands bounded by face-to-face contact, modern nations divisible into smaller subregions [...] may be treated as speech communities, provided they show linguistic peculiarities that warrant special studies.” (Gumperz, 2001: 43)

Being a member of a given community also implies that we have something in common with other members of this community, a common ground. As it seems a vital premise for any oral interaction to take place, this notion is addressed while defining relational work (3.1.2).

A question arises as to which elements should be considered cultural artefacts, and which should simply be seen as products of co-existence and co-participation in the social life. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to elaborate on the question further; it is however necessary to state here that it seems vital for achieving cultural competence in a given language to be both intimate with the practical aspects of the social life, and knowledgeable about the underlying cultural premises of interaction.

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<sup>34</sup> Even though the views on the lack of a norm for spoken language are by no means unanimous (cf. *Norsk Lingvistisk Tidsskrift* 27/2009, where the different standpoints are presented in depth), this statement reflects the legal situation, as in Norwegian schools, the teachers are not allowed to correct pupils spoken language.

### 2.3.7 Norwegian or Nordic as a whole?

When it comes to Norwegian oral communication, one cannot find its integral description in the literature on the subject. However, there are several reasons for considering the Scandinavian cultures, especially Norwegian and Swedish, as similar in many ways. Ethnologists have postulated a division of Scandinavia, basing on socio-cultural factors, into northern part, including Norway and North-Sweden, and southern part, consisting of South Sweden and Denmark (Gullestad, 1989: 40). Both in Hofstede's (1994, 2005) and Inglehart's (after Pettersson, 2002) charts, Sweden and Norway are located very close to each other, scoring high on the scales of individualism<sup>35</sup>, femininity and low on the scale of power distance. Norwegians often refer to Sweden as *storebror*, that is Big Brother, pointing not only to their common history in which Sweden dominated Norway for 90 years, but also to the fact that the countries are very similar, both socially and politically, following the same socio-political doctrine of welfare state. This brotherhood can additionally be extended to cover Denmark. One can easily find examples of using Norwegian and Scandinavian almost interchangeably, such as "I would like to propose a set of hypotheses, or, if one would prefer, a substantial theory about some central features of *Norwegian or Scandinavian culture*" (Gullestad, 1989: 110, my italics, PH). What is more, Scandinavia is often considered to be a single SPEECH COMMUNITY, on account of the assumption that Norwegian, Danish and Swedish are mutually understandable. However, as Uhlmann (1994) has shown, although inter-Scandinavian communication is possible and indeed happens quite often, it does require much more effort than a similar conversation between native speakers of one of the Scandinavian languages, especially in cases when Danish is involved. This leads to the conclusion that although mutually understandable to some extent, the Scandinavian languages comprise three distinct speech communities.

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<sup>35</sup> Kubitsky (1987: 224) notices an interesting fact that the term "individualism" in Sweden has strong negative connotations, whereas the terms "kollektiv, grupp" are seen as generally positive.

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One should also not forget that differences also exist between Norwegian and Swedish society. Norwegian society has never been as stratified (as seen in the Swedish complex system of personal pronouns, cf. Paulston, 2005) and formal as Swedish. On the other hand, in the descriptions of Swedish culture one cannot find the glorification of rural life and nature, which is often found in Norwegian studies. Moreover, Norwegians are supposed to be less controlled when it comes to emotions than Swedes (Daun, 2005: 153).

To sum up, it is sensible to state that although Norway and Sweden are two separate cultures, they have a great deal of phenomena in common. Indeed, if one is interested in finding the closest “neighbour” of Norway, not only geographically, but politically and sociologically, it has to be Sweden. There are few examples of such a match in the rest of Europe.

### **2.4 Conclusions. Being Norwegian in oral communication**

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the notion of frame as a tool in interethnic conversation analysis and to identify aspects of Norwegian culture influence the process of oral communication. Frame has been defined as:

*complex communicative pattern of elements that is grounded in values predominant in the given society and mediated through practices of everyday interaction.*

Following Daun’s (2005) analysis of Swedish, and taking into account interactive constraints based on Hofstede’s (1994) cultural dimensions, the frames of “being Norwegian in oral communication” are as follows:

1. **Equality.** This frame is connected to the considerably small power distance, which results in limited honorifics use and relatively symmetrical conversations, where all parties, regardless of their social status, can show initiative;
2. **Harmony.** Norwegians do not favour competitive conversations and focus predominantly on harmony and conflict avoidance. This is achieved through giving more attention to similarities than to differences, controlling emotional manifestations, moderated usage of involvement tokens and a great value attached to silence. The stress on harmonious interactions may possibly be linked with the high degree of femininity of Norwegian culture;
3. **Distance.** Keeping distance with one's interlocutor is another means of sustaining harmony, but also the result of "bureaucratisation" of the society;
4. **Seriousness.** Norwegians engage in conversations in order to achieve certain goals, not for the activity's own sake. Hence, "small talk" is considered unnecessary when one is pursuing concrete aims. On the other hand, in casual conversations it is often used as means of keeping distance (see point 3.) and sustaining harmony (see point 2.);
5. **Simplicity.** This feature is closely linked with equality (one should not "stick out" of the collective also by means of elaborated language) and harmony (being a good listener);
6. **Locality.** Having knowledge about the dialectal variation in Norway and the stereotypes linked to it is a part of being Norwegian. This feature is also connected to the fact that in Norway, geographical ancestry is important for social relations. A person talking to a stranger always tries to establish where the person comes from. Hence, the consistency of dialect use is also vital for interactions.

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One could additionally name “key words” connected to the social and cultural life of Norway, as well as typical topics for conversations. For lack of valid arguments for one or another option, the topic cannot be further developed in this chapter. However, the issue of proper names, geographical regions, and also intra-national stereotypes that are important for Norwegian discourse, is to some extent addressed in the analytical part of the study.

Frames can reveal themselves on several levels of discourse, through single practices in the course of conversation. The following chapter presents studies on speaking practices in Norwegian, and suggests a comprehensive definition of the Norwegian ethnic communication pattern, consisting of frames and their manifestations.

## Chapter 3.

### Communicative practices

#### 3.1 Practices

##### 3.1.1 The term

The term PRACTICE has a long tradition in sociological and cultural studies as a constitutive element of such central concepts as Pierre Bourdieu's HABITUS (proposed in *Outline of a theory of practice*, after Moerman, 1988: 56), which was defined as "principles of the generation and structuring of practices". It also prevails in many linguistic descriptions. For instance, verbal taboo is referred to in Encyclopedia of Linguistics as "a spectrum of linguistic practices" (Strazny, 2005: 462), and contextualization tactics are seen as "communicative practices" (Strazny, 2005: 402). Practices can be seen as patterns of actual behaviour that serve a specific communicative function (cf. Jacquemet, 1995). As many anthropological studies show, practices are often linked to a particular cultural or social group (Goodwin, 1985, 1990 for Black children; Moerman, 1988 for Thai formal discourse; see also Strazny, 2005: 606).

Familiarity with verbal practices available in a given social group is gained in the process of language socialization during childhood. At the same time, adults are also subject to language socialization, as they "may find it necessary or desirable to master new registers or styles associated with changes in their vocational or professional lives, or with new vocations or other activities that broaden their social horizons and involve participation in new communities of practice" (Strazny, 2005: 610). Naturally, moving to a different country will require from an adult the mastering of a new linguistic code, together with its characteristic set of practices. The process might prove a difficult task:

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“In fact, one of the most difficult tasks for foreigners in learning a new language is learning the different styles and the contexts in which they are used. Many fluent speakers never manage this, and tend to speak in a single style, which makes them sound too formal in some contexts and too chatty in others.” (Gallois&Callan, 1997: 11)<sup>36</sup>

Practices, on account of their context- and culture-dependency, are closely related to frames. In fact, they can be perceived as interactional manifestations of frames prevailing in a given community of practice, revealed on several levels in the course of interaction.

In her study of cross-cultural variation in compliment responses, Wierzbicka (2003: 131) uses the term CONVERSATIONAL ROUTINES to refer to similar phenomena as the previously introduced notion of PRACTICE. However, as both the name and her following analysis suggest, it mainly covers ritual aspects of oral communication, including greetings and complimenting, among others. The notion of practice does not carry such implications, and can hence be seen as a broader term, referring to all phenomena taking place in the course of verbal interaction, that can be perceived as culturally prepatterned.

Yet another term that is contrasted with practice is COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGY, depicting “specific (more or less intentional or at least recurrently used) way, or method, of going about solving (trying to solve) the problem or task defining a communicative project or communicative activity” (Linell, 1998: 227). As we see from the quotation, communicative strategies involve some premeditation, and pursuing a specific interactional goal<sup>37</sup>. Norrby (2004) shares Linell’s understanding of the concept, but at the same time she admits that the strategies are based on more general rules (frames?) such as cooperation or competition, solidarity and equality or status and hierarchy, respect and considerateness or

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<sup>36</sup> This quotation makes use of the term ‘style’, which will be elaborated upon in section 3.1.2.

<sup>37</sup> Linell’s examples include politicians strategies of coping with difficult questions, or the strategy of telling about own experience as a ‘fishing devise’ (Linell, 1998: 228).

confrontation and challenge, chosen on the basis of the type of activity one is involved in. But even when the above mentioned general rules are common for all participants of a given interaction, the single strategies they use might lead to communicative misunderstanding:

”Om en samtalsdeltagare håller sig tyst och avvaktande för att visa hänsyn gentemot sin samtalspartner är det fullt möjligt att den andre uppfattar dette som ett utslag av nonchalans eller ointresse och inte som tecken på hänsyn eller respekt. Samtalsdeltagarna använder sig alltså av diverse, och åtminstone delvis olika samtalsstrategier, på den lokala nivån (tur för tur) för att nå sine övergripande kommunikativa mål” (Norrby, 2004: 191)

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If one of the participants of the conversation stays silent and awaiting in order to be considerate towards his or hers partner, it is likely that the other person will understand it as a sign of nonchalance and disinterest, and not as a sign of being considerate and respectful. Interactants use varied, and at least partly different communicative strategies, on the local level (turn after turn) in order to achieve their larger communicative goals.

Norrby describes methods of creating solidarity and distance in a conversation, and provides an example of analysing signals of considerateness in Swedish. However, she does not attribute the differences in strategy use to different cultural backgrounds of the speakers, nor does she suggest that there is cross-cultural variation as to how a given situation is structured and perceived by its participants.

The notion of strategy bears resemblance to PROCEDURE, a term proposed by Svennevig, defined as “a set of functional units which are linked by means of relevance relations and together accomplish some communicative task” (1999a: 11-12). Svennevig, like Linell in the case of strategy, sees procedures as constituents of genres, which in turn are defined as “more or less fixed concate-

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nations of local conversational procedures" (op.cit.: 12). Interestingly enough, Svennevig acknowledges the differences between genres in different communities: "the notion of activity and genre presuppose a community whose members share a competence governing the use of the conversational procedures involved" (op.cit.: 12). However, in the following work, he does not develop this idea in depth.

To sum up, practice seems to be the most appropriate term to use in the dissertation to refer to *interactional phenomena that serve a specific conversational function and originate from frames for interaction*. At the same time, such understanding of practices does not presuppose their belonging to a specific communicative activity, as the terms procedure and strategy do. Practices are connected various conversational functions and constitute ethnic communication pattern (ECP), which is presented in chapter 3.2.

### 3.1.2 Practices in relational work

Practices can also be perceived as conversational utterances that "contribute to the establishment, maintenance and alteration of social relationships" (Svennevig, 1999a: 38). Such a view seems somewhat narrower than the previously suggested, as not all practices constitutive for ethnic communication patterns can be directly linked with interpersonal goals (but instead with conversation management goals, see 3.2). Of course, one could argue that with conversation being a social phenomenon, interpersonal functions are superior to other conversational aspects (such as conveying information). Such a view is presented in Brown & Levinson (1987), which treats politeness as an all-pervasive and all-determining feature of human communication (see 2.2.1). Yet, politeness as face work is only one aspect of relational work. The two other aspects include CONVERSATIONAL STYLE and establishment of PERSONAL COMMON GROUND<sup>38</sup>. The latter in particular seems important in the case of interethnic conversations, since the

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<sup>38</sup> Ragnar Rommetveit speaks of establishing a TEMPORARILY SHARED SOCIAL REALITY in a conversation as one of its most basic functions, and achievements at the same time (Rommetveit, 1974).

non-native participants of such conversations are likely not to be familiar with the aspects of communal common ground that constitute a “mental encyclopedia” of a given language community. Membership in a community is marked by using terms from such “communal lexicons”, and by discourse markers such as *jo* (Fretheim, 1991, after Svennevig, 1999a: 62).

“Choosing a linguistic expression that fits the current common ground is important both for the communication of referential content and for the maintenance of the social relation. (...) Taking too much for granted may give the impression that the speaker is not attentive to the informational needs of the hearer, that he is elevating himself or denigrating the other by ‘talking over his head’. On the other hand, presenting information explicitly that is already in the hearer’s background knowledge may appear as an underestimation of his intellectual capacity and may thus seem patronizing” (op.cit.)

In spite of the vitality of the concept of common ground in Norwegian scholar tradition (cf. the collection of Rommetveit’s works on socio-psychological aspects of interaction, 2008), there is as yet no study concerning what constitutes the Norwegian “communal lexicon”.

CONVERSATIONAL STYLE is a feature generally considered to be closely linked with the type of activity one is pursuing, its setting and participants (Svennevig, 2001b: 245-6). Traditionally, the preception of conversational styles follows a dichotomy formal vs. informal, the former being typical for institutional settings, whereas the latter used mostly for describing private interactions (ibid: 248). This difference, however, seems to be a continuum rather than being a clear-cut distinction. Lakoff (1979, after Tannen, 1984) suggests three points on this continuum, namely distance, deference and camaraderie. At the same time, Tannen suggests that the style chosen by interactants depends as much on their perception of the communicative situation, as on their own “characteristic style”, being “a combination of family background

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and other interactive experience" (ibid: 13-14). However, this definition, focusing on individual differences rather than socio-cultural patterns, is contradicted in the following analysis, where Tannen sees high-involvement style as characteristic of American-Jewish culture, whereas its counterpart, the style of considerateness is typical for people with white American background. As features of high-involvement style she lists:

- a) topical features, such as preference for personal topics, abrupt topic shifts, introducing new topics without hesitation and with persistence, if needed;
- b) pacing: faster rate of speech, faster turn-taking, less interturn pauses, cooperative overlap, participatory listenership;
- c) narrative strategies: telling stories, often in rounds;
- d) expressive paralinguistics, including among others tone and quality of the voice. (ibid.: 30-31)

Tannen's analysis has been repeatedly criticised for being speculative and unreliable when it comes to the size and type of data used for drawing conclusions, as well as for lack of methodological rigour (see for example Svennevig, 1999a: 53). Yet, one cannot deny that it attempts to describe phenomena which at that time seemed undecipherable. As a result, Tannen (1984) is still largely referred to, even though with a distance, in a great deal of conversational studies. One of them is Norrby (2004), which except for the two styles described above also includes masculine and feminine conversational styles as characterized by competitiveness and cooperation respectively, a view that can be seen as somewhat generalising.

In the author's opinion, the notion of style is inferior to the definition of ethnic communication pattern, the latter being less dependent on the communicative activity and its participants. In the search for ethnic communication pattern the aim is to grasp the speaking practices that are characteristic for Norwegian conversations, disregarding the participants' sex and social status. At the

same time, there is no denial that differences grounded in the social construction and interpretation of a given situation do exist. Still, for this study's scope these aspects are not completely relevant. Therefore, in the following definition, what Tannen defines as stylistic features are presented as examples of rhetorical features, used for achieving interpersonal goals.

### 3.2 Levels of manifestation. Ethnic communication pattern

ETHNIC COMMUNICATION PATTERN (ECP, *kommunikationsmönster*) is a term borrowed from Allwood (1982), who investigates the possibility of defining a pattern for Swedish oral communication. He identifies following features of communication patterns:

1. Typical sequences, further divided into initial, middle and final sequences;
2. Turn-taking;
3. Back-channels signals;
4. Spatial positioning and body contact;
5. Content of the conversation. (ibid.: 8)

A more precisely structured option has been offered by Günther&Knoblauch (1995), who state that communicative genres manifest themselves on three levels:

1. Internal structure, including the linguistic signs of the communicative action;
2. Situative level, defined as "interaction order" (ibid.: 8), including interactive exchange of utterances and the sociospatial relation established in the interaction;
3. External structure, defined as "the «situated» elements referring to the insitutional structure of a society" (op.cit.)

With simpler terms, one could say that these three levels comprise «what» is said, «how» it is said and «where/when» it is said. Needless to add, all three levels are mutually correlated, and cannot be perceived as separate realities. Moreover, only the first two seem to be of immediate interest to linguists, since the third,

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although undoubtedly influencing the communication in a given interaction, consists of social phenomena, such as identity, social roles *etc.* Linguists can only study them as long they are referred to in the ongoing conversation. The first level contains both verbal phenomena in a conversation, namely lexico-semantic elements, morpho-syntactic devices, rhetorical figures, what Günther&Knoblauch call minor forms (stereotypes, idioms, common places, proverbs) as well as non-verbal, that is prosody, voice quality, signs, mimic and gestures. The second, situative level, comprises ritual phenomena (e.g. opening and termination of contact) and the 'machinery' of conversation, namely turn-taking system, adjacency pairs and preference structures. On the subject of the latter they say: "we do not regard preference structures as a part of the conversational apparatus but rather as conventions which heavily depend on the socio-cultural context" (ibid.: 14).

While the analysis proposed by Günther&Knoblauch (ibid.) seems very intricate and complicated, Allwood's (1982) suggestion gives an impression of being not specific enough to be implemented on studies of real-life recorded interactions as it is. Comprising the two analyses presented above, the structure of ECP consists of following practices:

- lexico-semantic practices (e.g. proverbs, idioms, common places and people, Svennevig's "terms from communal lexicons");
- strategic practices - achieving communicative goals (e.g. turn-taking and turn-leaving signals, changing the topics, signalling understanding, etc);
- rhetorical practices - achieving interpersonal goals (e.g. means of signalling assertiveness, distancing devices, etc.);
- topical practices (content);

The suggested practices on the verbal level are facilitated by non-verbal communication, such as gestures, voice quality and spatial positioning. Moreover, the practices are shaped by social and cultural frames, which do not predefine the course of interaction,

but only provide a reference point to an individual's possible conduct.

The structure of ECP is consistent with Goddard & Wierzbicka's (1997) suggestion regarding the scope of possible differences between societies in their language use. Goddard & Wierzbicka point to "participation conventions" and "methods of influencing the interlocutor" as important "parameters of variation" (ibid: 254, see chapter 1.2.1). In the proposed ECP, participation conventions correspond to strategic practices, and methods of influencing the interlocutor are labelled as rhetorical practices. Additionally, differences can be observable in the topical organisation and through lexico-semantic practices, the latter embracing among others "culture's key words" (Wierzbicka, 1997).

### 3.3 Comparative view on speaking practices in Norwegian, Swedish and Polish

When it comes to studies on the topic on Norwegian conversation, there is a considerable need for more research. The microlevel<sup>39</sup> of strategic and rhetorical practices is to some extent described, especially when it comes to the field of lexical pragmatics. On the other hand, one lacks a larger overview and studies of longer stretches of talk.

#### 3.3.1 Practices on the microlevel

Concerning the microlevel, Svennevig (2001a) and (2007) are devoted to two phenomena that might be perceived as somewhat "non-standard" at least by Polish and English language users. Svennevig (2001a) is a study of responding to wh-questions with

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<sup>39</sup> Within the dialogical theory, the term MICROLEVEL refers to the strictly linguistic level of single practices, whereas MESOLEVEL relates to phenomena located in-between linguistic and sociological categories, embracing for instance politeness or genre (cf. Scheuer, 2006: 44). Consequently, MACROLEVEL refers to the level of discourse.

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*ja, jo* and *nei*, which he interprets as both a sign of reception of the prior turn and a projection of the coming turn's content (as a hedge or an upgrade, cf. chapter 7.2). Svennevig (2007) examines the tag question *ikke sant* 'not true' and its use as a single response particle displaying alignment and involvement. Except for the above mentioned phenomena, there are also studies of pragmatic particles such as *bare* ('just', Opsahl&Svennevig, 2007) and *nesten* ('almost', Fretheim, 1979). Although undeniably useful in describing the use of different linguistic tokens, these studies seldom reach deep enough to explain the reason for their employment in talk. Those features of spoken Norwegian might be unexpected, and hence more difficult to use, for non-native speakers. Even more so, the difficulty in using them might arise from the fact that such practices are not existent in their mother tongue. To such features belong also ingressive (produced on inbreath) sounds like *ja* and *nei* which seem to be typical for Scandinavian languages (Allwood, 1982: 14)<sup>40</sup>. Kobayashi (2001) identifies as much as four functions of ingressive sounds in Norwegian:

- a) as a back-channel signal;
- b) closing function;
- c) confirming function;
- d) a turn-taking signal.

Eklund (2002) confirms these findings for Swedish data as well, noting at the same time that "ingressive speech will likely not occur in any other settings than genuine, spontaneous, human conversation". This makes ingressive sounds one of characteristics of natural conversation. What is more, it is often claimed that the feature is more typical for women than men speaking, possibly as a sign of affection (cf. Pitschmann, 1987: 154). Although all the above mentioned scholars stress formal and functional distinction between them, the use of ingressive and egressive variants of *ja* and *nei* is often considered interchangeable. Moreover, many Scandinavians are not fully aware why they produce ingressive

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<sup>40</sup> Eklund (2007) claims that ingressive sounds are universal phenomena for a great number of languages in the worlds. In the same time, though, the "Nordic" ingressive sounds differ from f.ex. English and Japanese, both when it comes to their form, and to the complexity of functions they have (Kobayashi, 2001: 22, 24).

sounds or even that they use them at all (Pitschmann, 1987, Kobayashi, 2001).

Unlike in Norway, conversation analysis as a research method has a strong position and is successfully applied in the Swedish and Finnish academic world (Norrby, 2004, Lindström, 1999), both in fields of linguistics and sociology<sup>41</sup>. However, a great deal of research in these countries focuses on institutional discourse (Backlund, 1991). One of the exceptions from this tendency is Lindström (1999), who studies several interactional features of Swedish everyday conversation and telephone dialogues. In her study, Lindström focuses on three verbal practices, namely:

- a) marking problematicity with the *eller*-inquiry (or-inquiry);
- b) accepting deferred<sup>42</sup> action requests, invitations and proposals;
- c) curled *ja* as a projection of disalignment.

The analysed practices are all expressions of certain presuppositions on the speaker's or recipient's side. In the case of *eller*-inquiry, the speaker anticipates recipient's resistance to the mentioned action (ibid: 174, cf. chapter 7.1). The analysis of the second practice shows that in Swedish, an affirmative token is insufficient to accept a deferred action request or proposal, and that a additional unit of talk is needed to display the speaker commitment to satisfy the deferred action request (ibid.). The "curled" *ja*, on the other hand, serves the role of projecting a subsequent dispreferred action (such as rejection or refusal to a request). Moreover, the curled *ja* seems rather to project a slight disalignment rather than full-fledged rejection (ibid: 175, cf. chapter 8). In other words, Lindström focuses on specific rhetorical practices belonging to Swedish communication pattern, as their use and understanding is a matter of language socialisation and membership in the Swedish community of practice.

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<sup>41</sup> One can talk of the CA-school within the Finnish sociology in particular, started by Anssi Peräkylä at the University of Helsinki. In Sweden, the CA methodology is less popular in sociological studies (Lindström, 1999).

<sup>42</sup> This term refers to actions that cannot be immediately satisfied.

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### 3.3.2 Norwegian politeness

A broader look on Norwegian communication is presented in Fretheim (2005), which is a study of verbal politeness. In Norwegian discourse, negative politeness strategies (minimising imposition on others) are preferred instead of positive politeness (realising others' face needs). Norwegians seem also rather modest, strict and formal in their realisations of politeness strategies:

“(...) verbal politeness is not of the conspicuous sort (...) Norwegian contains relatively few conventional means of signalling concern for the addressee's face wants; at the same time there is a risk that use of non-conventional ways of displaying willingness to be polite will actually be misunderstood and interpreted as either ironical or servile.”  
(Fretheim, *ibid*: 145)

In Norwegian society there is a strong focus on not being, or at least not sounding, insincere and that is how positive politeness strategies, as found in other languages, would be interpreted if copied into Norwegian conversation: “what is felt to be cajoling is generally resented” (*ibid.*: 146). Negative politeness strategies may be misinterpreted, or even pass unnoticed in case of speakers with other cultural backgrounds that stress the role of positive politeness (Sifianou&Antonpoulou, 2005 for Greek language). Moreover, non-native speakers of Norwegian from countries favouring positive politeness might fail to notice and acquire less conspicuous means of being polite and as a result, sound abrupt or rude while asking for help, requesting or declining an offer in Norwegian (Ronowicz, 1995: 91). Poland is also among the countries that prefer positive politeness, realised for example by the many-leveled system of terms of address and grammatical forms linked to it (Huszczka, 2005, Zgółka&Zgółka, 2001). The variety of forms found in such detailed system results in their broad application as distancing, intimising or dominating devices, depending on the situation and forms applied (cf. Rosińska-Mamej, 2007, on the use of address forms in Polish).

Fretheim, similarly to Allwood (1982: 11-12, for Swedish) stresses the excessive and unusual usage of *takk* (thank you) in Norwegian interaction. Interestingly enough, a comparative analysis of thanking phenomena by Zborowski (2005) shows that Polish and German differ significantly from Swedish when it comes to:

- formalisation of thanking formulas (with Swedish being to a great extent formalised);
- methods of reinforcing the formula (Swedish referring predominantly to quantitative reinforcement: *tack så mycket* 'thank you so much', *tusen tack* 'thousand thanks', and Polish and German using mainly qualitative methods);
- replies to the act of thanking (with the Swedish formulas for "thanking for thanking": *tack själv*, which is less common in Polish and German)<sup>43</sup>;
- the use of thanking formulas in directives (for example in shops, where a Swede would say *en kvällstidning, tack* 'a newspaper, thank you', whereas a Pole and a German would use their equivalents of 'please');
- presence of the speaker and the recipient in the thanking formula (in Swedish it is uncommon for both the speaker and the listener to appear in the formula, contrary to Polish and German)<sup>44</sup>.

Even though his analysis does not include Norwegian, one can say that the two Nordic languages are akin to one another with respect to thanking formulas. Fretheim (2005) also notices the Norwegian lack of a lexeme that would directly correspond to English 'please', neither in form nor function (the same is reported for Swedish by

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<sup>43</sup> Zborowski links the phenomenon of "thanking for thanking" with the Swedish value of equality and solidarity between the speakers. Consequently, replying to a thanking formula with an expression of the type: "you're welcome" or "don't mention it" would actually be tantamount to admitting that there is something to thank for, what again could disturb the equality of the speakers.

<sup>44</sup> Zborowski also mentions a Swedish phenomenon that seems not to have an equivalent in Norwegian, namely the expression *tack du*, literally "thanks you (2ps.sg)". This expression is again linked to the value of equality in Sweden.

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Allwood, 1982: 11)<sup>45</sup>. The function of politeness markers is realised by syntax, sentence form (questions) and lexicalised constructions, such as the additional use of *få* 'get' and implementation of *jeg lurte på* 'I was wondering' in order to make requests more polite.

Comparing Polish, Swedish and Norwegian politeness Urbanik (2008) found several rules of conversation common for both Scandinavian languages and Polish, such as symmetrical relations and solidarity with one's conversational partner. However, he has also identified rules typical only for Swedish and Norwegian discourse, namely:

- a) modesty, defined as a conversational conduct. One is not supposed to speak about one's own achievement or private life, unless directly encouraged to. Opinions and radical ideas are to be delivered in a weakened form, through use of various hedges.
- b) acceptance, understood as avoidance of criticising one's conversational partner. If a critical opinion is to be put through, one uses euphemisms such as impersonal constructions of the type "One should not...", "There should not be...", *etc.*
- c) harmony, being one of the key politeness strategies in Scandinavian conversation. Harmony is maintained by avoiding conflicts and accepting the partner's opinions. (ibid: 120-121)

Urbanik's findings are in agreement with what has been identified before as typical Norwegian/Swedish features of social interaction.

When it comes to Swedish conversation, Allwood (1982) suggests several features as typical, including norms of presentation (it is common to present oneself), scarce excusals, but superfluous thanks, low tolerance for interruption, long pauses between turns, abundant feedback signals (when compared for example to

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<sup>45</sup> Wasilewski (2006: 173) considers this lexeme to be an "honorific quantifier for verbs". This might be the reason for Norwegian and Swedish to make do without it, as it is a positive politeness strategy to mark respect on verbs.

Anglo-Saxon culture)<sup>46</sup>. As we can see, some of these features, as self-presentation, thanking and excusing, represent the ritual side of a conversation. Yet, Allwood does acknowledge the role of less conspicuous features of a conversation such as interruptions, pauses and feedback signals. These features are perceived as less conspicuous, since native language users seldom think about the rules for interrupting their conversational partners or not, unless the rules are broken. Only then does one realise that there are certain behaviours, both linguistic and non-linguistic, that are expected from the speakers and that the speakers also expect them from one another in interaction. Allwood also mentions that in Swedish culture there is a need for some kind of softening devices when introducing a difficult topic, asking someone a favour or suggesting an action (ibid: 11). It also seems that one turns to softening devices also while asking even innocent personal questions, as if recognizing the possible threat to one's face such a question might pose. This fact may be linked to what was observed typical for Norwegian interaction as well, that is the rule of minimising imposition on others, negative politeness in other words. In Polish conversations, however, there is an opposite tendency when it comes to softening devices:

“Poles tend to be direct when they express opinions or when they disagree, since an argument is not only considered a good way of exchanging ideas, but also an enjoyable form of conversation. Consequently, the primary aim of many Poles when expressing an opinion is to state it in such a manner that it will be difficult to refute it.” (Ronowicz, 1995: 80)

Polish discourse favours openness in expressing emotions and showing involvement in a conversation through loud voice and lively mimic: “the conversation is usually loud and animated, with people trying to convince each other about their own points of view and seldom agreeing with each other” (ibid: 78). As a

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<sup>46</sup> Naturally, the use of attributes depicting relative features requires a reference point. In his paper, Allwood states the cultures in relation to which the Swedish conversation is compared.

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consequence, Polish might seem abrupt or even rude to people used to a different way of conduct.

When it comes to topical aspects of Swedish conversation, personal topics seem to be more common than in England, but less common than in Eastern Europe (ibid.: 15). The avoidance of personal topics in favour of commonplace subjects has been detected in family conversations (Knoblauch, 1991: 188) as means of avoiding conflict. Nor do politics and religion belong to common topics in Scandinavian conversation (Backlund, 1991: 62) which cannot be said of Polish conversation: "for most Poles, a social conversation at a party provides an ideal opportunity for a serious discussion on controversial topics. Many English speakers, however, tend to feel uncomfortable debating controversial issues in this setting" (Ronowicz, 1995: 78). Political issues belong among others to such controversial topics.

### 3.3.3 The outsiders' voice

Resorting to an outsider's view, that is, descriptions of how NNSs perceive oral communication in a given language, may also provide fruitful results. Aambø (2005) focuses on the Norwegian way of being, oral communication among others, as seen by immigrants in Norway. Among the most often mentioned features are: equality of speakers, manifested by the use of *du* (you-SG); silence or "communicative greed" on the side of Norwegians; reservation or not showing too much involvement in the conversation; strict rules for not interrupting others while they speak. An Argentinean immigrant describes Norwegian conversation as very different from that in her mother tongue:

"Den norske måten å samtale på, med å respektere hvem sin tur det er å snakke, er fullstendig annerledes enn den jeg kjenner fra før. Nordmenn respekterer den personen som snakker helt til intonasjonen forandres og en kort pause forteller at det nå er samtalepartnerens tur. Først da svarer man." (Aambø, 2005: 267)

The Norwegian way of conversing with one another, respecting whose turn it is to speak, is something totally different to what I had known before [I came to Norway]. Norwegians respect the person talking until the intonation changes and a short break tells the others that it is their turn to speak. Only then does one answer.

People used to conversations characterised by faster pace and frequent involvement tokens might – and indeed do – interpret Norwegian behaviour as reservation, coldness and disinterest. Immigrants from Slavonic countries (Russia and Croatia), while discussing Norwegian conversation, mention the role of eye-contact, which seems to be greater in Norway than in their countries, where keeping eye-contact throughout the whole conversation could be interpreted as an attempt to dominate the other speaker rather than to show involvement and interest. Other signs of domination include compliments on one's language skills ("your speak good Norwegian") that often come very early in a conversation. Such a compliment is then interpreted as a sign that the conversation partner noticed "whom he/she is dealing with", rather than as an honest compliment, even though it does not necessarily have to be so<sup>47</sup>. The topics and content of conversations might also differ – in Russia one talks about the private, but also about politics, culture, topics considered vital for everyone. As the interviewee says: "there is almost no «empty talk» [in Russia]", Norwegian conversation may sometimes seem superficial and shallow. This fact is interesting to compare with the claims put forward in chapter 2.3.5 about the negative values attached to "small talk" in Norwegian culture. It seems therefore that the label "small talk" may be attached to different speech activities in various cultures.

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<sup>47</sup> A similar fact of complimenting even poor speakers has been noted by Nishizaka (1995: 312) in case of Japanese. She links it with the "ownership of the language" on the side of native speakers, which makes it natural for them to define what is "good Japanese", which on the other hand would sound unnatural in a non-native speaker's mouth.

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Kjelaas (2006) is a study of communicative challenges that N2-speaking nurses meet in their work. She groups her findings in four main challenges: on the level of attitude, on the level of understanding and applying contextualisation cues, on the level of style and when it comes to power in communication. On the level of attitudes, the very perception of yourself as a non-native language user might result in a humbleness and a weakened self-assurance (ibid: 48). This leads to exercising less initiative in and control over the conversation. When it comes to contextualisation cues, Kjelaas' informants stress that there is little body language in Norwegian conversation, which some of them perceive as a mechanism of deception, as "body language cannot lie" (ibid: 58). Yet others claim that less body language makes expressing meanings more difficult, as one cannot combine the verbal code with other channels. Another feature discussed by Kjelaas is the egalitarian style, observed in the use of *du* when talking to everyone. Similarly to Aambø's (2005) informants, Kjelaas' interviewees focus on this feature as problematic. Even though a system with less honorifics seems easier to use, in practice it may be more difficult to apply for non-native language users. In Norwegian one can express the same meanings as in other languages, and when no honorifics are used, these meanings must be expressed in less conspicuous ways:

"[...] ved å variere alt fra tonefall, trykk og uttale av enkeltlyder, til ordvalg, syntaks og bruk av språkhandlinger, kan en markere om en er formell eller mer hverdagslig, alvorlig eller humoristisk, høflig eller konfronterende osv." (Kjelaas, 2006: 85)

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[...] through variation in intonation, stress and pronunciation of single sounds, as well as choice of words, syntax and use of speech acts, one can mark if one is being formal or casual, serious or humorous, polite or confronting etc.

Thus, in the absence of an immediately visible system of honorifics, the NNSS have to learn on their own, through inter-

action, how to speak to people of different status and in different situations. There are also some “unwritten rules” when it comes to the use of strategies. Some strategies, as for example denying or criticizing others, are not available for NNSs, as they are reserved for speakers of high status (ibid.: 98). Such an observation has also been made by Andenæs (2008), who talks of “access to language” that is limited in case of NNSs, however fluent they become.

### 3.3.4 The practices incorporated into the Norwegian ECP

The aforementioned speaking practices may be incorporated into the Norwegian ethnic communication pattern, which structure has been suggested in section 3.2.

#### 1. lexico-semantic practices

The lexico-semantic aspects of the Norwegian communication pattern have as yet not received much attention from scholars. The only feature one could possibly include here would be the frequent and somewhat specific use of thanking formulas.

#### 2. strategic practices – achieving communicative goals

- a) turn-taking rules in Norwegian conversation do not favour interrupting the current speaker; the turn ends when the current speaker finishes his utterance and signals it with a proper intonation contour and a pause. This rule is valid also for collaborative completions, which are hence dispreferred. As a result, Norwegian conversation might seem very relaxed, and its participants reserved and uninvolved;
- b) participants in a Norwegian conversation give abundant feedback, in varied forms, including ingressive sounds with all their functions;
- c) there is the tendency to explicitly close topics or the act of conversing by “summing up”, that is stressing the fact that an agreement has been reached (*da sier vi så*, which corresponds roughly to ‘so we will say it this way’);

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- d) there is a great deal of ritual involved in a conversation, especially while commencing and terminating the contact, including ritual greetings, inquiries about others' well-being, and later farewell and thanking;
- e) when a new speaker "gets the ground", it is vital to prepare the recipients to what will follow. That is achieved among other by signals of disalignment, such as curled *ja* or answering *ja/nei* to wh-questions, which both serve the function of suggesting that the following turn will correspond (in case of *ja*-answer) or not (in case of curled *ja* and *nei*-answer) to the previous speakers expectations.

### 3. rhetorical practices – achieving interpersonal goals

- a) in Norwegian conversation it is vital not to impose on other participants. It is achieved by using litotes (*nesten, bare*) that weakens the propositional content of a given structure, the or-inquiry (to suggest to the partners that we do not expect a given answer but are open to all possibilities<sup>48</sup>) and negative politeness strategies (realized as use of specific syntactical and lexical patterns);
- b) in the case of conversation with non-native speakers, there is a tendency to compliment them on their Norwegian, even in the very beginning of a conversation, when the other party has not been able to show his full skills. This feature, however, might be typical for interethnic conversations in general;
- c) suggesting and marking common ground is done by means of discourse particle (*jo*) and *ikke sant*-answers ('not true');
- d) the egalitarian style, manifested by the use of *du*, and few observable positive politeness strategies, such as honorifics.

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<sup>48</sup> Restricting one's choice can be seen as a domination strategy (cf. Wasilewski, 2006: 132)

#### 4. content (topics)

Little can be said about the topical aspects of Norwegian conversations, as they have not been thoroughly studied on a comparative ground. One can speculate on the preference for non-personal topics, and a dispreference for topics connected to the interactants' opinion on controversial subjects, such as politics. The topical features are however difficult to compare as they are highly dependent on the context of the interaction, which by itself cannot be completely reproduced in order to obtain corresponding research data.

It is important to state here that the Norwegian ECP is not a set of practices found in Norwegian conversations solely. The identified features can, and indeed should, be found in other ethnic discourses. Yet, the entire configuration of features is ethnic-specific for verbal interactions in a given language. As would be expected, the Norwegian ECP overlaps greatly with the Swedish, and possibly also the Danish variety, whereas a comparison with the Polish ECP would show considerable differences.

### 3.4 Conclusions. Frames and practices of Norwegian ECP

In the previous chapter, frame has been defined as a "complex communicative pattern of elements that is grounded in values predominant in the given society and mediated through practices of everyday interaction" (chapter 2.4). Chapter 2 also provides suggestions as to which frames are constitutive of Norwegian oral communication. In the present chapter, a working definition of practices has been suggested as

*"interactional phenomena that serve a specific conversational function and originate from frames for interaction".*

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Practices realise various functions in the course of conversation, and can thus be classified into strategic (conversational goals), rhetorical (interpersonal goals), lexico-semantic and topical. The two latter types of practices do not perform a specific function in the course of conversation other than conveying meaning, yet this process is also influenced by cultural values and was hence seen as vital for the suggested ECP.

Culture provides many different frames. Only some of them can be directly linked to the linguistic side of the communication process. Due to practical reasons, this study deals only with those frames that have been found to have impact on interaction. In order not to equate culture with interaction, cultural frames are represented in the ECP by interactional maxims. Each maxim is realised in the reality of conversation by practices from various levels. Such conceptualisation (presented on figure 2 below) stresses the complementarity of the ethnic model to the universal conversation theory, represented by Gricean maxims.

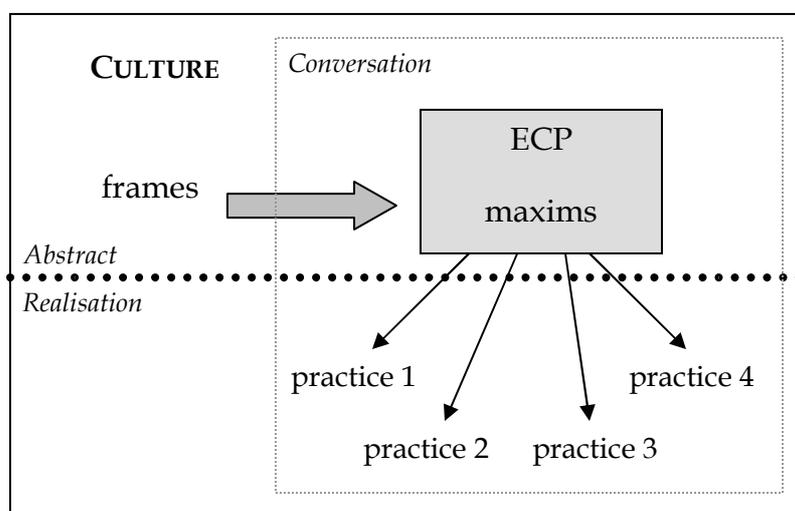


Fig. 2. The structure of ECP and its relation to cultural frames and communicative practices.

**HOW TO BE NORWEGIAN IN TALK?**

**1. Be equal.** The frame of equality has been found pervasive in the descriptions of Norwegian culture, and can be linked to the relatively small power distance factor observed in the social contacts.

- a) do not use honorifics, and address your conversation partner with *du* 'you-SG';
- b) do not adopt excessive politeness strategies, in particular not positive politeness;
- c) quickly establish the common ground in the dialogue, using for example your interactant's geographical ancestry as a starting point;
- d) maintain the common ground by frequent use of involvement tokens (*ikke sant*) and backchannel signals.

**2. Be harmonious.** Harmony, realized as focus on similarities and conflict avoidance, is a feature characteristic of the Nordic cultures in general.

- a) avoid topics that might provoke conflict (personal topics, expressing opinions);
- b) use frequent hedges while expressing your opinions (litotes);
- c) do not impose on your conversational partner: do not interrupt he/she by any means (not even for collaborative completion), leave questions open by means of or-inquiry.

**3. Be predictable.** Maintaining predictability in talk is a vital factor in harmonious interaction. At the same time, this maxim can be connected to the frame of distance.

- a) prepare your conversational partner for what is going to come by use of projecting devices, such as curled *ja, ja/nei*-answers to information inquiries and others;

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- b) prepare your conversational partner for an upcoming question about personal matters (connected to maintaining harmony in the interaction).

**4. Be distanced and uninvolved.** The maxim of remaining indifferent is naturally connected to the frame of distance and the frame of harmony.

- a) do not interrupt your conversational partner (cf. 2c);
- b) stick to the topic, and make sure it is properly 'closed' before you open a new one;

**5. Be Norwegian.** This maxim may be to some extent perceived as a hyper-maxim, that is an all-pervasive rule that is superior to the four previously mentioned, as all of them comprise what is identified as "Norwegian way of being" in conversation. Thus, being Norwegian is achieved by both the form and the content of talk.

- a) do not explain culture-specific lexemes (names of dishes, geographical places, famous people, institutions) to your conversational partner;
- b) use your dialect.

As can be observed in the model, some of the suggested maxims are as if inherent in others, which is the case, for instance of the maxim of predictability, which in a way is a subcategory of the harmony maxim. However, on the level of discourse, maintaining harmony can be realised through both rhetorical practices (as e.g. litotes mitigating opinions) and strategic practices (as signalling the upcoming turn). The maxim of predictability refers to strategic practices of maintaining conversational coherence as one aspect of preserving harmony. In chapters 5-8, the practices realising the suggested maxims will be identified and analysed on the study data.

## **Chapter 4.**

### **Data collection**

#### **4.1 The design of the study**

The collected data consists of real life conversations between Polish advanced speakers of Norwegian as a second language (N2) and their Norwegian interlocutors. The focus of the study is qualitative and based on transcripts of whole conversations. The total number of recorded conversations is thirteen, with the average length of the conversation being half an hour. The recordings were taken in various places, including participants' workplace, home and a quiet café. When it was possible and when the participants agreed, a video recording of the conversation was also made (10 out of 13). In order to make the data collection as unobtrusive as possible, the researcher did not participate in the conversations, although in some cases she was able to listen to the talk. The participants were asked to talk about any topic they might find interesting, for at least twenty minutes<sup>49</sup>. The upper time limit was not stated in advance. In order to prevent the conversation from breaking up, a list of possible topics has been given to the participants, including latest news, pastimes, travelling, culture etc. After the conversation had been recorded, an interview was conducted with the Polish

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<sup>49</sup> Since in the dissertation, data also from the Oslo Corpus of Oral Norwegian (NoTa korpuset) are used, the assumption has been made, following the suggestions of scholars responsible for the NoTa-corpus. It was argued that the interlocutors produce more natural speech when they feel more relaxed, well into the talk and hence suggested a minimum 20 minutes long conversation duration of 20 minutes (Janne Bondi Johannessen and Kristin Hagen, private conversation).

participant, while the Norwegian interlocutor filled in a questionnaire (see appendices 2 and 3, respectively). Both were asked to reflect on Norwegian oral communication and the challenges it poses for N2-learners, and to comment on the previously recorded conversation.

## 4.2 The participants

The sampling conducted for the study is purposive and to a certain degree convenience dependent. Data representativity was not among the most decisive factors for acquiring participants for the study, as the prime concern was to recruit participants whose Norwegian skills would enable them to conduct a conversation<sup>50</sup>. Latest statistics show that the number of Polish immigrants in Norway now exceeds 30 000 (as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008). At the same time, reports from Bergen University and Folkeuniversitetet, the institutions responsible for conducting *Norskprøve for voksne innvandrere 3* (Test in Norwegian for adult immigrants, level B1) show that only 132 and 128 Polish immigrants took the test in 2006 and 2007, respectively. Over the same time span, 101 Polish immigrants have been registered for *Norskprøve for voksne innvandrere 2* (Test in Norwegian for adult immigrants, level A2)<sup>51</sup>. Although this data does not allow for generalisations concerning Norwegian skills of the Polish immigrants, it may be assumed that the majority of them do not speak Norwegian to a degree sufficient to maintain a conversation. Additionally, approximately 70% of Polish immigrants in Norway are men<sup>52</sup>, whereas among the participants of the study the proportions are twelve women to one man.

The data for the study have been collected in one of the biggest cities in Norway. All the participants have learned Norwe-

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<sup>50</sup> cf. also chapter 1.2.5 on the notion of representativity in qualitative studies.

<sup>51</sup> Data available from <http://www.fu.no/default.asp?avd=231&nyh=6702> [acquired 12.03.2009]

<sup>52</sup> Data by Central Statistics Office (Statistisk Sentralbyrå): <http://www.ssb.no/emner/02/01/10/innvbef/tab-2008-04-29-05.html>, [acquired 03.03.2009]

gian as adults (over 20 years of age), and all except one after moving to Norway. Their Norwegian skills vary greatly, as does the frequency of their using the language in everyday life. All of them work and use Norwegian at least to some extent at work. In addition, 8 of the participants predominantly, if not exclusively, use Norwegian in their homes, due to either being married or having been married to Norwegians. The participants were free to choose their interlocutors. Hence, in the data three types of relations can be found: the Polish participants conversed with their spouses/partners (4 conversations), with their colleagues (4) or with people previously unknown to them (5).

Code	Place of recording	Participants
1U	meeting room in Eli's workplace	Grażyna and Eli, both between 50 and 60 years of age. They do not know each other. Eli works at the university.
3F	at work	Hanna (25) and Per (45) work together in a company hiring Polish workforce, mainly for construction companies. Sometimes they meet in their spare time.
4F	at work	Greta og Frøydis, both between 35 and 40 years of age, are doctors working in the same division of a hospital. Lately they have developed a "kind of friendship", as Greta put it, which involves meeting outside work as well.
5U	in a cafe	Joanna (30) and Tone (25) do not know each other. They have a common Polish friend.
6M	at home	Teresa and Anders, both around 30 years of age, are married.
7U	at Agnieszka's home	Agnieszka (30) and Gina (25) do not know each other. Gina is a student, and Agnieszka is married to a Norwegian, currently looking for a job.

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8M	in Renata's workplace, on a Saturday	Renata and Andreas, both around 30 years of age, are engaged. They met in Germany, and German is their first language at home.
9F	in Vidar's office (in a school)	Regina (55) and Vidar (40) know each other from work, but they do not meet on daily basis. Vidar is the supervisor of all Polish teachers in the local municipality ( <i>kommune</i> ), so he is also Regina's supervisor.
10M	at home	Dorota and Morten, both around 30 years of age, are married.
11U	meeting room in Gunhild's workplace	Julia (30) and Gunhild (30) do not know each other. Gunhild works at the university, and Julia is a student.
12M	at home	Helena and Stig, both around 30 years of age, are married.
13U	in a cafe	Magda (25) and Randi (30) do not know each other. Randi works at the university, and Magda is self-employed.
14F	at work	Tomasz and Eirik, both around 30 years of age, are colleagues.

Table 2. Description of the collected conversational data. The symbols U, F and M stand for relation between interactants, either being unknown to each other (U), friends or colleagues (F) and couples (M). All names have been changed, including geographical places that might have revealed the participants' identity. The given age is an estimate.

Some preliminary findings as to the impact of relations between participants on the conversation are presented in part 4.4.

The level of competence in Norwegian of the Polish participants, as well as their length of stay in Norway varies greatly. Most of them are around 30 years of age, but two participants are older, their age being approximately 55 years. They moved to Norway and learned Norwegian when they were approximately 40. Apart from these two exceptions, all partici-

pants moved to Norway in their (late) twenties. The following two tables present data on both Polish and Norwegian participants.

Code	The polish participants - biographical information
1U	Grażyna (55). In Norway for 13 years. She was married to a Norwegian, who had been her reason to come here. She has attended several Norwegian courses, but now her use of Norwegian is mainly work-related (she is divorced). She works as an interpreter, even though she does not rate her Norwegian competence very high (5/10).
3F	Hanna (25) In Norway for 3 years. She came here to work as an au-pair for a Norwegian family, and learned Norwegian there. She has passed <i>Bergenstesten</i> , and rates her Norwegian competence for 6 or 7/10. Her boyfriend is Polish, so she speaks Polish at home and Norwegian at work.
4F	Greta (40) In Norway for 14 years, works as a doctor. She has attended a Norwegian course for doctors at University of Oslo, and passed <i>Bergenstesten</i> . However, she uses Norwegian mainly at work, at home she speaks Polish with her daughter. In her own eyes she makes a lot of mistakes when speaking Norwegian.
5U	Joanna (30) In Norway for 2 years. She moved to Norway to join her husband who had already been working there for three years. At first she studied Norwegian on her own, and afterwards attended courses for 1,5 year. She herself says she has little opportunity to talk to Norwegian, as she works primarily with Polish.

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6M	<p>Teresa (30)            In Norway for 3 years. She is married to a Norwegian and is currently on a maternity leave from her work in an insurance company. She attended Norwegian classes and rates her competence as “more than advanced”. She speaks mainly Norwegian in her everyday life.</p>
7U	<p>Agnieszka (30)            In Norway for 3 years. She is married to a Norwegian, whom she met when he studied in Poland. She knew some basic Norwegian before she came, and took some evening classes. She says the language is not a problem for her anymore, but can hear her own mistakes, especially when it comes to intonation. She is currently looking for a job.</p>
8M	<p>Renata (30)            In Norway for 1 year. She came to Norway to join her boyfriend, whom she met in Germany. She learned Norwegian on her own (she is a fluent speaker of German, English and Russian besides), and uses it mainly at work . At home she speaks mainly German.</p>
9F	<p>Regina (55)            In Norway for almost 16 years. She is married to a Norwegian. She attended Norwegian courses for many years, and passed <i>Bergenstesten</i>. Currently she is a ‘mother tongue teacher’ (<i>morsmåslærer</i>) in primary schools in the municipality. She rates her Norwegian competence for 81%.</p>
10M	<p>Dorota (30)            In Norway for 3 years, married to a Norwegian. She met her husband in Poland and came to Norway with only basic knowledge of language. She works in her education. In her opinion, her Norwegian is not satisfactory, as “one still can hear I am not native”.</p>

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11U	<p>Julia (30)</p> <p>In Norway for 4 years. Julia wanted to study Norwegian in Poland, but failed the entrance exams to the university. After completing her bachelor studies in English she came to Norway to work as an au-pair and learn Norwegian. She is now married to a Norwegian and works as a Norwegian teacher, besides finishing her master's studies. She has also finished an interpreter course, yet she claims her vocabulary is limited.</p>
12M	<p>Helena (30)</p> <p>In Norway for 1 year. Helena is the only participant of the study who has studied Norwegian in Poland. She started learning Norwegian 3,5 years before she met her Norwegian husband and moved to Norway. She claims she is very comfortable using Norwegian, both at work and at home.</p>
13U	<p>Magda (25)</p> <p>In Norway for 4 years, she came together with her boyfriend and daughter. She works (cleaning, sewing) and attends Norwegian evening classes. Her Norwegian is in her opinion understandable, but very incorrect grammatically.</p>
14F	<p>Tomasz (30)</p> <p>In Norway for 8 years. He came to work at a construction site. He married a Norwegian, and completed studies. He learned Norwegian on courses and on his own, and it is now good enough to pass for a local, he says.</p>

Table 3. Description of the Polish participants, obtained in interviews conducted after the recordings.

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Code	The Norwegian participants – dialect information
1U	Eli speaks a variety of <i>trøndersk</i> dialect.
3F	Per comes from Northern Norway and speaks a clear <i>finnmark</i> -dialect.
4F	Frøydis comes from the region of <i>Trøndelag</i> , but she does not speak any distinct dialect, and her spoken language can be described as close to moderate <i>bokmål</i> .
5U	Tone comes from <i>Østlandet</i> and speaks a variety of <i>østnorsk</i> dialect.
6M	Anders speaks a variety of <i>østnorsk</i> dialect.
7U	Gina comes from <i>Østlandet</i> and speaks the dialect from her home town.
8M	Andreas comes from the region of <i>Trøndelag</i> , but does not speak a distinct dialect. His language use can be described as close to moderate <i>bokmål</i> .
9F	Vidar speaks a variety of <i>trøndersk</i> dialect.
10M	Morten speaks a variety of <i>trøndersk</i> dialect.
11U	Gunhild speaks a variety of <i>vestnorsk</i> dialect.
12M	Stig comes from Northern Norway and speaks a variety of <i>nordnorsk</i> dialect.
13U	Randi comes from Oslo and uses the variety that can be described as close to conservative <i>bokmål</i> .
14F	Eirik speaks a variety of <i>trøndersk</i> dialect.

Tab.4. Information about dialects used by the Norwegian participants. The vagueness of descriptions is intentional, as revealing the participants' home towns could have threaten their anonymity.

### 4.3 The collected data

#### 4.3.1 Naturalness of the spoken data

As already mentioned, one of the most basic premises for CA-researchers was to base their analysis on authentic language data. Several scholars have addressed the question of data authenticity, yet in a somewhat ambiguous way. Clark (1996) mentions 'recordlessness' in his list of conversational features and by this term he means that the participants' actions leave no record or artefact. Such a precondition would disqualify all CA-studies, the great majority of which are based on audio- and/or video-recordings of conversations. Wilson (1989) claims that the label NATURAL DATA is tantamount to "talk which has not been elicited using experimental methods" (ibid.:19). What he means by experimental methods, and where the border between "experimental" and "natural" data collection is, he does not specify. Wilson's data examples used to illustrate his theses are acquired from recordings made among Belfast adolescents. It is however not entirely clear why this setting of language use should serve as a model for all naturally occurring conversations rather than conversations occurring in any other personal, non-informal setting.

In an attempt to obtaining natural data, Warren (2006: 35-36) surreptitiously recorded conversations in public places. Being aware of ethical consideration that such a method may raise, he says:

"In all of the discourse recorded, the writer was never less than one metre from the participants, and very often even closer (...) The proximity of the writer meant that the participants were well aware that a stranger was within hearing distance of what they were saying, and therefore everything they said was said in the knowledge that it could be overheard. (...) After each recording was completed, the permission of the participants was sought to use the data for the purposes of research."

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While Warren claims that surreptitious recordings are the most natural data a researcher can obtain, he admits that the boundary between 'natural' and 'contrived' data is somewhat blurred (Warren, 2006: 34). As examples of contrived data he suggests acting out role plays such as »boy meets girl: he wishes to take her off from a party« and »Jim talks politics to his girlfriend's father: their views and backgrounds differ«. Other examples include recording conversations in which participants are asked to recollect a film, or asking a couple to record every conversation that they intend to have for more than 30 minutes<sup>53</sup>. Yet it is not unthinkable that there are other types of conversational data that lie between surreptitious and fully contrived recording, which Warren does not address.

The postulate of naturalness of conversational data is motivated by the reasoning that if the study is supposed to analyse language as a social practice, the data cannot be contrived outside the social reality it normally occurs in, that is – in an experimental setting. This in turn is due to the OBSERVER'S PARADOX, a term introduced to humanities by William Labov (1972)<sup>54</sup>, which refers to the situation when the presence of an observer contaminates the event and influences its participants. However, there are several issues connected with collecting naturally occurring data, primarily of an ethical and legal character, that need to be addressed. Recording conversations without the permission of the subjects is considered to be unethical by many. Several countries, including Norway, have adopted a law forbidding collecting any type of personal data, both directly and indirectly identifiable, without the given person's permission. Audio recordings are considered to be indirectly identifiable personal data<sup>55</sup>. Moreover, cooperation between the researcher and the informant can greatly contribute to the understanding of "what is happening in the conversation" (Scollon&Scollon, 2000; Cameron, 2001). A scholar can for example discuss his or her interpretation of the interaction with its

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<sup>53</sup> For references of the quoted studies, see Warren, 2006: 27-28

<sup>54</sup> The phenomenon has been earlier described in physics by, among others, Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg, as OBSERVER EFFECT.

<sup>55</sup> All information available on <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/>

participants, and in this way validate claims about a given phenomena. Cameron (2001) addresses the issue of naturalness of data in the following way:

“Arguments about what is and is not ‘natural’ raise complicated issues. I do not think anyone has shown convincingly that the talking research subjects do in a lab is a different thing in every respect from their ‘normal’ talk. Conversely, it is widely acknowledged that the act of recording talk (...) has the potential to affect participants’ behaviour and make the talk something different from what it would have been otherwise. All talk is shaped by the context in which it is produced, and where talk is being observed and recorded that becomes part of the context. It could be argued that the lab is in itself a social setting, and ‘taking part in a research project’ is a recognizable social activity, just like ‘chatting with friends’.” (Cameron, 2001:20)

Following Cameron’s reasoning, one might claim that if a socially recognised activity of ‘chatting with friends’ and a different activity of ‘taking part in a research project’ exist, there might also exist a mixed activity of ‘chatting with friends for research purposes’. In the dialogical theory such an activity would be called a hybrid activity type (Thomassen, 2005).

Within second language acquisition (henceforth SLA) studies, the dominating type of data is elicited data. Wagner (1998) claims that such data originates from socially empty situations: “(...) by designing elicitation tasks, SLA creates the artificial collectivity of non-accountable members, of guinea pigs, whose interaction is described” (Wagner, 1998: 109). What Wagner does not seem to acknowledge is that data do not necessarily have to be either NATURAL (i.e. good) or CONTRIVED (i.e. bad). It is rather a continuum on which various levels of naturalness can be found.

### 4.3.2 Semi-elicited data

Possibly as a result of the common trends in conversation study (see Warren, 2006: 13-14, 251), there is also a noticeable focus on studying institutionalised discourse within the Nordic interethnic conversation field. Conducted studies include analysis of workplace discourse (in a hospital and in a private company, Andersson&Nelson, 2005), interviews in employment agencies (Sundberg, 2005) and between clerks and non-native clients (Svennevig, 2002, 2004). Kurhila (2003) includes both what she calls institutional encounters (a university office dealing with Finnish as a second language courses, the reception desk of a hotel, information desk in a bus station) and everyday conversations (between two friends). Similarly, Brouwer *et al.* (2004) include both telephone conversations at work and "daily life conversations" into their corpus. Brouwer (2004) is a study of solely private everyday conversations between Dutch and Danish native-speakers in Danish. However, she does not mention how the recordings have been made and the participating non-native speakers selected, and neither do Svennevig (2002, 2004) and Kurhila (2003). Particularly when it comes to institutionalised encounters with SL-users, it would be interesting to know how the data have been collected. One might namely fall into the trap of recording situations typical for second language learners - for example in an office where they come to consult their teacher. Hence, one would be recording them in a situation when their awareness of not being competent language users is very high. Alternatively, one can follow them and record what they are saying, as Andersson and Nelson (2005) did, which does however exclude obtaining an unobtrusive recording. One possible solution to this problem is to collect semi-elicited data, as found in Mazeland&Zaman-Zadeh (2004), Mori (2004) or Carroll (2004). With this kind of data one has to take certain precautions. It is however unusual to find statements such as the following in studies using semi-elicited data:

“Our data are semi-elicited. The talk we recorded was not ‘naturally occurring’. Although the participants had local control over turn-taking and the topical and sequential organization of the talk, the exchange itself was arranged for research purposes. Almost all of the reservations that should be held against the use of elicited data apply to ours too.” (Mazeland&Zaman-Zadeh, 2004: 135)

This reluctance to reflect on the type of collected data may result from the fact that semi-elicited data is often considered less valid than naturally occurring data. Yet recording non-native speakers in their natural environments is problematic, as they have to be selected beforehand. It seems that sacrificing greater generalisability brings several benefits, both of methodological and ethical nature. One has to be aware that studies based on semi-elicited data cannot answer some questions, yet this is not reason enough to totally disqualify this kind of data from being valid objects of study.

#### **4.3.3 The features of semi-elicited data**

In order to show what the characteristic features of semi-elicited data are, I will focus on instances of talk which raise some doubt as to whether they would occur in a conversation not conducted for the purpose of any study. I will give examples of the conversations’ beginnings and endings, as well as explicit comments on the situation of recording. I will not check my data against all variables suggested by Warren (2006), as it is not my intention to prove that my data is wholly natural. My point is that there exist different levels of naturalness and that semi-elicited data does not have to be disqualified as a valid study object.

In the interviews both the Polish and the Norwegian participants said that the conversations were in their opinion normal everyday conversations. A few of them admitted that the presence of the camera made them nervous, but said that they felt more relaxed after some time. One person said that he spoke less than he normally would in order to let his wife show her language

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skills. The interviews show that the participants of the study did not perceive the conversation they had as a specific type of speech activity. Yet in the data instances of talk appear that attract attention as being rather specific for this type of speech activity and unnatural in a normal conversation. Those instances are labelled TRANSITION PASSAGES, since they serve the function of delimiting the meta-activity of discussing the premises of the conversation from the conversation itself. In most cases, the transition passages appear at the beginning and end of the talk, which is not surprising. However, in some cases the transition passages are embedded in the talk itself, constituting a side sequence. The following analysis serves the purpose of discussing the features and functions of the identified transition passages.

### 4.3.3.1 Transition passages commencing the talk

The transition passages commencing the talk include joking about the situation of recording (extract 1 and 2), negotiating the premises of the talk (extract 3) and topic negotiation (extract 4 and 5)

(1/14F)<sup>56</sup>

- 1.Tomasz:jeg har lurt bestandig på din seksual legning  
**I have always wondered about your sexual orientation**
- 2.Eirik:min seksuelle legning ja . mhm  
**my sexual orientation yes . hmm**
- 3.T: hehe [nei hehe  
**hehe no hehe**
- 4.E: [føler du at det kan jeg snakke om nå  
**do you think I can talk about it now**
5. når det står et opptak  
**when it is being recorded**
- 6.T: hehe ja  
**hehe yes**
- 7.E: hehe . ja  
**hehe . yes**
- 8.T: nei: kos går det  
**no: how are you doing**

In extract (1), the participants have just been informed about possible conversational topics. The extract begins with a joke,

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<sup>56</sup> On the transcription symbols and note on the translation method see Appendix 1.

using the situation of the recording as the background: Tomasz ironically suggests the topic of sexual orientation, knowing that such a suggestion would not be considered serious in the given situation. Eirik decides to “play along” and continues in the same way (line 2). This collaborative joke leads to a relaxing of the atmosphere through making fun of the situation of recording, which might have been stressful for both parties. Only then does Tomasz commence the conversation in a proper way, using the standard Norwegian conversational opening move, namely inquiry about one’s well-being (line 8). Extract (2) illustrates a similar situation:

(2/4F)

- 1.Greta:hvor lenge skal vi snakke  
**how long are we supposed to talk**
- 2.Paulina:tjue minutter omtr[ent  
**around twenty minutes**
- 3.G: [tjue minutter  
**twenty minutes**
4. [oh
- 5.P: [ja . men hvis det ikke går så går det ikke  
**yes . but if it doesn't work it doesn't work**
6. jeg skal ikke være så veldig-  
**I won't be so very-**
- 7.Frøydis: ((coughs))
8. går det an å snakke jobb og sånne ting  
**is it possible to talk work and such things**
9. og[så  
**as well**
- 10.P: [alt sammen  
**everything**
- 11.F: alt sam[men  
**everything**
- 12.P: [alt skal anonymiseres så hvis dere  
**everything shall be made anonymous so if you**
13. snakker om tredje personer så går det også helt  
**talk about third persons it will also be**
14. fint  
**fine**
- 15.F: [hehe
- 16.G: [hehe det kunne vi snakket flere [timer  
**hehe we could talk for hours about that**
- 17.F: [hehehe

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(24 seconds of talk omitted)

- 18.G: fordi jeg egentlig ikke jeg vet ikke hvor  
**because I actually don't I don't know where**
19. ligger hytta di  
**your cabin is**
- 20.F: den ligger opp på Kvitfjell  
**it is up in Kvitfjell**

Extract (2) begins with my explanation of the recording and the ethical considerations involved in it. My suggestion of talking about third parties (lines 12-13) brings out a humorous association for both conversational partners, and results in Greta's joke about gossiping about one's colleagues and common friends (line 16), which Frøydis receives with a laughter sequence (line 17). However, after some additional explanation from my side, both partners continue with a topic they have already embarked upon before the recording commenced. Similarly in extract (3), the topic suggestion is preceded by some preliminary discussion about the situation of recording (lines 1-15).

(3/3F)

- 1.Hanna: ja . me[:n  
**yes . bu:t**
- 2.Per: [ja . det blir jo gøy  
**yes . it will be fun**
- 3.H: ja det blir det  
**yes it will be**
- 4.P: ja  
**yes**
- 5.H: hva skal vi snakke om . vi fikk vi  
**what are going to talk about . we got we**
- 6.P: nei: . vi skal finne på det sjølv  
**no: . we have to invent it ourselves**
- 7.H: ok
- 8.P: skal bare snakke som vanlig som  
**we're just supposed to talk as usual**
9. som vi bruker å gjøre  
**like we're used to**
- 10.H: ok . med bare [foran kamera  
**ok . but just in front of a camera**
- 11.P: [heh
12. foran kamera  
**in front of a camera**

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- 13.H: ja  
**yes**
- 14.P: ja . slurpe litt kaffe og [. ja  
**yes . sip coffee a bit and . yes**
- 15.H: [ja  
**yes**
- 16.P: men forresten du og Radek ja  
**but by the way you and Radek yes**
17. når skal vi finne på det  
**when shall we do it**
- 18.H: når skal vi: (1.4) [mener du den k-  
**when shall we: . you mean this r-**
- 19.P: [du og Radek  
**you and Radek**
- 20.H: kongekrabbe o:g  
**king crabs and**
- 21.P: ja komme og spise  
**yes come and eat**
- 22.H: okei (.8) nei du må bare bestemme når  
**ok . no you just have to decide when**
22. det passer deg .best  
**it suits you best**

Interestingly enough, in line 16 Per proposes the topic for conversation with *forresten* 'by the way', which is normally applied to introduce a topical change. This fact might be interpreted as to mean that in Per's view, lines 1-15 constitute a topic of their own, which requires an additional move to be changed. Per suggests a topic that both parties have talked about before, though the realisation of this fact takes Hanna some time, as seen in line 18. In line 22 she accepts the topic by continuing it herself.

In several other cases, however, the topical introduction requires additional conversational moves, such as a request for the other party's consent (extract 4) or a longer negotiation, with several topical rejections (extract 5).

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(4/8M)

1. Renata: hva skal vi snakke om  
**what shall we talk about**
2. Andreas: nei det er ikke (--) hva som [kommer  
**no it is not (--) whatever comes up**
3. Paulina: [dere kan  
**you can**
4. planlegge noe  
**plan something**
5. A: vi kan planlegge noe  
**we can plan something**
6. R: ne:: . men skal vi fortelle om det  
**ne:: . but shall we tell about it**
7. A: hva da  
**what**
8. R: Månedl<sup>57</sup>  
**Monthl**
9. A: Månedl . ja . du må fortelle hva vi skal  
**Monthl . yes . you have to say what we shall**
10. snakke om du planlegger  
**talk about you're making plans**
11. R: °hochzeit° /de/  
**°wedding°**
12. A: ja (1s) på norsk (1s)  
**yes (1s) in Norwegian (1s)**
13. R: ja: . aber wollen wir das oder nicht /de/  
**ye:s . but do we want it or not**
14. A: jo: vi driver jo og planlegger det er planlegging  
**ye:s we are after all making plans this is making plans**
15. så vi kan jo bare snakke litt løst om det  
**so we can just talk a bit loose about it**
16. R: men . eh  
**but . eh**

Extract (4) begins (lines 1-5) with a discussion of topic possibilities. It seems that Renata has a specific topic on her mind (line 6), but does not want to reveal it. However, Andreas does not cooperate and asks direct questions as to what Renata means (line 7, 9-10). Even when she reveals what she was thinking of as a possible topic (line 11), he does not seem to understand why she has doubts about such a topic (line 14-15): using *jo* appeals to Renata's

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<sup>57</sup> The date has been made anonymous.

common sense and serves to downplay her doubts. Subsequent talk, which is not rendered here, reveals why Renata was unsure as to whether the topic of wedding would be an appropriate one – their marriage plans are secret and nobody except themselves and Renata’s sister know about their plans. Yet in the following talk Renata decides that since the conversation will be made anonymous, they can engage in discussion of their marriage plans; they even add that finally they have an opportunity to discuss the matter in peace.

The use of German in extract (4) requires some additional comment. As previously mentioned, Renata and Andreas met in Germany, and mainly use German at home. Andreas is a German teacher, and Renata considers herself to be a better speaker of German than of Norwegian (in the questionnaire). However, she uses Norwegian at work and often in daily life (she sings in a choir). Renata and Andreas sometimes talk Norwegian at home, especially when Renata feels the need for extra practice. In the course of the interaction some German expressions appear, especially in Renata’s speech. They also use German diminutive endings *-i* on their names<sup>58</sup>.

The following extract is also taken from a conversation between life partners:

(5/10M)

- 1.Dorota: yyy: . tju tju tju tju  
 2.Paulina: kanskje dere har noe å diskutere eller noe sånn  
                   **maybe you have something to discuss**  
 3.D: nei delte er faktisk ikke så mye som skjedde i dag  
                   **no not so much happened today actually**  
 4.Morten: [nei ikke-  
                   **no not-**  
 5.D: heh altså vi har snakket så kjempemye i går  
                   **heh well we have talked so much yesterday**  
 6. vi hadde en stor fest i går=  
                   **we had a big party yesterday**  
 7.P: =ja  
                   **yes**

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<sup>58</sup> Although the question of using given names in Norwegian conversations is an interesting one, it has not been addressed in this study, due to practical reasons.

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- 8.D: så vi hadde brukt alle våre . ressurser (1s)  
**so we had used all our . resources .**
9. språkressurser . hører du at jeg mistet stemme  
**language resources . do you hear that I lost my voice**
10. ((coughs))
- 11.M: mhm
- 12.D: jeg ble litt sånn (1s)  
**I am a bit like .**
13. nei ja: (2s) hva skal vi snakke om (1s)  
**noyeah: (2s) what shall we talk about (1s)**
14. det gikk ganske fort å legge Trond heheh  
**it went quite fast putting Trond to bed heheh**
- 15.M: heheh
16. ja (-- ) (1s)  
**yes (-- ) .**
- 17.D: nei vi kan snakke om ferie i Portugal kanskje .  
**no we can talk about holidays in Portugal maybe**  
(continues)

Extract (5) provides another example of a topic negotiation. In line 2, the researcher suggests a general topic for the participants, which is immediately rejected by both Dorota (line 3) and Morten (line 4). The rejection is followed by Dorota's partly humorous explanation as to why they have "run out" of topics to discuss (lines 5-9). In line 9 Dorota suggests the topic of her sore throat, yet this topic is not actively taken up by Morten, neither in line 11, nor in line 12, when the long pause after Dorota's statement is a potential transition point. This leads to Dorota's abandoning the suggestion (*nei ja*: in line 13) and opening up for new suggestions (the statement and following pause in line 13). As Morten does not seem to want to take the floor, she puts forward another proposition, namely putting their son to bed (line 14). However, she ends the suggestion with laughter, which is supposed to mark that this statement is not to be taken as a serious proposition of a conversation topic. Morten acknowledges this understanding of the suggestion and agrees by laughing in line 15. In the following line, Morten "opens up" again, using *ja* and a longer pause to signal that the floor is free to be taken, upon which Dany takes the floor by suggesting the topic of planning holidays (line 17). Her suggestion is weakened by the use of hedges such as *kanskje*

'maybe' and *vi kan* 'we can' instead of *la oss snakke* 'let's talk'. The suggestion is also followed by a pause, in which her conversational partner can reject the topic if he wishes to. In the following talk, which is not rendered here, Morten picks up the topic and develops it, yet the topic is abandoned rather quickly in favour of discussing daily life problems.

Summing up, the presented beginnings prove that even elicited data conversations follow the rules of natural conversations when it comes to introducing topics: they are suggested, negotiated and rejected conversationally through various conversational moves, such as for instance laughter sequences. Some of the presented extracts show explicit or implicit reference to the situation of recording, yet in a way any context of situation would evoke. The extracts analyzed here can hence serve as examples for practices employed for developing the topical flow of the dialogue. As shown in the extract, the activity of discussing the premises of the conversation is often separated from the further talk by transition tokens, such as response particles (extract 1 and 5, discussed in chapter 7) or *forresten* 'by the way' (extract 3). Moreover, topic transition is often accompanied by long pauses and several weak participation signals, serving as retardations. The issue of retardation and various practices for its realisation is analyzed and discussed in chapter 6.

#### 4.3.3.2 Transition passages terminating the conversations

Similarly, analyzing the conversations' ends, one can identify transition passages including meta-discussions concerned with the premises of the activity. In a few cases, the dialogue comes to an end as a result of both parties' consent, as in extract (6).

(6/3F)

1.Hanna:jo (1s) okei skal vi fortsette å jobbe (1.1)

**well . ok shall we continue working .**

2.Per: ja jeg tror vi har brukt opp tida våres nå=

**yes I think we've used our time now**

3.H:

=ja

**yes**

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4. det tror jeg også (1s)  
**I think so too .**
- 5.P: •har vi brukt lang tid nå?• (.5)  
**•have we used a lot of time now?• .**
6. kanskje vi bare har brukt ti minutt?  
**maybe we have only used ten minutes?**
- 7.H: kanskje jeg vet ikke .  
**maybe I don't know .**

In line 1, Hanna suggests going back to work, after a pause of one second, which makes her taking the floor legitimate. In line 2 Per consents to her suggestion and gives an additional reason to finish the talk, namely the suggested timescale of the conversation. This shows the participant's orientation towards, and awareness of, the situation of recording, strengthened by his straightforward question directed at the researcher sitting in the other room (line 5). The orientation towards the suggested timescale is also visible in extract (7).

- (7/4F)
- 1.Frøydis:men det er litt sånn . styr . med å få det  
**but it is a bit . problem . to make it**
2. til å gå på plass .  
**work as it should**
- 3.Greta: uhm
- 4.F: så da (.9) oi oi oi oi . jeg kjenner jeg er  
**so . oi oi oi oi . I feel I am**
5. trøtt jeg  
**tired I**
- 6.G: ja har vi snakka mer enn tjue minutt=  
**yes have we talked for more than twenty minutes**
- 7.Paulina: =ja:  
**ye:s**
8. mer enn tjue  
**more than twenty**

In this extract, Greta displays her awareness of the suggested time span by asking the researcher a direct question about the length of their conversation (line 6). This is however done only after the other party produced a statement that was interpreted as a hint to finish the conversation (lines 4-5). In several other extracts,

however, one of the participants terminates the conversation by openly directing herself at the researcher and asking about the time span, as in extract (8):

(8/10M)

- 1.Dorota: ja ja blir det hun da blir hun sikkert veldig trøtt  
**yes yes it she will surely be very tired then**
- 2.Morten: uh hh (4.5)
- 3.D: .hh hh snakker vi halv time nå eller  
**.hh hh have we talked for half an hour now or**
- 4.M: [nei  
**no**
- 5.Paulina: [ja sikkert  
**yes surely**

In line 3, Dorota delivers a statement that commences a closing sequence. Yet, the interactional environment in which the statement appears justifies this conversational move – it appears after an excessively long pause of 4,5 seconds, in which neither of the participants decided to take the floor. This pause has hence been interpreted by Dorota as a possibility to terminate the conversation. In the subsequent talk which has not been rendered here, Dorota gives additional reason for her move, namely a sore throat.

In some dialogues, however, neither of the conversational partners decided to end the dialogue, even though one of them is giving rather obvious hints that he is not interested in continuing the conversation, as in the following extract:

(9/6M)

- 1.Anders: ja (2s) yes yes . hvilke butikker for eksempel  
**yes . yes yes . which shops for example will**
2. er det snakk om . i det nye kjøpesenteret=  
**there be . in the new shopping mall**
- 3.Teresa: =nei  
**no**
4. husker ikke dyrebutikk husker jeg  
**I don't remember expensive/pets<sup>59</sup> shop I**

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<sup>59</sup> Tove's utterance is ambiguous, as lexemes *dyr* 'animal' and *dyr* 'expensive' are homonyms.

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5. bare det var der (1s)  
**only remember was there .**
- 6.A: dyr?  
**expensive/pet?**
- 7.T: dyre no /pl/ . dyrbutikk (.4)  
**expensive/pets yes . pet shop .**
- 8.A: åh ja (1.2) naja  
**oh . well well**
- 9.T: husker ikke noe mer (.8)  
**don't remember anything more .**
- 10.A nei  
**no**
- 11.T: sånn stygg bygning vettu .  
**you know such an ugly building .**
- 12.A: .ja (.4)  
**.yes .**
- 13.T: metal  
**metal**
- 14.A: metall ja (.3)  
**metal yes .**
- 15.T: enkelt  
**simple**
- 16.A: ja (--) (.8) heh he (1s)  
**yes (--) . heh he .**
- 17.T: forferdelig  
**terrible**
- 18.A: ja ja (2s) ja ja fint vær det=  
**yes yes . yes yes nice weather**
- 19.T: =ha ha ha ha
- 20.Paulina: vi kan godt avslutte dere har jo snakket i tjue-  
**we can finish you have talked for twenty**
21. mer enn tjue minutter så det går fint  
**more than twenty minutes after all so it's ok**
- 22.T: tak? no dobra /pl/ skal vi avslutte?  
**yes? ok shall we finish?**
- 23.A: ja det kan vi  
**yes we can do that**

In line 1, Anders continues the topic of a new shopping centre, suggested in the previous talk by Teresa. However, he does not show interest in developing the topic further. His minimal responses and frequent pauses can rather be seen as a subtle hint that he is not interested in continuing (lines 8, 10, 12, 14, 16). Teresa does not seem either to understand or to comply with the hint, so she

adds new contributions to the topic (line 11, 13, 15). In line 18, then, Anders makes a rather awkward move, namely shifts the topic to weather. This move is immediately understood and acknowledged by Teresa (laughter sequence in line 19) as a humorous way of displaying lack of topics, and hence, end of the conversation. It is achieved by means of introducing a superficial topic, typical for conversations between not well-acquainted partners, to a dialogue between spouses. Also the researcher takes the hint and suggests the termination of recording in lines 20-21, giving additional reasons to do so. This move is followed by consent from both partners (line 22 and 23).

Summing up, it seems that the participants of the study are aware of being recorded towards the end of conversation, as they orient themselves to time span and their "obligation" to talk for a certain amount of time. Again, the situation varies from conversation to conversation.

#### 4.3.3.3 Transition passages medially in conversations.

In a few cases, the participants also refer explicitly to the setting of conversation in its middle, through joking about being recorded and their behaviour:

(10/8M)

1. Andreas: for det er jo billigere enn Norge med det er  
**cause it is after all cheaper than Norway with**
  2. forskjellig hvordan man gjør det sjølv (1s) .hh  
**different how you do it yourself . .hh**
  3. (jeg får råd) til den da (.4) må snakke litt Reni  
**(I have money) for it then . you have to talk more Reni**
  4. jeg snakker altfor mye normalt er det motsatt .  
**I talk too much normally it's the other way around .**
  5. Renata: heh
  6. A: du snakker hele tida  
**you talk all the time**
- (lines omitted)
7. A: ja nei det var jo hyggelig å komme hit og  
**yes no it was really nice to come here and**
  8. kunne snakke og .  
**be able to talk and .**

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- 9.R: heh
- 10.A: nei da kunne jeg eventuelt ha tenkt meg og dratt  
**no well I could for example imagine travelling**
11. til Mexico  
**to Mexico**
- (lines omitted)
- 12.R: ja  
**yes**
- 13.A: ja det var veldig praktisk for vi kan planlegge  
**yes it is very practical because we can make plans**
14. har vi endelig tid til å snakke sammen  
**we have finally time to talk to each other**
- 15.R: ja  
**yes**
- 16.A: så blir vi . har vi dokumen[tert det  
**so we'll be . we have documented it**
- 17.R: [ja men du må ikke  
**yes but you mustn't**
18. snakke så mye me- . med denne .  
**talk so much t- . to this .**
- 19.A: [kamera  
**camera**
- 20.R: [du skal snakke med meg  
**you're supposed to talk to me**
- 21.A: deg ser jeg hver dag (1s) det blir kjedelig for meg .  
**I see you every day . it is boring for me .**
22. her jeg ser jo kamera  
**here I see a camera**
- 23.R: ja men  
**yes but**
- 25.A: nye mennesker . nye horisonter nei ok nå tuller jeg  
**new people . new horizons no ok I was making fun now**
- 26.R: heh

In extract (10), references to the setting of the dialogue are made several times. In line 3, Andreas rather abruptly makes a metalinguistic comment on his excessive talking, which normally is rather uncommon (lines 4 and 6). In lines 7-8, Andreas makes a humorous comment on what a good idea it was to do the recording, since they finally have time to discuss the wedding plans. After that, he immediately goes back to the previous topic (line 10). Such topical excursions are not very common in the studied data, and would rather be qualified as an individual style of the couple

than a trait typical for Norwegian conversation (further discussions of the topic development can be found in chapters 6 and 7). In the following talk, Andreas once again refers to the possibilities the setting of the conversation made available for them, namely its documentation (line 15). Renata's reply in line 16, on the other hand, is a criticism of Andreas' tendency to talk to the camera, which is not supposed to happen in this setting (line 19). This comment elicits a new joke from Andreas, comparing the situation of being recorded on video to becoming famous. All those comments show that the participants feel the presence of the recording device and are aware of the partial artificiality of the situation. Yet, they often treat the setting not as the threat to the conversation, but simply as a part of context the conversation takes place in.

#### 4.4 The negotiation of social roles

Although the limited data material obtained for the study does not allow for basing findings on quantitative analysis, one can observe a certain tendency in commencing the conversation.

Code	Extracts no.	Beginning
1U	--	NS: "your name is Grażyna" > NNS: provides personal info
5U	--	NS: "do you feel good in Norway?"
7U	--	NS: "how long have you lived in Norway?"
11U	--	NS: "your name is Julia... do you study here?"
13U	--	NNS: "she is hungry all the time" about her daughter > NS: "how old is she?"
3F	3	NS: suggests a previously discussed topic
4F	2	NS: suggests a previously discussed topic
9F	--	NNS: suggests a topic > N: consents
14F	1	NNS: "how is it going?"

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6M	--	NNS: "what shall we talk about"
8M	4	NNS: "what shall we talk about"
10M	5	NNS: "what shall we talk about"
12M	--	NNS: "we shall talk about ..." > NS: consents

Table 5. Beginnings of the conversations, grouped according to the type of relation between the interactants. The symbol '>' stands for a consequent action.

As we can see, 4 out of 5 conversations between participants previously unknown to each other commence in a similar fashion – namely by the native speakers' inquiry about their partners' reason to be in Norway. It is not surprising, as it would be not justified to pursue a specific topic without getting to know one another. It is neither unexpected that the native speaker is the first one to take the floor, being somewhat more privileged in the conversation. Such a fact may prove that the relation between the speakers is asymmetrical in the beginning of the interaction, and that the non-native speakers are actually labelled as 'non-native speakers'. This is however not the case when it comes to relations between acquaintances and partners. Basing on the data, one could propose a hypothesis that conversations between acquaintances commence by one party's suggestion of a topic and the other party's consent. The relation seems symmetrical, as both parties may start the dialogue if they wish to. Conversations between partners on the other commences with an open negotiation of the topic, with a greater frequency of topic rejection than in case of conversations between acquaintances. It seems therefore justified to claim that interactions in partner relationship allow for more frequent face-threatening and conversationally risky behaviours of their participants than in case of relationships between acquaintances.

Comparing the conversation beginnings with their endings suggests that the social roles have been negotiated throughout the conversation and are no longer as clear-cut as initially.

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Code	Extracts no.	Ending
1U	--	NS: "how long should we be talking?"
5U	--	The researcher interrupts
7U	--	The researcher interrupts after a longer pause
11U	--	NNS: "how long have we talked?"
13U	--	The researcher interrupts
3F	6	NS and NNS agree to finish > NS: "how long have we talked?"
4F	7	NS: hints that she wants to finish > NNS: "how long have we talked?"
9F	--	Telephone call interrupts
14F	--	NS and NNS agree to finish and leave the room
6M	9	NS hints on finishing > The researcher interrupts
8M	--	The researcher interrupts
10M	8	NNS: "have we talked enough?" after a pause
12M	--	The researcher interrupts after a longer pause

Table 6. Endings of the conversations, grouped according to the type of relation between the interactants. The symbol '>' stands consequent action.

There are fewer visible correlations between the conversations' end and social role or relationship between speakers, possibly also because of the intervention of the researcher. However, the finish of the conversation is commonly agreed on only in case of the group conversations between acquaintances (2 out of 4).

## 4.5 Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to present these parts of the obtained data which constitute transition sequences between the activity of establishing the premises of the conversation and the conversation itself. As such, the transition passages seem untypical for non-elicited conversations. Most of the examples show orientation towards the setting of the conversation, such as presence of the recording devices and the suggested time span of the activity. At the same time, this fact proves the naturalness of the data, as in natural conversation "immediate context takes preference over non-contextually immediate topics" (Wilson, 1989: 36). Moreover, the transition passages are incorporated in the talk and handled conversationally as any other topic would be, by means of standard conversational procedures. An example of such procedure was suggested in section 4.3.1, when the pattern for suggesting topics is discovered. This proves that semi-elicited data can also be useful for studying conversational procedures and do not necessarily have to be labelled as contrived data obtained through experimental methods. It seems therefore that the degree of naturalness of the data is a continuum, and not a dichotomy. Additionally, possible consequences of different relations between the participants of the study are suggested. It can be claimed that the relationship affects the way in which the conversation is commenced. In conversations between strangers (U), there is a prevalence of instances when the native speaker introduces the topic of their conversational partner's personal matters. Participants acquainted with one another (F) typically agreed on the topic of the conversation beforehand, whereas life partners (M) embarked on a topic negotiation strategy. However, these tendencies were not as visible towards the end of the conversations. The following chapters provide further discussion concerning the impact of the type of relation between interactants on the practices found in the data.

## Chapter 5.

### Asymmetry in interethnic talk

Ferguson (1975) put forward a hypothesis that speech communities have “conventional varieties of simplified speech”, applied when addressing people with limited understanding of the language. To the latter group belong children (‘baby talk’), hearing-impaired people and foreigners (‘foreigner talk’, *ibid.*). English foreigner talk identified in his experiment includes omissions (of articles, tense markers, conjunctions), expansions (reduplication, additional vowels, equipping the imperative with a pronoun) and replacements (analytic paraphrases of possessive constructions, pronoun replacement, lexical substitutions). Ferguson’s experiment elicited results depicting the manner of speaking to non-native speakers who are very limited in their second language command<sup>60</sup>. However, it seems plausible to believe that when a given interaction is perceived as interethnic, the native speaker might adjust his/her language use to what is seen as appropriate for the interlocutor<sup>61</sup>. As a result, the conversation might become to some extent unbalanced, with one party having access only to a certain range of verbal behaviours (Drew, 1991). Such asymmetry is often taken for granted, as seen in this opening description of a paper dealing with NS-NNS conversations:

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<sup>60</sup> “They [your interlocutors] may have heard some English before but they are not really able to understand it or speak it”, an extract of the elicitation instructions for the experiment (Ferguson, *ibid.*: 12).

<sup>61</sup> An interesting paper on the topic of semantically simplified language is Levý (1998) who analyses the language of translators as a certain “style” of its own, characterized among other by frequent use of hyperonyms instead of corresponding hyponyms.

“Utgangspunktet er at den ene parten kommuniserer på et andrespråk og dermed har begrensede språklige ferdigheter, både når det gjelder å produsere og å forstå ytringer på norsk.” (Svennevig, 2002: 111).

-----  
The basis [for the conversation] is that one party has to communicate in a second language and cope with limited command of the language, both when it comes to producing and understanding utterances in Norwegian.

Svennevig’s data is possibly such that it justifies the use of such a clear-cut assumption regarding the status of interactions’ participants. In general, however, the asymmetry cannot be solely attributed to social or institutional background; it is oriented to, negotiated and rejected in the course of interaction. Linell& Luckmann (1991) refer to these forms of asymmetry as “imported or imposed from outside” and “dialogue produced”, respectively.

It is important to distinguish asymmetry from dominance and problematic talk. The term asymmetry in general refers to “various sorts of inequivalences in dialogue process” (ibid.: 4), such as differences in entitlement to develop topics and to take a particular perspective on a given topic, varying access to knowledge of different kinds etc. Asymmetry on the local level<sup>62</sup> is present in all conversational contexts, even those traditionally perceived as relatively symmetrical (ibid.: 8). Dominance, on the other hand, is rather a global characteristic of discourse that can be studied in several dimensions, as for example amount of talk, interactional dominance, strategic features and semantic dominance (Linell, 1990, after Sandvik, 1993). Asymmetries on the local level may, but do not necessarily need to lead to problems and misunderstandings in communication (Drew, 1991); indeed, some asymmetries play an important role in developing the course of interaction (Linell&Luckmann, 1991).

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<sup>62</sup> A local asymmetry is tied to adjacency pairs such as question-answer, promise-acceptance etc.

As previously stated, the design of the study conducted for this dissertation is such that it reinforces the perception of the interactions as interethnic, and as such, asymmetrical as regards the participants' command of the language of the conversation. However, the following analysis shows how the imbalance is handled and negotiated by means of certain conversational moves. The analysis focuses on the easily observable differences in applying conversational practices by native (NS) and non-native (NNS) participants of the study. The presupposition underlying this analysis is that certain practices are available only to NSs, whereas others are more frequently, or solely adopted by NNSs. Consequently, the observed differences reflect the non-native participants' status in the conversation and their perception as (in)competent speakers of Norwegian.

### **5.1 NSS' communicative practices**

In the study data, three practices have been identified as belonging to the domain of the native speakers:

- complimenting language command (4 instances);
- defining the world (15 instances);
- other-correction (5 instances).

In the literature of the subject, the focus has been placed on instances of correcting (cf. Kurhila, 2003). The two former practices, on the other hand, have received considerably less attention in interethnic conversation studies. This section will therefore focus on instances of complimenting the interlocutor's language command and of explaining specific concepts as belonging to the "hypodermic" ethnic discourse, parallel to the actual conversation.

### 5.1.1 Paying compliments

Paying a compliment about one's language command is naturally a strategy reserved exclusively for native speakers in an interethnic conversation<sup>63</sup>. It claims "ownership of the language" and normative knowledge about what is proper Norwegian (cf. Nishizaka, 1995). As previously stated (chapter 3, cf. Aambø, 2005), NNSs might treat this conversational move as a domination strategy, especially when produced in the very beginning of a conversation, before the partner could actually form a justified opinion on that matter.

In the study data, compliments occur four times, three times in interactions between participants previously unknown to one another and once in interaction between life partners. The compliment on the other party's language command invariably comes in the middle or towards the end of the conversation. It may be followed (extract 11) or preceded (extract 12) by questions concerning the person's opinion about Norwegian as a second language or inquiry about their learning methods.

(11/1U)

- 1.Eli:→ men du har jo lært deg å snakke norsk godt da  
**but you have jo learned to speak good Norwegian**
2. hadde du studert noe norsk på forhånd før  
**have you studied Norwegian before**
3. du kom hit [før du gifta deg  
**you came here before you got married**
- 4.Grażyna: [nei nei he he=  
**no no he he**
- 5.E: =hvordan  
**how**
6. snakket mannen din polsk da?  
**did your husband speak Polish then?**
- 7.G: nei  
**no**
- 8.E: nei? [det var interessant hvordan kommuniserte  
**no? it's interesting how did you communicate**

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<sup>63</sup> In a lingua franca conversation, however, one can imagine a NNS complimenting another NNS's command of language. Yet, the validity of such utterance is by no means evident.



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(12/7U)

- 1.Agnieszka:mhm . språket . sluttet å være barriere .6  
**mhm . the language . is no longer a barrier**
2. (så det)  
**(so)**
- 3.Gina: ja . ja synes du det var vanskelig å lære  
**yes . yes do you think it was difficult to learn**
4. norsk (.6)  
**Norwegian .**
- 5.A: ((kl)) (1s) ne-i (1s) ikke så veldig  
**((cl)) . no-o . not so very difficult**
6. vanskelig å lære men-e: .5 men-e: . den tida .  
**to learn but-e . but-e . the time .**
7. når jeg lærte meg norsken var vanskelig  
**when I was learning Norwegian was difficult**
- 8.G: mhm
- 9.A: for da: forsto jeg ingenting  
**as I didn't understand anything**
10. o:g kunne ikke (1s) si noe [o:g kunne ikke  
**then and I couldn't . say anything and I could not**
- 11.G: [ja  
**yes**
- 12.A: være seg selv på grunn av det [så:  
**be myself because of it so:**
- 13.G: [uhm
- 14.A: det var bare vanskelig tida men-e (.7) ja  
**it was just difficult time but . yes**
- 15.G: ja  
**yes**
- 16.A: [alle må-  
**all hav-**
- 17.G: [nei gikk på noen skole for å lære eller har du  
**no did you attend a course to learn or did you**
18. bare lært det deg sjølv eller . av mannen din  
**just learn by yourself or . from your husband**
- 19.A: hh da jeg flyttet til Norge så ble jeg gravid  
**hh when I moved to Norway I got pregnant**
20. med en gang  
**immediately**
- (lines omitted)
- 21.G: → ja for jeg synes jo du snakker veldig godt norsk  
**yes because I think that you speak very good Norwegian**

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- 22.A: jeg gjør det?=  
**I do?**
- 23.G: =ja  
**yes**
- 24.A: jeg må snakke me:d sviger[foreldre heh he he he  
**I have to talk to my parents in law heh he he he**
- 25.G: [he he he he he he
26. → ja jeg har ikke noe problem å forstå deg=  
**yes I don't have any problem to understand you**
- 27.A: =nei  
**no**
28. [det var bra  
**it is good**
- 29.G: [he he he uhm
- 30.A: .ja

Language command is suggested as a topic by the non-native participant herself, Agnieszka (line 1). It is then pursued by Gina and developed into an inquiry about Agnieszka's learning methods (line 17-18). After Agnieszka's detailed explanation, Gina compliments her on her language skills (line 21), which is responded to with a tag question expressing doubt, and followed by a joking explanation (line 24). This explanation presented in a joking mood has the function of reducing the asymmetry and possibly also changing the topic. However, Gina chooses to continue the compliment in line 26 to reinforce her opinion on Agnieszka's command of Norwegian. This time, Agnieszka accepts the compliment with a statement of value (line 28), after which a topic closure procedure follows. The method of handling the compliment by laughing and changing the topic is also exhibited in the following conversation<sup>65</sup>:

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<sup>65</sup> The conversation has not been included in the corpus as it is the researcher herself who recorded her own conversations with her friends. The pauses are approximate.

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(13)

- 1.Jola: jeg vil deg ikke noe vondt? . kan ma si sånt? (.5)  
**I don't want to harm you? . can you say so? .**
2. nei (3s) he he [he  
**no . he he he**
- 3.Reidar: [jeg vil ikke noe vondt  
**I don't want any harm**
- 4.J: men hvor skal du (1.5) hvor skal du sette inn  
**but where could you . where could you put**
5. deg da . eller deg (2s)  
**'you' in . or 'you' .**
- 6.R: e: jeg vil deg ikke noe vondt  
**e: I don't want to harm you**
- 7.J: ja men da sa jeg det (1s)  
**yes but I said so .**
- 8.R: → selvfølgelig . du har jo bedre norsk enn meg  
**of course . you have better Norwegian than me**
- 9.J: he he he (2s) ikke tull nå (1s)  
**he he he (2s) don't joke with me .**
- 10.R: → nei det er bare sannheten . såm er det bare (1s)  
**no it is just the truth . it's just like that**
11. så det er ikke noe jeg får gjort med det  
**so there is nothing I can do about it**
- 12.J: nei . men hva: hva sa mora di?  
**no . but what what did your mother say?**

The compliment comes in line 8, after a repair initiated by the NNS, in which it turns out that the repair was not necessary. The compliment is immediately rejected by a laughter sequence and a joking plea that follows (*ikke tull nå* 'don't joke with me'), upon which Reidar reinforces the compliment by claiming Jola's command of Norwegian to be some kind of a higher force he cannot fight with (lines 10-11). This time she offers acceptance in an idiomatic Norwegian way (using negative token *nei*) and re-tables the topic previously interrupted.

Polish speakers of Norwegian seem to exhibit a tendency to downplay or openly reject compliments, whereas their Norwegian interlocutors expect acceptance. A possible explanation to this state of facts is that the Polish pattern of reacting to acts of praise is different from the Norwegian model; however, this hypothesis

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requires verification on a larger data corpus<sup>66</sup>. In the two following extracts, one can also observe NNS's rejection of the compliment, which results in the NS's producing a reinforcement.

(14/5U)

1. Joanna: a vi: av og til leier . fra butikken  
**yes we sometimes borrow . from the shop**
2. Tone: ja  
**yes**
3. J: og for meg det er ingen problem hvis jeg  
**and for me it's no problem if I can**
4. for eksempel kan se på norsk film  
**for example watch Norwegian film**
5. T: mm
6. J: fordi jeg lærer også . språk [. men mannen min  
**because I also learn . language . but my husband**
7. T: [ja  
**yes**
8. J: liker ikke å se . på norske [tekster  
**doesn't like to watch . Norwegian subtitles**
9. T: [he he he og ja  
**he he he oh yes**
10. jeg skjønner jo det at .  
**I understand it that .**
11. J: ja . hvis for eksempel han må leser boka (--)  
**yes . if for example he has reads the book**
12. [nei: jeg har ikke jeg foretrekker bedre polsk boka  
**no: I don't have I prefer Polish book better**
13. T: [he he he
14. ja  
**yes**
15. J: jeg liker lese norske boka og se på tv fordi .  
**I like read Norwegian book and watch tv because .**
16. jeg vil lære mere norsk  
**I want to learn more Norwegian**

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<sup>66</sup> Interestingly, it has been found (Zimmermann, 2004) that the most common reaction to compliment in Russian was acceptance. Conversely, Germans predominantly expressed appreciation (of the type 'Thank you, I'm glad you like it'), whereas speakers of English offered additional reasons for the state of being (e.g. 'That's thanks to my wife'). Ronowicz (1995) claims that the standard Polish reaction to compliments is an acceptance in case of women (as in Russian), and a downplay or rejection in case of men. His claims, however, are not based on any verifiable research data.

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- 17.T: → du er veldig flink til å snakke norsk og . du er det .  
**you are very good in Norwegian . you are .**
18. fordi det er trøbbel med med Jan for eksempel  
**because it is a problem with Jan for example**
19. han . han snakker godt. men han skjønner ikke  
**he . he speaks good. but he does not understand**
20. meg tror jeg . så godt=  
**me I think . so well**
- 21.J: =åh ja  
**oh yes**
- 22.T: så det jeg føler . av og til at han ikke skjønner meg  
**so what I feel . sometimes that he doesn't understand me**
- 23.J: mhm
- 24.T: men-e: (--) jo godt men-e: . og så tror jeg så tror jeg  
**but-e (--) well but-e . and so I think I think**
25. at kanskje (det er det jeg føler) sjølv når jeg reiser  
**that maybe (it is what I feel) myself when I travel**
26. til England. og så snakker engelsk der . så føler jeg  
**to England. and speak English there . so I feel**
27. meg he:lt idiotisk [nei: he he he  
**completely stupid no: he he he like**
28. [sånn (kan det jo være) med ham og da .  
**(that it can be) with him as well.**
- 29.J: [he he he
- 30.T: (--) ikke takler språket da blir redd for  
**(--) not master the language and is afraid**
31. å snakke norsk jeg veit ikke .  
**to speak Norwegian I don't know**
- 32.J: kanskje  
**maybe**
- 33.T: jeg synes jo at han er flink jeg  
**but I do think he is good**

In extract (14), the compliment is offered by Tone after Joanna has presented herself as an eager learner of Norwegian. This might be the reason for Joanna's downplaying of the compliment, as her statements in lines 3-4 and 15-16 could be interpreted as fishing for compliment. Joanna's negation is not verbal, yet a reaction might be assumed to have been produced, as immediately after the

compliment in line 17 Tone produces its reinforcement<sup>67</sup>. What is more, the reinforcement is followed by a justification of the opinion, being a comparison to their common acquaintance, Jan (lines 18-19, 22). Yet, the situation is still perceived as slightly unbalanced by Tone who continues to compare the situation of Joanna and Jan to her own situation when in a foreign country (lines 24-28), and suggests an understanding of how they feel (lines 30-31). Tone's conversational moves serve to reinstate balance and symmetry in the conversation, as well as to show alignment with her interlocutor (see chapter 7 for a discussion of this feature of Norwegian discourse).

Extract (15) on the other hand, in an example of a situation when the asymmetry created by the NS's compliment leads to instances of domination.

(15/8M)

- 1.Andreas: ja men vi må snakke mer norsk (.4)  
**yes but we have to speak more Norwegian .**
- 2.Renata: ja men-e: jeg er sånn begrensa . [jeg føler meg ikke bra  
**yes but it is as if limited . I don't feel good**
- 3.A: [mm
4. nei du føler deg underlegen (1.4)  
**no you feel inferior .**
- 5.R: ja: og hva hva?  
**yes and what what?**
- 6.A: nei det vet jeg ikke=  
**no I don't know**
- 7.R: =was bringt das?  
**what about it? /de/**
8. ne: men at du må lære (2s) nei jeg synes bare  
**no but that you have to learn . no I just**
9. det er artig å se det hvor (.8) og så hvor  
**think it's funny to see how . how**
10. flink man kan bli da hvis man .jobber (1.2)  
**good one can get when one . works .**

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<sup>67</sup> There is no video recording of this conversation available to verify if Janne actually did produce a non-verbal sign that could have been interpreted as a rejection.

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- 11.R:    jobber med språk                    ja 1.2  
           **work with language                yes .**
- 12.A:    mhm .7                    de:t er flere nå 1.6  
     mhm .                        **there is more now .**
13.        jeg har snakket både me:d (1s) folk flere her  
           **I have talked both to: . many people here**
14.        som jeg har snakket med og som er flinke (.3)  
           **that I have talked to who are good .**
- (talk omitted, a story of a person who has learned  
 good Norwegian)
- 15.A: → så det synes jeg er imponerende . du er og flink (.8)  
           **so I think it's impressive . you are also good**
- 16.R:    nei jeg føler meg ikke sånn  
           **no I don't feel this way**
- 17.A:    jo . men du er som alle andre som er jo du er litt lat  
           **yes . but you are like all the others who are you are**
18.        så du vil heller snakke tysk med meg  
           **a bit lazy so you prefer to speak German with me**

The compliment appears in a long stretch of talk concerning Andreas' view on learning languages in general. Throughout the whole conversation with Renata he makes several explicit comments about her using (or not using) Norwegian. The extract above also starts with an encouragement to speak Norwegian (line 1), which brings out a complaint from Renata that speaking Norwegian limits her (line 2). Andreas shows alignment by reformulating her statement in line 4, and in the same time provides the lexeme *underlegen* 'inferior', which he assumes she was looking for. His move may be interpreted as a correction, and indeed Renata reacts in a confrontational way, yet not knowing the proper expression in Norwegian, she turns to German. This move is an attempt to regain symmetrical position in the conversation by using a *lingua franca* that does not favour any of the speakers. Renata's reaction results in a mitigating move by Andreas (line 6), who in the subsequent turns provide a long narrative about their common acquaintance whom he considers to be a good example of a foreigner learning proper Norwegian (lines 7ff). The compliment is then produced in line 15, by comparing Renata to the previously mentioned person. In line 16, Renata immediately rejects the compliment, and Andreas reinforces it (*jo* in line 17) and gives

additional reason for her command of Norwegian not being as good as it could have (*litt lat* 'a little lazy' in line 17). The topic continues for several more rounds, exhibiting several examples of domination attempts, most of them being grounded in Renata's not being a NS of Norwegian.

The conversation labelled 8M is a special case in the studied data corpus. It is very dynamic when it comes to topical development, and least oriented towards maintaining harmony and cooperation of all the collected dialogues. It displays a great deal of emotional involvement, as inferred among others from the use of hypocoristic address forms. In the conversation there are several attempts on both sides to gain dominance over the other party. It seems however that the relationship between the participants of the dialogue, namely that of being life partners, allows for behaviours that are less restricted by face-protecting strategies, and therefore more prone to also exhibiting verbal signs of conflict or disagreement. Nonetheless, other conversations of spouses recorded for the study prove to be neither as emotionally involved nor as competitive as 8M, a fact that makes it rather exceptional in the conversation corpus (the disagreement sequences from 8M are analysed thoroughly in chapter 8.6).

As the extracts analysed above show, paying the NNSs a compliment on their language command is in most cases accompanied by giving reasons for such an opinion and other moves which function as means of re-establishing symmetry in the conversation. The NNSs' reactions to the complement include laughing and expressing weak disagreement, sometimes followed by an explanation. Not surprisingly, the compliments occur in conversations where participants did not previously know each other (with the exception of 8M), which substantiates the claim put forward in chapter 4 that this group of conversations is perceived as interethnic for the very reason that the ethnic origins are the only variable about their interlocutors known to the Norwegian participants prior to the interaction.

### 5.1.2 Defining the world

Another practice reserved for the native speakers is explaining the meaning of certain culture-specific expressions, such as idioms, names of places and people, as well as political organisations and institutions. One can assume that certain expressions and names belong to the common knowledge for all members of a given culture (constituting the aforementioned CULTURAL LEXICON, see chapter 3). While applying culture-specific expressions in interethnic talk, the NNS may follow three different paths:

1. Assume common knowledge. Such strategy displays the treatment of the conversational partner as an equal, but may endanger mutual understanding, if the NNS does not admit that she is not familiar with a given concept. On the other hand, it gives the NNS a chance to deduce the meaning of the concept from its context, and hence treats him/her as a competent and secure language user who will signal problems with understanding in case they appear.
2. Do not assume common knowledge; explain immediately. This strategy stands in direct opposition to the one discussed above. By using it, NNS prevent a comprehension problem from appearing, yet in the same time display their conversational partners' assumed inability to manage problematic issues themselves. On the other hand, immediate clarification of a possibly difficult expression does not highlight the problem as much as explicit inquiry and need not be oriented to by NNSs in the course of interaction, which is the case in the next strategy.
3. Check to confirm common knowledge; ask or attempt to deduce if the concept is understood. Using this strategy, the NS is explicitly focusing on the concept, which often leads to developing a side sequence in order to establish mutual comprehension.

Similarly, there exists a domain of shared knowledge between acquaintances and friends regarding their life experiences, common friends and so on. Expressions belonging either to the

cultural lexicon or based on the common experiences of interactants are delivered in talk without the introduction required while providing new information.

### 5.1.2.1 Geographical places

Geographical places constitute a vital part of the communal lexicon, and appear in conversations fairly often. Extracts (16) and (17) provide instances of referring to geographical places with the assumption that they are known to the interlocutor.

- (16/14F)
- 1.Tomasz: det var fint hotell da (.2)  
**it was a nice hotel then .**
- 2.Eirik: ja hvor var det hen? .  
**yes where was it? .**
- 3.T: → St.Olavs gård (.6)  
**St.Olavs gård .**
- 4.E: åh ja . [(--)  
**oh yes (--)**
- 5.T: [vet du hvor det er?=  
**do you know where it is?**
- 6.E: =ja ja har  
**yes yes I have**
7. vært der på kurs og  
**been there on a course too**
- 8.T: åh ja (1.2) stort anlegg da .  
**oh yes . big place then .**
- 9.E: ja: det er svært det (1s) det er bra sånn  
**ye:s it is huge it . it is a good**
10. kurshotell egentlig .  
**conference hotel actually**
- 11.T: ja det er sånn kurs- og konferanseho[tell  
**yes it is a course and conference hotel**
- 12.E: [ja ja 1.2  
**yes yes**

In extract 18, the participants are discussing a course Tomasz has recently attended. In line 2, Eirik inquires about the conference venue, and receives a straightforward answer in line 3, followed by a pause, awaiting either confirmation or further inquiry. The confirmation comes in line 4, followed possibly by an explanation, yet by then Tomasz is already explicitly reassuring himself that

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Eirik knows the mentioned place (line 5). Hence, in lines 6-7 Eirik provides an explanation of how he got familiar with the place, upon which some general comments on the topic are delivered (lines 8-12).

Likewise, the speaker in extract (17) refers to a geographical place assuming shared knowledge. In this case, however, the NNS is forced to reveal and handle her lack of knowledge.

(17/4F)

- 1.Greta: fordi jeg egentlig ikke jeg vet ikke hvor  
**because I actually don't I don't know where**
2. ligger hytta di?  
**your cabin is**
- 3.Frøydis:den ligger oppå Kvitfjell . hvis du kjører  
**it is in Kvitfjell . if you drive**
- 4.G: → Kvitfjell?  
**Kvitfjell?**
- 5.F: ja hvis du kjører herifra og så mot Røros  
**yes if you drive from here to Røros**
- 6.G: mhm
- 7.F: og så cirka 3 mil før du kommer til Røros  
**and so about 30 km before Røros**
8. sentrum så ligger ho  
**centre it is there**
- 9.G: mhm

The extract shows the beginning of the conversation, just after the participants have chosen the topic of Frøydis' cabin. In lines 1-2, Greta inquires about the location of the cabin, upon which she receives the name of the place, Kvitfjell, which she is not familiar with<sup>68</sup>. Hence, in line 3 she repeats the name with a rising intonation, which is interpreted by Frøydis as a request for clarification, provided in lines 5 and 7-8. However, in the clarification another geographical name (Røros) is used, again under the assumption that Greta is familiar with it, which seems to be the

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<sup>68</sup> Instances from the NoTa corpus point to Kvitfjell as also belonging to the Norwegian cultural lexicon. However, the place is mentioned five times in two conversations, which does not seem a sufficient ground for drawing definite conclusions.

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case. Undoubtedly, Røros belongs to the Norwegian cultural lexicon, typically associated with copper mines and severe climate (it is one of the coldest regions in Norway).

Such instances of NNSs being treated as a knowledgeable and competent speaker when it comes to general knowledge of Norway are rather scarce in my data material. As the following extracts will show, the strategy of not assuming shared knowledge is more common among NNSs. The following two extracts exemplify the NNSs asking their interlocutors whether they are familiar with the mentioned cities, in both cases well known to all Norwegians.

(18/5U)

1. Tone: → for jeg er oppvokst på det som heter Elverum  
**because I have grown up in a place called Elverum**  
 2. vet ikke har du hørt om det?  
**I don't know if you've heard of it**  
 3. Joanna: mhm  
 4. T: → og der er det en plass som heter Hamar .  
**and there is a place called Hamar .**  
 5. ved siden [av .  
**nearby .**  
 6. J: [mhm  
 7. T: og (vi kan høre) forskjell på de to  
**and (we can hear) the difference between those two**  
 8. J: mhm  
 9. T: men-e: jeg skjønner godt hvis for eksempel du ikke  
**but-e: I can understand if for instance you don't**  
 10. hører forskjell [. men vi som er oppvokst som  
**hear the difference . but we who have grown up who**  
 11. J: [mhm  
 12. T: hører all det je og itte [og så er det (.3) ja  
**hear all that je and itte and so it is . yes**  
 13. J: [he he

Extract (18) deals with the topic of Norwegian dialects and differences between them. In lines 1-2, Tone wants to use her own experience to refer to the dialectal variation in Norway, and offers her home town as an example. Yet, she finds it necessary to confirm Joanna's understanding, and delivers an explicit question about her knowledge of the place. Similarly, Tone does not refer to Hamar directly, but uses an introduction strategy instead: *en plass*

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som heter Hamar (line 4). The pronouns she uses mark a clear boundary between *vi* 'we (=Norwegians)' and *du* 'you<sup>SG</sup> (=a foreigner)'. The pronoun use is discussed below (extracts 21 and 22). Throughout the whole passage Joanna delivers only minimal responses that serve rather as continuers than signals of mutuality. A different strategy is adopted by another NNS, Turid, in the following extract.

(19/7U)

- 1.Gina: jeg synes det regner litt mye i S2 jeg da (.4)  
**I think it rains a bit much in S2 then .**
2. → jeg kommer fra Skien egentlig (.3) vet ikke  
**I come from Skien actually . (I) don't know**
3. om du vet hvor det er (.6)  
**if you know where it is .**
- 4.Agnieszka: det er litt .  
**it is a bit .**
- 5.G: ja det er sør for Oslo [. ja to timer . sør  
**yes it is south of Oslo . yes two hours . south**
- 6.A: [ja ja  
**yes yes**
- 7.G: for Os[lo (.8) så jeg er litt vant med mer  
**of Oslo . so I am a bit used to more .**
- 8.A: [mhm
- 9.G: stabilt (.4) vær da både sommer og . vinteren  
**stable weather then both summer and . winter**
10. egent[lig . litt mer sol og hih (.7)  
**actually . a bit more sun and hih .**
- 11.A: [ja  
**yes**

While discussing the climate in their place of living, Gina justifies her opinion by referring to her home town, Skien, and opens up for a possible clarification by suggesting that Agnieszka might not know where the mentioned place is located. Agnieszka responds by *det er litt*, accompanied by pointing in the air, which suggests that she is familiar with the place, even though somewhat vaguely (line 3). In line 4, Gina delivers a confirmation *ja* and a precise account of Skien's location, using Oslo as a point of reference. Her explanation is received by Agnieszka through repeated acknowledgement tokens in line 5. After the mutual understanding is reinstated, Gina returns to the previous topic.

## 5.1.2.2 Political life

Other concepts belonging to the cultural lexicon concern social life, including familiarity with political parties and institutions.

(20/9F)

- 1.Regina: borgerlig plattform er det fint ord?  
**citizens' platform is it a nice word?**
2. som parti? jeg synes nei abso[lutt nei]>>  
**as party? I don't think so at all no**
- 3.Vidar: [veit ikke .>>  
**don't know .**
- 4.R: >>he he hvis jeg er leder i: em parti  
**he he if I were leader in a party**
- 5.V: >>(--) jeg som er så dårlig i polsk  
**(--) me who is so bad in Polish**
- 6.R: at jeg ville ikke dette ordet nei [. nei  
**I would not [choose] this word no . no**
- 7.V: [nei .  
**no .**
8. → nei nei (.8) jeg vet ikke i Norge har vi  
**no no . I don't know in Norway we have**
9. et parti som heter rødt jeg vet ikke  
**a party called Red I don't know**
10. om det er no mye bedre (.3)  
**if it is so much better .**
- 11.R: rød allianse tenker du?=[ah rødt  
**Red Alliance you think og Red**
- 12.V: =nei [rødt . dem  
**no red . they**
13. har skifta navn nå  
**have changed the name now**
- 14.R: oKEI  
**ok**
- 15.V: dem heter rødt (.6) ikke [mere . rødt  
**they are called Red . not more . Red**
- 16.R: [ah uhm
- 17.V: .ja . så de:t (.3)  
**.ja . so tha:t .**

In this extract, Regina has introduced the topic of political parties in Poland, and puts the focus on the name of the currently ruling party which has been previously translated as *Borgerlig plattform* 'The citizens' platform' (not rendered here). Regina suggests that

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this name is not suitable for a political party. Vidar does not have an opinion on that matter, but offers a comparison to a Norwegian party called *Rødt* 'Red', which in his eyes is no better name than the discussed Polish name. The Norwegian party is introduced to the talk as information assumed unknown to Regina: *i Norge har vi et parti som heter rødt* 'in Norway we have a party called Red' (lines 8-9). Had Vidar been talking to a person whom he considered a knowledgeable member of the culture, he would have probably assumed that the names of political parties belong to the cultural lexicon and as such require no introduction. His turn would then be constructed as for instance: *ja, synes du at rødt er så mye bedre som partinavn?* 'well, do you think that Red is so much better as the name of a party?'. However, Regina's reaction in line 10 shows that she is familiar with the names of Norwegian political parties, as she suggests a different understanding of what Vidar means (*rød allianse*, which turns out to be the party's previous name, lines 12-13). Hence, Regina's turn can be seen as an attempt to discard Vidar's assumption and claiming the role of an equally knowledgeable speaker in the given topic.

### 5.1.2.3 Idioms

Another part of the communal lexicon consists of linguistic expressions, such as proverbs, fixed collocations and idioms. In interethnic conversations, the native participants might assume that the expressions are not known to the non-native speakers. Such an assumption might, but does not have to, result in the NNS explaining the meaning of the used idiom, thus preventing misunderstanding, but at the same time displaying the perception of their interlocutor as a not fully competent speaker.

(21/13U)

- 1.Randi:men de er i nærheten av hverandre?  
**but they live close to each other**
2. [like ved eller  
**just nearby or**
- 3.Magda:[ja: dem dem er vel sammen  
**ye:s they they are probably together**
- 4.R: ja ja  
**yes yes**

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- 5.M: men dem bor i . andre huset eh  
**but they live in different house eh**
- 6.R: → men i Norge så har vi et navn for det kanskje  
**but in Norway so we have a name for it maybe**
7. dere har det i Polen og vi kaller det for  
**you also do in Poland and we call it**
8. særbo (.6) altså et par som er sammen  
**særbo that is a couple that is together**
9. [som er kjæresten  
**that are partners**
- 10.M: [uhm
- 11.R: og kanskje har barn sammen [sånn de bor  
**and maybe have children such they live**
- 12.M: [uhm
- 13.R: → hver for seg så istedenfor å si sambo  
**separately so instead of saying cohabitant**
14. vi [sier samboer så sier særbo .  
**we say cohabitants so we say særbo**
- 15.M: [okei  
**ok**
- 16.R: det er noen folk som gjør det (1.5)  
**there are some people who do that .**
17. kanskje de: holder seg kanskje de er bedre  
**maybe they stay maybe they are better**
18. venner . når de bor hver for seg (.5)  
**friends . when they live separately .**
- 19.M: kanskje . jau kanskje  
**maybe . yeah maybe**

In extract (21), NSs is explaining the expression *særbo*, coined on the pattern of a more common *sambo* and *samboer* 'cohabitation, cohabitant'. Hence *særbo* refers to a couple who are life partners living separately. Randi assumes that Magda is not familiar with this word, since in lines 3 and 5 she depicts that kind of relationship without using the term itself. Consequently, in lines 6ff Randi delivers an explanation of the term, while Magda produces back-channel signals meant as a reassurance for Randi. Randi's explanation highlights her being the knowledgeable participant in the talk. Moreover, her use of pronouns displays the perception of Magda belonging to a different ethnic group: *men i Norge så har vi et navn for det* 'but in Norway we have a name for it' (line 6), *vi sier samboer* 'we say cohabitant' (line 14). The pronoun *vi* used in

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reference to only one participant of the conversation, refers to his/her being a member of a particular social group which the other person does not belong to. Hence, *vi* as used in this extract is an example of an EXCLUSIVE pronoun<sup>69</sup>. It does not necessarily need to refer to ethnic groups, yet in extract (21) the reference is explicitly mentioned by the expression *i Norge* 'in Norway'. A similar pronoun use can be observed in extracts (22).

(22/1U)

- 1.Eli: så: . så kom det mange polakker hit [. som som  
**so: . so a lot of Poles came here . that that**
- 2.Grażyna: [ja  
**yes**
- 3.E: som ble . så å si (1s) ansatt for  
**who got . so to say hired for**
4. → knapper og glansbilder som vi sier e: .  
**'buttons and shiny pictures' as we say e: .**
5. det var sosial [dumping det . og  
**it was social dumping it . and**
- 6.G: [ja  
**yes**
- 7.E: det er jo [grusomt vi kan ikke ha det sånt  
**it is jo terrible we cannot have it this way**
- 8.G: [ja ja  
**yes yes**
9. nei nei  
**no no**

Eli and Grażyna are talking about the situation of emigrants in Norway and the phenomenon of social dumping. In lines 3-4, Eli refers to this phenomenon by using an idiomatic expression *for knapper og glansbilder*, referring to the low wages that many foreigners receive for their work in Norway. The turn is delivered with hesitations markers and pauses, which show that the expression is expected to be problematic. Finally, Eli signals that it

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<sup>69</sup> There exist several languages exhibiting a formal distinction between inclusive and exclusive pronouns. To those languages belong several African and Indian languages, as well as Mandarin and Austronesian languages. None such languages are found in Europe (The World Atlas of Language Structures Online, <http://wals.info/index>)

is an idiom *som vi sier* 'as we say' that may not be fully transparent for non-members of the Norwegian ethnic group. However, she does not produce an explicit clarification of the idiom's meaning, rather focusing on the content of the ongoing talk than on the linguistic side of it.

#### 5.1.2.4 Defining the norms

Another case of depicting oneself as a member of Norwegian culture is stating what is typical (*vanlig*) in Norway, as can be observed in the two following extracts.

(23/5U)

1. Tone: ja sånn er sånn er egentlig nordmenn og hvis  
**yes such are such are actually Norwegians and**
2. vi for eksempel rei- hvis vi flytter fra .  
**if we for instance tra- if we move from .**
3. → det er vanlig at vi flytter hjemmefra når  
**it is normal that we move out from home when**
4. vi er femten seksten år for da skulle vi  
**we're fifteen sixteen years old because then**
5. begynne på en skole  
**we shall start school**
6. Joanna: mhm
7. T: og i Norge så er det jo ikke så mye store plasser  
**and in Norway there are not many big places**
8. så vi må flytte til en by for å gå på skole  
**so we have to move to a city to go to school**
9. J: mhm
10. T: → der er det vanlig at e: . for eksempel de som  
**it is normal that e: . for instance those who**
11. kom fra den plassen jeg kom fra vi var sammen .  
**came from the place I came from we were together**
12. når vi flyttet til den byen  
**when we moved to the city**
13. J: mhm
14. T: så vi var liksom bare det nettverket fra .  
**so we were sort of just this network from .**
15. de som man kjente fra hjembyen liksom  
**those whom you knew from your home town sort of**
16. J: åja  
**oh yes**
17. T: så sånn blir det nesten det samme nå når  
**so such it is almost the same when**

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18. dere kommer til en ny . til et nytt land så  
**you come to a new . to a new country and**
19. er dere fortsatt sammen  
**you are still together**

In this part of the conversation, Tone has asked Joanna whether she has many Norwegian friends. Upon Joanna's decline and explanation that she mainly has contact with other Polish people, Tone provides a justification of the fact by stating that this is also the case for Norwegians moving to different places in Norway, hence reframing the fact that Joanna has not met many Norwegians as a normal, rather than unusual situation. While delivering this justification, Tone embarks on a long explanation, claiming that is it typical in Norway to move away from home to attend a secondary school (lines 2-5), the reason for this being that people live in small places where there are no schools (lines 7-8). By performing this conversational move, Tone displays an assumption that Joanna is not familiar with this Norwegian pattern, and requires an explanation. Joanna's minimal reactions neither verify nor discard this assumption.

(24/8M)

1. Renata: ja okei invitasjonen . [når og .  
**yes ok invitations . when and**
2. Andreas: [invita- invitasjon og  
**invita- invitation and**
3. [lokale  
**venue**
4. R: [hvor mange? . og . skal vi sende per post  
**how many . and . shall we send by post**
5. eller skal vi vente til vi: e treffer folk?=  
**or wait until we meet people?**
6. A: =nei:  
**no:**
7. → sende per post (.3) det er vanlig å sende dem  
**send by post . it is normal to send by post**
8. per post så får du skriftlig [svar  
**so that you get written answer**
9. R: [ja og hva  
**yes and what**
10. gjør vi med overnatting for dem  
**do we do with accommodation for them**

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- 11.A: .hh  
 12.R: skal vi betale også for det=  
**shall we also pay for that**  
 13.A: → =nei det er  
**no it is**  
 14. ikke vanlig Reni 1s det er IKKE vanlig det var  
**not normal Reni . it is NOT normal it wasn't**  
 15. de:t heller ikke når vi dro til Hamar nå .  
**either when we travelled to Hamar now .**  
 16. hvis vi hadde dratt til Sivert sitt bryllup  
**if we had gone to Sivert's wedding**  
 17.R: mm  
 18.A: så måtte vi selvfølgelig ordne det sjølv (.2)  
**so we had to organise it ourselves of course .**  
 19. → det er helt normalt (1.8) er du gal .  
**it is completely normal . are you crazy**  
 20. kan ikke drive og nei nei nei (.4)  
**we cannot just go and no no no .**  
 21.T: naja da kommer mange fra Polen ikke (1s)  
**well then many from Poland won't come .**  
 22.A: nei men da: kanskje du kan ordne noe  
**no but then maybe you could organise some**  
 23. → overnatting for dem da men det er jo ikke  
**accommodation for them then but it is jo not**  
 24. normalt da nå (.6) det er jo ungdomherberge og  
**normal then now . there is jo a hostel also**  
 25. i S1 da (1s) det går an å bestille  
**in S1 then . it is possible to book**  
 26. rom der det koster ikke mye nå (1.2)  
**rooms there it is not expensive .**

Extract (24) is an example of Andreas' use of native knowledge as arguments for performing certain actions in a specific way. In lines 4-5, Renata inquires about the method of inviting guests to their wedding, suggesting two possibilities to choose from<sup>70</sup>. Andreas' reaction is immediate and rather decisive, reinforced after a short pause by a statement referring to the "typical" way of doing it (lines 7-8). Renata's subsequent question about covering the guests' expenses at the wedding (lines 9-10 and 12) is treated as a suggestion to do so and received with even stronger disagreement.

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<sup>70</sup> Notably, Trine uses the pronoun *vi* in the inclusive meaning, referring to her and her interlocutor, thus stressing the commonality.

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In the forthcoming talk, Andreas adopts several practices to convince his partner, using his superior position as the knowledgeable speaker (*det er ikke vanlig* lines 13-14, *det er helt normalt* line 19), appealing to his interlocutor (using a German diminutive name form *Reni*) and referring to their common experiences (lines 14-16). Upon Renata's remark that the Polish guests might not be able to afford the expenses (line 21), Andreas makes an amendment to his position, yet in the same time not resigning from his claim that Renata's suggestion to cover the guests' travel expenses and accommodation is not normal (*det er jo ikke normalt da*, lines 23-24). At the same time, the use of the particle *jo* suggests that his argument is based on common sense thinking and hence obvious to Renata as well.

### 5.1.2.5 Reversed roles

Among the identified explanation sequences, two of them exemplify a reverse situation, that is, the NNS producing an item which turns out to be problematic for the NS.

(25/13U)

1. Magda: veldig ofte og jeg jobber nå med (.3) med  
**very often and I work now on . a bunad? .**
2. bunad? (.4) da må jeg gjøre sånn [(--)  
**and then I have to do so (--)**
3. Randi: [du jobber med?  
**you work on?**
4. M: → bunad . polske bunad ehm (.4) her i Norge du  
**bunad . Polish bunad ehm . here in Norway you**
5. har bunad som nasjonale klær (.3) bunad?  
**have bunad as national clothes . bunad?**
6. R: åh ja BUNAD [ja ja ja . ja  
**oh yes BUNAD yes yes yes . yes**
7. M: [ja og vi har også i Polen  
**yes and we also have in Poland**
8. R: ja  
**yes**
9. M: men ikke det samme typ . ehm (.4) ja som kjole  
**but not the same type . ehm . yes like dress**
10. og og bluse og gor[sett  
**and shirt and corset**

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- 11.R: [ja for det er liksom  
**yes because it is kind of**
12. folkedrakter det liksom [jada  
**national costume kind of jada**
- 13.M: [folkedrakt ja som jeg  
**national costume yes**
14. [jobber med så  
**that I work on so**
- 15.R: [ja . ja?  
**yes . yes?**
16. jeg er snart blir ferdig håper jeg  
**I am done soon I hope**
- 17.R: ja  
**yes**

Extract (25) is an example of a misunderstanding caused by Randi not comprehending the lexeme *bunad* 'traditional Norwegian costume'. In line 1, Magda delivers a turn containing the word *bunad*, marked as a slightly problematic item (by the pause and rising intonation, before continuing with the topic. In line 3, Randi initiates a self-repair sequence, repeating the utterance prior to the difficult item with a rising intonation. In lines 4-5, Magda attempts to explain the notion, yet struggles to find a suitable paraphrase, which results in repeating the lexeme *bunad* several times before suggesting the phrase *nasjonale klær* 'national clothes'. In line 6, Randi marks surprise and displays comprehension by repeating the word and delivering a reduplicated acknowledgement token *ja*. The misunderstanding cannot be attributed to Magda's erroneous pronunciation and subsequent correction, as each time the item is produced in the same way. However, the stretch of talk in which the problem appears, concerns Magda's work as a clothes designer, which might account for Randi not expecting the word *bunad*. This understanding is sustained in lines 11-12, when Randi delivers a paraphrase framed as an understanding check, in which she suggests the word *folkedrakt* to refer to Polish national costume, rather than *bunad* which explicitly refers to Norwegian traditional clothes. The misunderstanding in the following extract can be attributed to an unexpected item appearing in the NNS's talk. A similar situation is exhibited in extract (26).



delivers a laughter sequence and admits she is not familiar with the name. Her laughter sequences is interpreted by Agnieszka as a sign of Gina thinking that it is a place in Poland, which leads to providing explicit information of the place's location in line 5 *det er i Norge* 'it is in Norway'. Gina's turn (lines 6-7) shows that Agnieszka's assumption has been correct; at the same time, it does not provide a confirmation that the understanding has been reinstated. Consequently, Agnieszka delivers an explanation, at first waiting for signs of comprehension from Gina after repeating the name of the place. Upon Gina's lack of positive response, Agnieszka refers to other towns in the vicinity of Skjåk in order to establish mutual understanding, which finally is granted in line 12 as a sudden comprehension token *åh ja* 'oh yes'.

The last excerpt shows that appearing as a speaker familiar with terms from the cultural lexicon is not reserved to NSs only. It can be argued that Skjåk does not belong to the standard knowledge of every Norwegian, and as such would require clarification even in a conversation between native speakers. However, in the NoTa corpus of spoken Norwegian, Skjåk is used twice (though notably in the same conversation) and is invariably delivered as information familiar to the other interlocutor. Yet, the small number of instances does not allow for definite conclusions in that matter.

#### 5.1.2.6 Conclusions

The instances of not assuming culture-specific knowledge appear in four conversations (1U, 5U, 8M, 13U), whereas 7U and 9F exhibit instances of the NNS claiming their position as an independent and knowledgeable speaker in the conversation. Notably, the conversations analysed in this section correspond (with the exception of 9F) to the conversations containing compliments. This fact supports the claim of the perception of those encounters as primarily interethnic.

### 5.1.3 Other-repair

Due to the amount of data concerning the issue of corrections in interethnic conversations (Kurhila, 2003; Plejert, 2004), this section is only a brief remark on the identified instances of the NS correcting the NNS's speech. It has been suggested that in conversations between equals there is a preference for self-repair over other-repair (Schlegloff, 1977, after Kurhila, 2003). These findings have also been confirmed for asymmetrical interactions, including interethnic conversations. Nonetheless, it can be argued that the roles assigned to the participants of a dialogue influence the type of repair strategies found in the data: "(...) it seems that the participants' positions of knowledge do have an impact on the repair sequences. The asymmetry makes particular types of repair possible, but it does not explain why or where it occurs" (Kurhila, *ibid.*: 63). Kurhila's findings for Finnish data suggest that the majority of other-corrections in interethnic conversations are done as outright corrections, rather than inviting the other party to perform a self-repair<sup>71</sup>. This finding is interpreted as NNS' avoiding the risk of displaying NNS' possible inability of executing the self-correction. So, paradoxically, such an outright correction might be perceived as a move preventing the establishment of asymmetry in the conversation. This is especially true in case of the so called *en passant* corrections, delivered without typical markers of dispreferred turn such as pauses, hesitations and delay markers (Pomerantz, 1984, after Lindström, 1999). Such correction is not seen as a disruption in the flow of conversation (Kurhila, *ibid.*) and even though it exposes the NNS's incompetence to a certain extent, it does not mark the corrected utterance as problematic. The correction is provided and the talk is resumed. As a result, the strategy does not open for a negotiation possibility on the side of NNS. Therefore it is mainly applied for corrections within the domain of grammar on which the NS naturally have expertise, and

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<sup>71</sup> A pattern that was found typical for talk between equals (Schlegloff *et al.*, 1977, after Kurhila, 2003)

in which there is in most cases just one possible form<sup>72</sup>. Another type of other-repair is what Jefferson (1987, after Kurhila, *ibid.*) calls EXPOSED CORRECTION. This strategy highlights the utterance as problematic, thus exposing the NNS's error. This type of repair is often produced as a dispreferred turn, accompanied by dispreference markers. Finally, other-correction may be embedded in the next unmarked turn<sup>73</sup>, which constitutes a type of correction called EMBEDDED CORRECTION (Jefferson, 1987, after Kurhila, 2003). Embedded corrections can be said to have a double agenda: one is to correct an error, and the other one to perform the 'standard' function of the given turn. Wong (2005) has found out that such corrections are often framed as signals of understanding.

In the whole data material (6,5 hours), there are five cases of conversational moves identified as other-repair, three of which are done in an outright manner. These numbers are not fully in line with Kurhila's (2003) study in which 50 examples of other-correction were found (data material of 16 hours), of which the majority was outright corrections. One possible explanation of this fact would be to treat the participants of the present study as more advanced language users than the participants of Kurhila's study. On the other hand, in the data there are several examples of language use that can be classified as linguistic errors, yet the NS have chosen not to correct them explicitly. It seems therefore plausible to claim that in Norwegian conversations (including interethnic encounters) there is a strong dispreference to other-correction.

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<sup>72</sup> As opposed to lexical errors which might result in misunderstandings that need to be clarified.

<sup>73</sup> An unmarked turn is what is normally expected to follow a given conversational turn, such as answer following a question, acceptance following request and so on.

## 5.2 NNSS' communicative practices

Studies of Kurhila (2005) and Wong (2005) show that the NSs have a tendency to disregard grammatical mistakes as irrelevant for the course of interaction and focus more on maintaining mutual understanding than grammatical correctness. NNSS, on the other hand, focus on the linguistic issues relatively frequently. These results are confirmed in the present study: the number of self-repair and word search instances, as well as explicit comments related to the language use, found in the data is much more significant than the number of other-repair instances:

- 10 instances of self-repair or requests of confirmation from the NSs.
- 31 instances of word search and requests of help from the NSs.
- 4 instances of explicit comments on their language use on the side of NNSS.

As in case of other-correction, self-repair and word-searches have received considerable attention in the literature of the subject. Thus, this section provides only brief remarks on the presence of these two practices in the collected data. However, as the issue of explicit comments on the language use on the side of NNSS has not been devoted much interest, extracts exhibiting this practice will be presented and discussed in section 5.2.3.

### 5.2.1 Self-repair

The identified instances of self-repair embrace both grammatical and lexical corrections, either produced independently as outright corrections, or accompanied by a request for NS's confirmation. Still, self-repair instances on the side of NNSS are not very common in the data material. At the same time, it is interesting to note that they are still more common than other-corrections, which agrees with Kurhila's (2003, 2005) findings on NNSS willingly displaying their unequal status in the conversation more frequently than NSs highlighting it.

### 5.2.2 Word-search

The non-native speakers can also display their orientation towards correctness and their linguistic uncertainty by performing word searches, directly asking or indirectly suggesting the partner to help them out of a lexical problem they have arrived at in their talk. The direct method of resolving the lexical difficulty involves admitting a lack of knowledge by producing inquiry *hva heter det (på norsk)* 'what is it called (in Norwegian)?'. Word search is one of the most frequent strategies applied to reveal a linguistic problem by the NNSs. There are four conversations which do not contain any example of a word search being addressed to the NS<sup>74</sup> (10M, 11U, 12M and 14F). The majority of the analysed examples of word search involve the NNS's focusing on the problematic issue and developing it into a side sequence of correction. Thus, the NNSs choose to present themselves as not fully competent speakers who need their interlocutors' assistance to express their thoughts. In some cases, however, the NNSs provide their conversational partners with the desired lexemes when the problem has been signalled through hesitation markers rather than explicit request for assistance. Nonetheless, in both cases one can find examples of word searches that are not necessary for maintaining mutual understanding and as such are ignored by the NSs who focus rather on the content than on the linguistic form.

### 5.2.3 Comments on language use

In some cases, the NNSs deliver meta-comments about their use of Norwegian in the given conversation, or in general about their language command.

(27/11U)

1. Julia: ja: ehm nei (.6) eh egentlig i familien min vi (.8)  
**ye:s ehm no . eh actually in my family we .**
2. eh praktiserer ikke så: (.7) mye sånn gave åh nå  
**eh do not practice so: . much such presents oh now**

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<sup>74</sup> In 14F, the NNS employs the practice of word search, yet does it in a way characteristic for NS. Such word search serves the function of holding the floor rather than requesting the interlocutor's assistance (cf. Kurhila, 2003: 156-157).

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3. → snakker jeg skikkelig dårlig norsk ja men når vi var  
**I speak really bad Norwegian yes but when we were**
4. små så åpnet vi gaver på julaften  
**little so we opened presents on Christmas Eve**
5. Gunhild:mhm
6. J: etter vi hadde spist [. nå er det sånt at (.5) de det  
**after we had eaten . now it is such that . they there**
7. G: [ja  
**yes**
8. J: kommer så mange f- så mange familiemedlemmer  
**are so many f- so many family members**

In extract (27), the meta-comment on the quality of her Norwegian is embedded in a longer passage describing June's Christmas traditions. In lines 1-2, Julia is struggling to express herself, which results in an utterance marked with hesitations, pauses and false starts, thus leading to an explicit criticism directed at her own "bad" language use *åh nå snakker jeg skikkelig dårlig norsk* (in lines 2-3). The comment is delivered in a slightly lower voice and at a faster pace, followed by an immediate resumption of the topic (by the use of a focus shift marker *ja men* 'yes but').

In extract (27), the comment about the use of Norwegian is delivered at the end of the conversation, possibly signalling that June is tired (she admits it further on in the talk). The same situation is observed in the following extract:

(28/8M)

1. Andreas: .hh det er jo jeg og da=  
**.hh I am that too jo then**
2. Renata: =det er dere er for meg  
**it is you are for me**
3. → for (.2) for mye å snakke norske med deg for  
**for . too much to speak Norwegian to you**
4. i dag [jeg jeg vil gjerne snakke tysk igjen .  
**today I want to speak German again**
5. A: [nei  
**no**
6. nei må snakke norsk  
**no must speak Norwegian**



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- 5.R: ja men skal vi ikke snakke norsk her?  
**yes but shouldn't we speak Norwegian here?**
- 6.A: jo jo altså  
**jo jo indeed**
- 7.R: → [pynt pynte lokalet mener du?=  
**decoration decorate the place you mean?**
- 8.A: [jeg kun- =ja jeg kan henge opp  
**I cou- yes I can hang**
9. norske flagg og [. ballonger og (.6)  
**Norwegian flags and . balloons and .**
- 10.R: [eh eh
- 11.A: eller kanskje du vil ha noe da (.8)  
**or maybe you want to have something then .**
- 12.R: ne /de/ det blir jo ikke tid (.6)  
**nah there will be no time .**

In the extract, Renata uses the opportunity that Andreas turns to German (in line 2) to produce a dominant move by correcting him (in line 3). In line 4, Andreas at first receives the repair with an acknowledgement token, yet continues by requesting confirmation from Renata, offered by her in line 5. However, at the same time she delivers an inquiry about the language of conversation, referring to the “rules” that Andreas has set previously in the talk. In line 7 Renata provides an embedded correction in a form of a confirmation check (*mener du?*), which is accepted by Andreas in line 8 by a confirmation token *ja* and a specification of what he intends to do. Renata’s conversational moves in the extract can be interpreted as attempts to regain status equality in the talk which is being threatened by her linguistic incompetency, so often highlighted by Andreas.

The analysed instances of meta-comments on the quality of their language use, delivered by the NNSS, show the speakers’ awareness of the pursued activity as a conversation in a second language. Interestingly, one instance of that practice has been found in 11U, which does not exhibit any other outright characteristics of an interethnic conversation (such as compliments, other-correction *etc.*). This fact supports the claim that the NNSS are more prone to orient to their being NNSS than their native interlocutors are.

### 5.3 Discussion and conclusions

The aim of the analysis presented in this chapter was to discuss practices which directly point to the participants' status in the conversation. Practices such as giving compliments, explaining culture-specific knowledge and other-corrections have been identified as practices displaying the position of an independent and knowledgeable speaker of Norwegian, and as such are characteristic predominantly for NSs. On the other hand, word searches, explicit comments on the language use, as well as requesting assistance in delivering a turn, serve to present the speaker as a less competent speaker of Norwegian, and hence belong mainly to the domain of NNSs. Nonetheless, the elicited conversations differ greatly when it comes to displays of the NNSs' status in the conversation. A number of conversations (for instance 14F, 12M, 7U, 6M) contain almost no examples of practices which would explicitly mark the participant status as a native or non-native speaker. Other conversations (1U, 5U, 8M, 13U) frequently exhibit signs of the NSs' treating their interlocutors as speakers who are not fully independent and knowledgeable when it comes to both linguistic and culture-specific items. Admittedly, the latter group of conversations includes participants who are least fluent in Norwegian; moreover, the participants of those conversations often were unknown to one another, which might have strengthened the dichotomy NNS-NS as the only known variable. An exception in this group is 8M which, as previously stated, exhibits a great deal of face-threatening acts and struggle for domination. Nonetheless, there is a tendency for the NSs to downplay their interlocutor's difficulties and to dismiss them as irrelevant for the course of the talk. This is true also for instances of NNSs' initiating a repair or asking for confirmation, which at the same time displays them as speakers dependent on their conversational partners.

The limited number of other-correction instances identified in the study data suggests that in Norwegian conversations there is a strong dispreference for that practice, which in turn means that the main function of repair strategies, namely achieving and

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maintaining mutual understanding, is realised through other conversational moves. Further in the study (chapter 6) it is argued that reformulations constitute the predominant practice fulfilling the function of achieving mutuality in the Norwegian discourse (along with other functions).

The observed asymmetry in interethnic conversations is two-fold. Firstly, it implies asymmetrical use of communicative practices, and as such refers to the level of expression. Secondly, asymmetry is also grounded in the level of competence and knowledge about the world – the NNSs lack expertise in domains considered reserved to native-speakers born and bred in a given country. Although the analysed data did not provide examples of applying such linguistic items, it can be expected that specific notions referring for instance to geographical concepts such as different kinds of hills or islands. Such elements of language constitute the invisible tissue of the cultural lexicon, alongside the more transparent ones such as national dishes, the Royal family *etc.* To some extent dialects belong to the same type of phenomena rarely available to second language users, who are not very likely to learn a dialect in its full scope, that is as regards both phonetics, morphology and syntax. Non-native speakers may nevertheless want to adopt some salient features from the local dialect in order to show solidarity with the community. As regard the present study, a great majority of the Polish participants used a variety that can be described as close to read *bokmål*, with single features of the dialect relevant for them (e.g. the spouse's dialect)<sup>75</sup>. Only one of the participants (14F) spoke a rather consistent dialect (including phonetics, morphology and to some extent even idiomatic expressions). It also seems that the level of language command forms the perception of a given person as knowledgeable or not in those domains restricted for NSs, as shown in extract (20).

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<sup>75</sup> The variety of Norwegian used by the Polish participants could in some respect be considered as the standard spoken Norwegian. However, scholars are yet far from agreeing whether there exists a standard spoken variety of Norwegian (cf. *Norsk Lingvistisk Tidsskrift* 27/2009). At the same time, one cannot deny the existence of a kind of standard variety while examining Norwegian as a second language teaching materials. Elaborating on this topic is unfortunately beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Concurrent to the everyday talk, there exists a hidden “hypodermic” ethnic discourse in the recorded conversations. It is observable through such phenomena as the inclusive particles *jo* ‘after all’ and *vettu* ‘you know’ on one hand, including the NNSs in the same group as their Norwegian interlocutors, and the exclusive pronoun *vi* (as used in extracts 20-25, 27: *vi i Norge*), drawing a line between Norwegians and other ethnic groups, Polish therein. At the same time, the inclusive particles may, and indeed do (see extract 24) perform a dominating function of claiming the obvious truth.

Summing up, the data corpus created for the purpose of this dissertation contains a wide range of interethnic conversations, and includes both participants whose language command is rather limited, and participants who are perceived almost as NSs. The presented extracts exhibit communicative practices that in their general form and usage are universal for interethnic conversations in any language. However, the frequency of using them, as well as preferences for given practices, may differ across languages. In Norwegian interethnic conversations there seems to be a dispreference for outright corrections in favour of framing the repairable issues as confirmation checks and reformulations. The following sections provide an analysis of other language-specific practices, which are based in the Norwegian communication pattern.



## Chapter 6.

### Accompanying the interlocutor

While engaging in a conversational activity, the interlocutors are obliged to follow the course of the dialogue and to shape their contributions according to it. One of the most vital tasks that one is faced with is to confirm one's understanding of the interlocutor's talk. The establishment of mutual comprehension is a dynamic and dialogical process, and as such requires constant monitoring by both interlocutors<sup>76</sup>. Understanding is signalled by means of several conversational practices, among which backchannel signals<sup>77</sup> are traditionally perceived as highly significant. In his detailed study of English response tokens, Gardner classifies them into several groups, one of them labelled "acknowledgements, which claim agreement or understanding of the prior turn (e.g. *mm*, *yeah*)" (Gardner, 2001: 2). However, as Foppa (1995) claims, back-channel signals do not necessarily convey understanding or agreement, and should rather be treated as support signals, displaying involvement in the process of dialogue, not acceptance of the prior turn's content. Instead, genuine comprehension is displayed in the conversation by means of what Foppa (ibid: 152) calls "indirect indications of understanding", namely understanding checks (in the form of questions regarding the meaning of

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<sup>76</sup> However, the responsibility for a conversation's mutuality needs not be equally distributed among the speakers, e.g. in an interethnic encounter the native speaker might feel more socially obliged to secure a successful interaction. This topic is addressed in the concluding remarks.

<sup>77</sup> As it is not within the scope of this dissertation, the notion 'backchannel signal' is not discussed here. For a detailed explanation of the terminology see Gardner (2001: 13ff).

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the previous turn or paraphrases) and explicit enunciation of the prior turn's meaning (e.g. 'I meant ..., not ...')<sup>78</sup>. At the same time, Foppa claims that there is a difficulty connected to the former phenomenon: "understanding checks do not occur in dialogue as often as one might wish" (ibid: 152). Such a statement seems somewhat vague and, as will be claimed in the forthcoming analysis, not necessary true in the case of Norwegian conversations, where paraphrases seem to be frequently employed. Similarly ambiguous is the so called ECHO-TURN, a conversational practice consisting of repeating the interlocutor's prior statement, at times accompanied by a reception token (e.g. 'yes'). Foppa claims that echo-turns, rather than displaying understanding or agreement, signal a need for further information (ibid: 160). However, in the analysed data the majority of echo-turns serve the purpose of confirming understanding, alongside performing other functions, discussed in the subsequent section. Hence, it seems that the functions of echo-turns are by no means as clear-cut as Foppa suggests, and that there exist language-specific differences in adopting various practices in confirming mutual comprehension. The following sections provide an analysis of the following phenomena belonging to the Norwegian repertoire of practices for maintaining mutuality:

- a) paraphrases (of one's own turn as well as the interlocutor's turn);
- b) pro-repeats;
- c) echo-turns.

The term PARAPHRASE refers in this study to instances of statements or parts of statements being repeated in the subsequent turns in the speaker's own wording, but having roughly the same meaning as the initial statement:

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<sup>78</sup> It seems curious to consider the strategy of enunciating to be an example of an indirect indication of understanding, as there seems not to exist a less explicit manner of facilitating comprehension.



287) that the functional difference between repetition and reformulation of the interlocutor's turn is that the former displays hearing, whereas the latter - understanding. Although essentially true, this claim does not exhaust the list of discursive functions served by the practices. This chapter provides an analysis of the use of repeating and paraphrasing for obtaining diverse conversational goals.

## 6.1 Paraphrasing

In the course of interaction, the interlocutors reformulate their own and their interlocutors' turns, in the form of a question, a statement or a single phrase. Nonetheless, paraphrases seem seldom attributed to everyday interactions, instead being considered characteristic for media language. The presence of reformulations has been claimed to differentiate for instance radio interviews from other verbal genres (Heritage, 1985, after Mårtensson, 1990). Focusing on media discourse, Nowak (2004) analyses the manipulative functions of paraphrases. At the same time, Brownell (2000) acknowledges the presence of paraphrasing in everyday conversation and perceives it as a display of speakers' desire to accompany their interlocutors and interest in the conveyed messages. Similarly, Stewart&Thomas (2000) see paraphrases as vital practices in what they call "active or emphatic listening". Moreover, paraphrases may also be seen as typical for conversations in a second language (e.g. Sundberg, 2005). It seems therefore that paraphrasing can perform a variety of functions, depending on the interactional context it is applied in.

In the data material, paraphrases represent a frequent and distinctive practice almost exclusively employed by the native speakers. The material analysed in the following two sections consists of over 100 instances of paraphrases delivered by the NSs (comparatively, NNSs delivered around 20 paraphrases, most of them being question paraphrases). Approximately 70% of them are instances of paraphrasing the interlocutor's statement, while the

other 30% constitute reformulations of one's own questions by means of offering candidate answers. Instances of the native participants paraphrasing their own affirmative statements are scarce in the data material. When it comes to non-native speakers delivering paraphrases of their own utterances, the majority of the identified examples constitute requests for confirmation from the NS. As such, they might be attributed to the speakers' weak language command which requires their interlocutors' assistance in order to make themselves comprehensible.

### 6.1.1 Question paraphrases

Svennevig (2002, 2003b) studied questions reformulated by suggesting the adequate or at times expected, answers, and identified it as a common practice on the native speaker's side in interethnic conversations. This strategy has several discursive functions. One of them is "repairing" one's own turn after the other party has signalled incomprehension, through a request of clarification or a lack of response. Another identified function of question reformulation is to steer the answer in a given direction, and can indeed be perceived as a dominance strategy (Svennevig, 2003b: 83).

Interestingly enough, in the data material nearly all instances of question reformulations occur in conversations between participants who did not previously know each other, which might suggest a connection between the perception of a conversation as interethnic and the application of certain discursive practices<sup>80</sup>. On the other hand, in the NoTa corpus there are also several instances of applying the practice of offering candidate answers to questions, both in cases of interlocutors who were unknown to one another and between family and friends.

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<sup>80</sup> Notably, question reformulations appear also in conversations 4F and 10M.

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(31/Ukj\_025-026)<sup>81</sup>

- 1.B: ja . for at jeg har sånn telefonkontakt  
**yes . because I have such phone contact**
2. det har jeg (omitted) men må man betale da  
**I do (omitted) but do you have to pay**
3. → med en gang liksom? . eller er det sånn  
**immediately sort of? . or is it such**
4. du får e faktura på det?  
**you get a bill for it?**
- 5.A: mm nei . (--) faktura (--) dager  
**mm no . (--) bill (--) days**
- 6.B: ja ok . ja . kanskje jeg skulle gjøre det da  
**yes ok . yes . maybe I should do that then**

(32/Fam\_005-006)

- 1.B: har du tenkt å jobbe noe mer etterpå  
**are you planning to work more later**
2. → eller skal du hjem?  
**or are you going home?**
- 3.A: jeg vet ikke em jeg skal tenke på det .  
**I don't know em I'll think .**
4. jeg skal i hvert fall innom kontoret . så .  
**I will have to drop by to my office . so .**
- 5.B: du har vel noen ting der og sånn  
**you probably have something there and such**

(33/Be\_003-004)

- 1.A: så neste helg faktisk så har jeg bestilt overnatting  
**so next weekend I have actually booked a room**
2. på Kikutstua så da skal jeg gå inn dit og så  
**in Kikutstua so I am going there and will**
3. gå litt (--) turer i det området  
**make some (--) trips in the surrounding area**
- 4.B:→ ja hvorfra da fra . Sørkedalen eller?  
**yes where from then . Sørkedalen or?**
- 5.A: det har jeg ikke bestemt meg for ennå men  
**I haven't decided yet but**

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<sup>81</sup> The abbreviations stand for the relation between participants: Ukj=unknown, Fam=family, Be=acquaintance. The numbers stand for participants of the NoTa study.

In extract (31), the question is re-introduced in an alternative version after a micropause, whereas in extract (32) the reformulation is incorporated in the turn with no hesitation markers. In both extracts, the reformulated question is a yes/no-question. Extract (33) on the other hand, is an instance of a paraphrase of a wh-question, formed as an or-inquiry, which is discussed in chapter 7.1. As the examples show, question paraphrasing cannot be solely attributed to interethnic conversations, but seems a natural method of establishing mutual comprehension in Norwegian conversations.

In the study data one can distinguish the same groups of question reformulations as found in the NoTa corpus. Contrary to Svennevig's (2002, 2003b) claims, there are remarkably few instances of question reformulations delivered as a response to lack of comprehension signalled by the NNS. The majority of reformulations are provided by the NS immediately after delivering the question, which does not support the understanding of paraphrase as being a reaction to a signalled difficulty. Nonetheless, some instances of paraphrases perform the predominant function of clarifying the question's reference.

#### 6.1.1.1 Question paraphrases as clarification

It could be claimed that discontinuous reformulations (that is, not delivered immediately after the previous utterance) function as a complement to the delivered question and thus facilitate understanding. Extract (34) exhibits two question paraphrases, the first one delivered after a pause, while the other one is provided after the other party has already commenced her response.

(34/1U)

1. Eli: men-a har du oppdaget siden du har bodd her  
**but did you discover since you have lived here**
2. så lenge som du har gjort nå da (.6) om det er .  
**so long as you have . if there are**
3. → kulturforskjeller . i Norge? (.5) altså mellom for  
**cultural differences in Norway? . well between**
4. eksempel nord og sør øst og vest  
**for instance north and south east and west**
5. Grażyna: uhm

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- 6.E: → eller synes du nordmenn er (.5)  
**or do you think Norwegian are .**
7. nordmenn uan[sett  
**always Norwegians**
- 8.G: [mm uhm . .hh nei det kanskje  
**.hh no that maybe**
9. min kunnskap ikke er s- er ikke  
**my knowledge is not s- is not**
10. så avansert men . jeg ville ikke si at det  
**erso advanced but . I would not say there are**
11. så store forskjeller (1s)  
**such big differences .**
- 12.E: nei  
**no**

Lines 1-2 provide a detailed account of the reasons for asking the subsequent question<sup>82</sup> about cultural variation in Norway. After a pause of 0,5 second, Eli explains her question as being related to geographical differences (lines 3-4). The paraphrase specifies what kind of answer the speaker is interested in, and thus prevents an undesired turn from appearing. In line 5, Grażyna acknowledges the question by a minimal backchannel signal *uhm*, upon which a second paraphrase is delivered (lines 6-7), suggesting an alternative. Grażyna seems to respond to the former question, as the negative token *nei* 'no' and the following lines suggest. Grażyna's response is at the same time mitigated by not claiming expertise in the given field *min kunnskap er ikke så avansert* 'my knowledge is not so advanced'. In the following extract the paraphrases also steer the answer in the desired direction:

(35/5U)

- 1.Tone: ja . er det noen likheter . på landet og sånt da  
**yes . are there any similarities . in the country and so**
- 2.Joanna:nei n(h)ei he he=  
**no n(h)o he he**
- 3.T: → =åssen er det i Polen da? .  
**what is it like in Poland then? .**

---

<sup>82</sup> The practice of projecting the forthcoming actions has also been found characteristic of Norwegian discourse, and is thoroughly described and discussed in section 4.4.3.

- 4.J:     nei det=  
          **no that**
- 5.T: →                 =åssen er naturen og sånt  
                          **what is the nature and such**
- 6.J:     å: det er stor forskjell mellom (--) (.3)  
          **oh there is big difference between .**
7.       vi har i Nord-Polen . et havn? (.4) o:g .  
          **we have in northern Poland . a port . a:nd**
8.       på andre sida vi har fjellet  
          **on the other side we have the mountains**
- 9.T:     ja  
          **yes**
- 10.J:    ja . det er stor forskjell  
          **yes . there is big difference**

In line 1, Tone poses a fairly general question about differences between Poland and Norway. Joanna's response in line 2 can be considered a negative answer to the yes/no-question. However, her attempts to answer are interrupted twice by Tone specifying her question by reformulating it first as a general wh-question (*åssen er det i Polen da?* 'what's it like in Poland?', line 3), and then as a specific one (*åssen er naturen og sånt* 'what's the nature and such like', line 5). Only after the paraphrasing is completed does Joanna take the floor to provide her answer. Tone's strategy in this excerpt is directed at maintaining comprehension in the talk by dominating practices steering the answers of her interlocutor in the desired direction.

As the extracts analysed above have shown, although question reformulations do function as clarification practices, they are seldom triggered by an explicit signal of comprehension problems. Instead, their main function seems to be preventive rather than reparative.

#### 6.1.1.2 Question paraphrases signalling reduced expectations

In the extracts analysed in the previous section (6.1.1.1), the Norwegian interactant provides her question reformulations even when her interlocutor has already commenced her response. Hence, the paraphrase is not required, since there is a chance that the hearer has understood what the question implies and is ready

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to answer it. A similar practice can be observed in the following extract:

(36/11U)

- 1.Gunh.:→ehm vil det gå ut over eksamenslesing eller .  
**ehm will it influence your learning or .**
2. [går det greit å kombinere  
**does it work to combine**
- 3.Julia: [ahm . jeg klarer ikke å sitte og lese så:  
**ahm . I cannot sit and read so:**
4. så [mye så  
**so much so**
- 5.G: [nei du må ha noen pauser litt allikevel  
**no you have to make some breaks a bit after all**

In line 1, Gunhild asks a yes/no question about Julia's spare time activity and its impact on time spent on studying (notably completed with 'or', cf. chapter 7.1). After a micropause, she provides an alternative question (line 2), yet by that time Julia has already began answering to the question raised (lines 3-4). Her answer is then paraphrased by Gunhild (line 5) to show empathy (see section 6.1.1.3. for a discussion of paraphrasing as display of alignment). The superfluity is even more visible in extracts (37), (38) and (39).

(37/13U)

- 1.Randi: ja: er det en spesiell tid på år når  
**ye:s is there a special time of the year that**
2. du pleier å reise hjem til Polen  
**you go home to Poland**
3. → eller [er det litt forskjellig  
**or does it differ**
- 4.Magda: [sommeren  
**the summer**
- 5.R: på sommeren ja  
**in the summer yes**
- 6.M: på sommer (.5) det er bare sånn fordi  
**in summer . it is just like that because**
7. på jul vi er her (.4)  
**for Christmas we are here**
- 8.R: ja (.3)  
**yes .**

In this extract, the paraphrase is provided immediately after the initial question, with no pause or other kind of disfluency markers. In lines 1-3, Randi inquires about Magda's habits regarding visiting Poland. In line 4, Magda provides an immediate answer which is almost simultaneous to the delivered paraphrase. Interestingly enough, the answer is then incorporated into Randi's question and confirmed with a receipt token *ja*. However, by incorporating the answer into her talk Randi also performs other-correction by adding the correct preposition *på sommeren* 'in the summer'. The following turn by Magda is a repetition of the corrected item, yet with an erroneous bare noun form *på sommer* 'in summer', and a further justification of this state of facts (echo-turns functioning as corrections are discussed in section 6.3.1).

As there are no signalled understanding problems, the question paraphrases in extract (36) and (37) seem to be unnecessary for the course of the conversation. However, by delivering a different version of the question, the speaker displays a lack of expectations towards a specific answer. In both cases, the paraphrase includes an opposite proposition content to the one inherent in the initial question:

(36) 'will it influence your studying or not (is it ok to combine)'

(37) 'is there a special time you travel to Poland or not (does it differ)'

Hence, the second question relaxes the obligation to deliver a positive answer, which seems to be the expected answer to yes/no-question (cf. chapter 7.2) and allows the interlocutor to choose from two alternatives. The situation can also be observed in the following extracts:

(38/5U)

1. Tone: er du mest sammen me:d med folk fra Polen  
**are you mostly with people from Poland in**
2. → på fritida og eller har dere norske venner?  
**free time and or do you have Norwegian friends**
3. Joanna: nei vi har ikke så mange norske venner  
**no we don't have so many Norwegian friends**
4. T: nei  
**no**

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- 5.J: vi har mere .  
**we have more .**
6. ja for det er ganske mange sikkert [. (--)  
**yes because there are many for sure .**
- 7.J: [mhm (--)
8. og kjente kjente mange mange polske .  
**and knew knew many many Poles .**
9. og vi kjenner  
**and we know**

Extract (38) exhibits a paraphrase superfluous for the establishment of comprehension. As suggested for extracts (36) and (37), Tone's question paraphrase in lines 1-2 displays a lack of expectations towards the answer.

(39/7U)

- 1.Agnieszka:han er i barnehage nå han går femti prosent (.3)  
**he goes to kindergarten now he goes fifty percent .**
- 2.Gina:→ja (.4) jobber du eller studerer eller .  
**yes . do you work or do you study or .**
3. [er du hjemme med ham?  
**are you home with him?**
- 4.A: [(--)- akkurat nå er hjemme  
 (--)- **just now I'm home**
5. med ham men[-e jeg er på jakt etter . e jobben  
**with him but-e I'm looking for . a job**
- 6.G: [ja  
**yes**
- 7.A: jeg vil jobbe femti prosent mens han er i  
 barnehage  
**I would like to work half time when he is in  
 kindergarten**
- 8.G: ja  
**yes**
- 8.A: .ja . og jeg synes det er koselig å være litt  
**.ja . and I think it is nice to be a bit**
9. hjemme med ham  
**home with him**
- 10.G: ja klart det når han er små og=  
**yes of course when he is small and**
- 11.A: =ja han er  
**yes he is**

12. bare to= ja [he he he  
**just two yes he he he**
- 13.G: =ja [he he he er det vanlig  
**yes he he he is it normal**
14. i Polen at mødrene er hjemme med (1s) barna  
**in Poland that the mothers are at home . with children**
15. → når de er små eller jobber de eller .  
**when they are small or do they work or .**
- 16.A: m-ja: barna i Polen e: . går i barnehage fra  
**m-ye:s children in Poland . go to kindergarten**
17. de er tre år gamle (.3) [. mm så det er vanlig  
**from when they are three . so it is normal**
- 18.G: [ja  
**yes**
- 19.A: at (1s) mamma er hjemme med barna (1s)  
**thatmom is home with children .**
- 20.G: ja  
**yes**

In line 1, Agnieszka is talking about her son, Per. In line 2, Gina inquires about Agnieszka's professional life, yet instead of asking a direct question (of the type 'what do you do?') she delivers a yes/no question offering several candidate answers. In line 4 one of the candidate answers is taken up by Agnieszka: *akkurat nå er hjemme med ham men* 'right now I'm home with him but'. The same practice is applied in by Gina in lines 13-15, yet this time Agnieszka offers an explanation of her own, only partly using Gina's suggestions as to possible answers.

Extract (39) illustrates another function of question paraphrasing, namely providing ready-made answers so as to spare the interlocutor the trouble to finding proper wording. Such a practice could indeed be understood as a domination attempt based on the perception of one's interlocutor as an interactant dependent on others' assistance in order to express him- or herself. In the studied data, question paraphrases occur almost exclusively in dialogues between participants unknown to one another, which would validate the claim that the practice is to certain extent triggered by the perceived inequality. However, as question reformulations have been identified both in NoTa corpus and also in single cases in conversations between life partners in the collected data, one can

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conclude that question paraphrases predominantly serve the function of relaxing the preference structure, and by this not imposing on the interlocutor.

### 6.1.1.3 Question paraphrases signalling alignment

Equipping the question with candidate answers, besides signalling reduced expectations, also seems to perform the function of displaying the speaker's alignment with the interlocutor.

(40/1U)

- 1.Eli:→ jobber du gjennom F1 . eller s- . er du . f-  
**do you work through F1 . or s- are you . f-**
- 2.Grażyna: nei=  
**no**
- 3.E: → =det du er engasjert gjennom F3 er det [sant  
**you're hired through F3 is it true**
- 4.G: [ja ja .  
**yes yes**
5. ansatt i [i en avdelingene i F3 ja .  
**employed in in one of the divisions in F3 yes**
6. full jobb=  
**full time job**
- 7.E: =ja og der er det nok å gjøre  
**yes and there is enough to do there**

Extract (40) comes from the beginning of a conversation, in which general information about the interlocutors is exchanged. In line 1, Eli delivers a specific question about Grażyna's work place, and after a micropause embarks on a reformulation suggesting an alternative state of facts. As we can see, Grażyna answers the first question with a single negative token, upon which Eli claims the floor again to suggest another understanding, followed by a question tag *er det sant* 'is it true'. Her second suggestion is confirmed and elaborated on by Grażyna in lines 4-6. By offering answers Eli claims knowledge about her interlocutor and at the same time displays involvement in the conversation. In the previous talk (not rendered here), Grażyna mentioned F3 as her work place. Hence, Eli has a reason to assume that the state of facts suggested in the reformulation in line 3 is the correct one. Offering

an answer that is assumed correct, functions as alignment signal and common knowledge marker.

#### 6.1.1.4 Conclusions

The majority of extracts analysed in this section exhibit candidate answers being delivered in talk immediately after the initial question, regardless of the interlocutors' reaction. Thus, one can draw a conclusion that the practice of question reformulation serves a preventive rather than repair function in the establishment of mutuality in the course of dialogue. Even more so, reformulation of the question by enumerating several candidate answers signals lack of expectations regarding the answer. In other words, the speaker leaves the floor open for all kinds of responses, thus not imposing him- or herself on their interlocutor. In this respect, question reformulations bear resemblance to *or*-inquiries which also relax the preference structure of reactions to *yes/no*-questions. The final identified function of question paraphrases is to mark solidarity and to create common ground by suggesting answers preferred (or expected to be preferred) by one's conversational partner. Such suggestions can be made only when the speaker has some grounds on which (s)he can infer what the answer can be, as seen in extract (40).

Additionally, question reformulation may also serve to dominate the discourse by steering the answer in the desired direction, or by displaying the speaker's perception of the interlocutor as a not fully independent language user. However, the paraphrases identified in the analysed extracts seem to function as markers of empathy rather than domination attempts.

#### **6.1.2 Paraphrasing the interlocutors' statements**

Another group of paraphrases consists of reformulating the interlocutor's statements. Such paraphrases may have interrogative form, thus being a request for confirmation of the suggested understanding:

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(41/Be\_003-004)

- 1.A: så det det s- det slutter ikke å fascinere meg .  
**so it it s- does not stop fascinating me .**
2. [egentlig det er ganske  
**actually it is rather**
- 3.B:→ [å ja så du får egentlig lyst å gjøre mer av det?  
**oh yes so that you actually want to do more of it?**
- 4.A: ja altså . m ja men jeg syns bare det er  
**yes well . m yes but I just think it's**
5. fascinerende i det hele tatt  
**fascinating generally**

At the same time, such confirmation checks infer new information from the prior statement, and thus contribute to the talk by suggesting a new perspective or by shifting the focus of the topic. A different group of paraphrases solely repeats the reformulated statement in a different wording:

(42/Be\_003-004)

- 1.A: nei man skal jo være mentalt klar for å se  
**no you should be mentally prepared to see**
2. sånne ting  
**such things**
- 3.B:→ ja det er ikke så gøy hehe  
**yes it is not so much fun hehe**
- 4.A: nei  
**no**
- 5.B: mm

Among the latter group, PRO-REPEATS, constitute a special case. Formally they can be analysed as instances of reformulation, but at the same time their form is fixed (the use of correct auxiliary verb, object invariably pronominalised as *det* 'it'), whereas paraphrases are not formed after any predetermined pattern.

(43/Ukj\_055-056)

- 1.A: det kan ikke jeg det går ikke noe buss  
**I cannot there is no bus going**
2. i det hele tatt ditt som jeg ta  
**going there at all that I could take**
- 3.B:→ gjør ikke det nei  
**there is not no**

- 4.A: nei . det er ikke noe trafikk der i fra  
**no . there is no communication from**
5. Nittedal kirke til Skedsmokorset  
**Nittedal church to Skedsmokorset**
- 6.B: nei nei  
**no no**

As previously stated, in the data material there have been identified approximately 70 instances of other statements' paraphrases, either as full sentences or as pro-repeats. A great majority of those has been performed by the NSS. Unlike question reformulations, this group of paraphrases is not restricted to dialogues between participants unfamiliar with one another. Still, there are no instances of this practice in conversations between couples, a fact that will be discussed in the concluding section (6.5).

#### 6.1.2.1 Concluding paraphrases

The first group of the analysed extracts exhibits instances of paraphrases that may be called CONCLUDING. They are in many ways similar to the group of paraphrases represented in extract (41), with the exception that they summarize several turns of the interlocutor, instead of reformulating only the adjacent one. The most obvious function of such paraphrases is to check the general understanding of the talk delivered by the other speaker. However, the practice proves to have a double agenda in all the analysed extracts.

(44/1U)

- 1.Grażyna: ja ja men . jeg e: y: kan ikke bedømme  
**yes yes but . I e: y: cannot judge**
2. noe som helst det er bare min inntrykk  
**anything it is just my impression**
- 3.Eli: uhm
- 4.G: som jeg har fått tilfeldig fordi  
**that I got by chance because**
5. jeg var tilfeldig i Polen  
**I was by chance in Poland**
- 6.E: uhm
- 7.G: men-e: (1s)  
**but-e: .**

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- 8.E: men det var et eller annet oppslag som jeg  
**but there was some or other news that I**
9. ikke har rukket å lese enda i avisen i dag=  
**have not yet read in the newspaper today**
- 10.G: =uhm
- 11.E: om disse to brødrene (1.5) [som styrer Polen  
**about these two brothers . that govern Poland**
- 12.G: [jeg hørte bare det  
**I just heard it**
13. noen (sa) [. jeg har ikke lest det  
**someone said . I have not read it**
- 14.E: [jaha  
**oh yes**
15. nei jeg rakk ikke [å lese det men jeg kunne  
**no I haven't read it yet but I could**
- 16.G: [ha ha ha ha ha
- 17.E: → lese det etterpå . men-a ja ja (1s) ja ja  
**read it later . but-e yes yes . yes yes**
18. men-a så du tror at norske politikere er mer seriøs  
**so you think that Norwegian politicians are more serious**
- 19.G: men . det tror jeg [. det er stor forskjell  
**but . I think so . there is big difference**
- 20.E: [mhm (1s)

Extract (44) comes from a long stretch of talk concerning Polish and Norwegian political life. Previously to this extract, Grażyna has argued that Polish politicians do not take their work seriously, before she downplays her opinions in lines 1-4 as not fully justified. As both participants fail to take the floor, in line 6 there is a pause of 1 second, after which Eli introduces a new topic related to the previous one, namely an article about two Polish politicians. Lines 8-17 show some attempts to develop the topic, which nonetheless dies out. Hence, in lines 18-19 Eli retables the previous topic by paraphrasing Grażyna's prior comparison of Polish and Norwegian political life. The double agenda of the paraphrase in this extract is to confirm understanding and at the same time contribute to the talk by suggesting a topic or a topic shift.

(45/1U)

- 1.Grażyna: og hun fikk ingenting [. hun var aldri  
**and she got nothing . she was never**
- 2.Eli: [nei  
**no**
- 3.G: i teater hun var aldri i kunstutstilling eller  
**in a theatre she was never in an art exhibition**
4. noen steder . men (.4)  
**or other places . but .**
- 5.E: → så det betyr [du ikke er helt fornøyd  
**so this means you are not fully satisfied**
- 6.G: [ja ja  
**yes yes**
- 7.E: med den videregående skolen  
**with the secondary school**
- 8.G: nei nei nei  
**no no no**
- 9.E: .nei  
**.nei**
- 10.G: det var lite å utvikle den åndelig heh . he he  
**there was little to develop the spiritual**
11. [personlighet  
**personality**
- 12.E: [åndelig siden .ja ja men jeg er nok ikke uenig (1s)  
**the spiritual side .ja yes but I probably do not disagree**

Extract (45) on the other hand, exhibits a concluding paraphrase delivered in order to show alignment with the interlocutor's statement. In lines 1 and 3-4, as well as prior talk not rendered here, Grażyna provides a comparison of Polish and Norwegian secondary schools, and criticises the Norwegian schools for not organising enough cultural activities for children. Her statements are reformulated by Eli in lines 5 and 7 as Grażyna's discontent with the quality of education that her daughter received in Norway. Upon Grażyna's confirmation of such understanding (line 8), Eli delivers an ingressive negative token *nei*. The response token functions as a topicalizer, that is a request for further explanation (Skarbø, 1999: 133ff), which is provided by Grażyna in lines 10-11. In line 12, Eli delivers a collaborative completion of Grażyna's turn, followed by a hedged agreement. Consequently, the reformulation seems to form a basis for signalling alignment

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with the interlocutor. Such practice is even more obvious in case of the following extract:

- (46/7U)
- 1.Gina: hvor har du vært hen da (1s)  
**where have you been then .**
- 2.Agnieszka: ja em: (2.6) hm . Sverige Denmark (.7)  
**yes em: . hm Sweden Denmark .**
3. kk- (.6) Tsjekkia . Slovakia (2s) Italia (1s)  
**Czech Republic Slovakia . Italy .**
4. em (.7) så var vi på bryllupsle- reise i  
**em . so we were on the honeymoon**
5. Dominikanske Republikk [. .ja (.5) så var vi  
**in the Dominican Republic . .ja . so we were**
- 6.G: [åh ja  
**oh yes**
- 7.A: i Egypt en gang [. så ja det var det (.5)  
**in Egypt one time . so yes that is it .**
- 8.G: [uhm
- 9.A: Frankrike Paris og ja= [ja  
**France Paris and yes yes**
- 10.G: → =mest Europa da [. ja  
**mostly Europe then . yes**
11. (.7) jeg har og vært mest i . Europa (.6)  
**. I have also been mostly in . Europe .**

In this extract, the topic of spare time activities, specifically travelling, is discussed. Upon Gina's question in line 1, Agnieszka delivers a long list of places she has visited (lines 2-9), interrupted only by Gina's support signals. In line 9, Gina delivers a summary of Agnieszka's record, followed by an alignment based on shared experiences *jeg har og vært mest i Europa* 'I have also been mainly to Europe'. Gina's conclusion seems rather palpable, as it could be expected that Europeans have travelled more in Europe than in any other continent. Therefore it is reasonable to perceive Gina's paraphrase as an attempt to come upon shared topics and thus find common ground with her interlocutor.

### 6.1.2.2 Rejecting concluding paraphrases

The extracts presented hitherto have in common the fact that the speaker whose statement had been reformulated did not object to

the inference suggested by the interlocutor. The following extract, however, is an example of a paraphrase which is not fully accepted by the other speaker:

(47/1U)

- 1.Eli: eller synes du nordmenn er (.5)  
**or do you think Norwegian are .**
2. nordmenn uan[sett  
**always Norwegians**
- 3.Grażyna: [mm uhm . .hh nei det kanskje  
**.hh no this maybe**
4. min kunnskap ikke er s- er ikke så avansert  
**my knowledge is not s- is not so advanced**
5. men . jeg ville ikke si at det er så store  
**but . I would not say there are so big**
6. forskjeller (1s)  
**differences .**
- 7.E: nei [nei d-  
**no no t-**
- 8.G: [MEN-e men-e for eksemple kanskje litt  
**BUT-e but-e for instance maybe a bit**
9. vi va- vi var i . nordland hos [. hans familie  
**we we- we were in . Nordland in . his family's place .**
- 10.E: [mhm
- 11.G: (1.4) så jeg må si at jeg opplevde de har  
**so I have to say that I experienced they have**
12. litt . annerledes temperament og mentalitet .  
**a bit . different temperament and mentality .**
- 13.E: mhm
- 14.G: mer gjestfri og åpen og . pratsom og .  
**more hospitable and open and . talkative and .**
15. det passet meg mye bedre [enn (1s)  
**it suited me much more than .**
- 16.E: [uhm
- 17.G: def- noen for eksempel fra fra . trøndelag  
**so- someone for instance from from Trøndelag**
- 18.E:→ ja . så du mener trøndere er mere lukket enn  
**yes . so you think trøndere are more closed than**
18. nordlendinge[ne  
**those from Nordland**
- 19.G: [jeg snakker stort sett om folk  
**I speak generally about people**
20. fra . fra bygda for eksempel .  
**from . from the countryside for example**

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- 21.E: mhm  
22.G: fra småplasser  
**from small places**  
23.E: .ja [ja men du vet nordlendingene er jo kjent  
**.ja yes but you know people from Nordland er  
jo famous**  
24.G: [ja-  
**ye-**  
25.E: for å [. å være veldig åpne og veldig gjestfrie  
**for . being very open and very hospitable**  
26.G: [ja  
**yes**

The stretch of talk which the extract comes from concerns cultural differences within Norway. Upon Eli's inquiry about Grażyna's opinion on that matter (line 1), Grażyna delivers a mitigated negation *jeg ville ikke si at det er så store forskjeller* 'I would not say there are big differences'. However, in the following lines (6-14) she gives an cautious account of her experience with people from northern Norway whom she considers more hospitable and talkative than others, offering people from Trøndelag as a possible contrast. In line 15, her opinion is reformulated by Eli in such a way that it casts a negative light on people from Trøndelag *så du mener trøndere er mer lukket enn nordlendingene* 'so you think people from Trøndelag are more closed than the northerners'. Upon this decisive paraphrase, Grażyna offers a mitigation of her opinion, suggesting that she only meant the rural areas in Trøndelag region (lines 16-17, 19). Yet, in line 20 Eli confirms her observation as being true and framing it as a part of general Norwegian knowledge (lines 20, 22, marked by the use of inclusive particles *jo* and *du vet*). Eli's verbal behaviour in this extract may undoubtedly be considered a dominating use of native knowledge, which has also been analysed in chapter 5.1.2.

### 4.3.2.3 Inferring paraphrases

The speakers are not only summarising their interlocutors' prior turns, but also explicitly suggesting their understanding and awaiting verification. Such instances may be labelled INFERRING paraphrases.

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(48/5U)

- 1.Joanna: ja samme som vi ja men mannen min kjøper bare  
**yes same som us yes but my husband buys only**
2. polske . filmer=  
**Polish . films=**
- 3.Tone: [åh ja =ja får du kjøpt  
**oh yes yes can you buy**
4. det her?  
**it here?**
- 5.J: ja det kan man y:  
**yes you can**
- 6.T: → ja og så er det sikkert (1s) det er sikkert .  
**yes and it is surely . it is surely .**
7. e: tekst polsk tekst [mhm  
**text Polish subtitles**
- 8.J: [ja ja bare polsk tekst  
**yes yes just Polish subtitles .**
9. (1.5)

Extract (48) is a part of a stretch of talk concerning watching movies. In lines 1-2, Joanna states that her husband buys only Polish movies, upon which Tone requests clarification (lines 3-4). In line 5, Joanna attempts to deliver a confirmation, yet does not complete her utterance. In lines 6-7, Tone offers her understanding of this state of fact which in line 8 is confirmed by Joanna. However, Tone's candidate understanding is accompanied by the particle *sikkert* 'surely', which gives the impression of the speaker's being certain of her interpretation. A similar case of adverbial use can be observed in the following extract:

(49/1U)

- 1.Eli: mm (.8) ja nei fordi jeg tenkte på (.8)  
**mm . yes no because I thought .**
2. i den forbindelse er du sa et eller annet  
**in connection to er you said something**
3. om at skolene var dårligere på landet  
**about schools being worse in the countryside**
4. eller slik at-  
**or such that**
- 5.Grażyna: [.hh ja generelt . generelt  
**.hh yes generally . generally**

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- 6.E: sier du det=  
do you say so
- 7.G: =ja ja  
yes yes
- 8.E: → ja (2.3) ja det har jo selvfølgelig med  
yes . yes it has jo of course something to do with
9. lærertilgang og sånt å gjøre  
teacher availability and such
- 10.G: [ja  
yes
11. (-- det er det (1.5)  
(-- it does .

In lines 1-4, Eli gives a resume of Grażyna's previous statements concerning schools in the countryside as compared with urban ones. She does not explicitly ask, yet it seems that she awaits further clarification from Grażyna's side of this matter (the response token *ja* in line 7 seems to function as a topicalizer). However, as Grażyna offers her only minimal affirmative tokens (lines 5 and 7), Eli delivers an interpretation of the state of facts based on her own knowledge of the subject, and frames it as a well-known fact by the use of certainty markers *jo* 'after all' and *selvfølgelig* 'of course'. Her understanding is confirmed by Grażyna in lines 10-11.

(50/7U)

- 1.Agnieszka: ja (.5) [. FRITID he he he he  
yes . free time he he he he
- 2.Gina: [he he he he ja hva gjør du  
he he he he yes what do you do
3. på fritida he he he  
in free time he
- 4.A: hviler [he he he  
rest he he he
- 5.G: [hviler he he he  
rest he he he
- 6.A: ja bare det og strikker o:g lager mat o:g  
yes just that and knit a:nd cook a:nd
7. a(h)lt mulig he [he he ja  
everything else he he he yes
- 8.G: [ja når du har en sønn på  
yes when you have a 2,5 year old son

9. → to og et halvt år så [har du vel (1.1)  
**so you have probably .**
- 10.A: [ja  
**yes**
- 11.G: nok å gjøre på fritida?=  
**enough to do in your spare time**
- 12.A: =(--) ja  
 (--) **yes**
13. det er ikke så mye fritid  
**there is not much spare time**
- 14.G: nei . hva kunne du ønske å gjøre hvis du  
**no . what would you like to do if you**
15. hadde . hatt mer fritid  
**had . more time**

Extract (50) is yet another case of adverb use, this time appearing in an interrogative sentence. In line 1, the topic of spare time is introduced, followed by Gina's inquiry about Agnieszka's spare time activities (lines 2-3). Line 4 is a humorous suggestion of resting as a pastime, echoed by Gina in line 4 (see chapter 6.3 for analysis of echo-turns). In lines 6-7, Agnieszka delivers a more detailed description of her pastimes. In lines 8-9 and 11, Gina produces a reformulation of Agnieszka's turn, focusing on the circumstances that led to this state of facts, namely that Agnieszka's son occupies all her spare time. Gina's paraphrase, unlike paraphrases from extracts (78) and (79), is framed as a cautious suggestion, as marked by the particle *vel* 'probably' and interrogative form. In lines 12-13, Agnieszka confirms the interpretation. The technique of confirming understanding is also present in the following extract:

(51/7U)

- 1.Gina: åh ja [. hvordan er forskjellen på været? 2.8  
**oh yes . what is the difference in weather .**
- 2.Agnieszka: [mhm
3. om sommeren er det litt . varmere i Polen (.9)  
**in summer there is a bit . warmer in Poland .**
- 4.G: åh ja  
**oh yes**
- 5.A: og om vinteren er det vakrere i Norge [he he  
**and in winter it is more beautiful in Norway**
- 6.G: [he he

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7. → he er det ikke så kaldt i Polen  
**is it not so cold in Poland**
8. om vinteren eller? (.4)  
**in winter or? .**
- 9.A: jo det er sikkert kald i s- (.5) sør-Polen  
**jo it is surely cold in s- . south of Poland**
10. [der Kraków og området  
**there Cracow and the region**
- 11.G: [mm ja  
**mm yes**
- 12.A: men i nord-Polen hvor jeg kommer fra .  
**but in the north of Poland where I come from**
13. da er det omtrent . hele tida e hele vinteren  
**there it is around . whole time e the whole winter**
14. det er . pluss en to grader [. så det er  
**it is . plus one to centigrades . so there is**
- 15.G: [åh ja  
**oh yes**
16. litt sånn plut plut [. uhm  
**a bit such plut plut . uhm**
- 17.G: [ja det regner  
**yes it rains**
18. → istedenfor å snø eller=  
**instead of snowing or**
- 19.A: =ja det snør og så  
**yes it snows and then**
20. er det bare blått [så litt sånn-  
**it is just melting<sup>83</sup> so a bit such**
- 21.G: → [ja så sånn i S2 da  
**yes so like in S2**
22. kanskje eller he [he he he he he  
**then maybe or**
- 23.A: [ja men det . det her det er  
**yes but i:t . it here it is**
24. koselig om vinteren synes jeg nå=  
**nice in winter I think so**
- 25.G: =ja  
**yes**

---

<sup>83</sup> Agnieszka has probably intended to say *blaut* 'wet', but delivered a neutrum form for *blå* 'blue' instead. As the mistake has not been corrected by Gina and the intention seems to have been conveyed, the meaning intended is rendered in the translation.

In line 1, Gina asks Agnieszka to compare Polish and Norwegian climates<sup>84</sup>. In lines 2-3 and 4-5, Agnieszka gives an account of the difference in a humorous way. The joking mood is eagerly taken up by Gina who also laughs before providing a candidate understanding, in the form of an or-inquiry. Her suggestion is opposed to in line 9 in an idiomatic Norwegian way by the affirmative response particle *jo*, used to confirm the content of a negative interrogatives. In this extract, Gina offers candidate understandings two more times, both times in the form of or-inquiry. Notably, in both cases her suggestions are not fully accepted. In lines 17-18, Gina interprets Agnieszka's onomatopoeic expression *plut plut* (line 16) to mean *det regner istedenfor å snø* 'it rains instead of snowing'. In lines 19-20, however, Agnieszka contradicts her understanding. The third time Gina offers an interpretation takes place in lines 21-22, comparing the described weather to what she sees as typical for their place of living (S2). In the subsequent lines, Agnieszka partly agrees with the comparison, yet displays a different emotional relation to the weather in S2 than to the weather in her home town in Poland. Throughout the extract, Gina is attempting to fill in Agnieszka's statements, thus showing involvement in the conversation and cooperation in constructing the meaning. At the same time, her suggestions are mitigated so as not to appear dominating and impose on her interlocutor.

In the previous extract, the final interpretation is introduced by means of the conjunction *så* 'so', referring to the logical relation between the paraphrased statement and the paraphrase itself. The conjunction is also adopted in extracts (52) and (53).

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<sup>84</sup> Note the long pause following the inquiry. A pause of this length suggests some kind of difficulty on the side of the next speaker. In this case, it can be attributed to Agnieszka's preparation to deliver a turn which is probably not expected by Gina, namely a joke. Nonetheless, Gina does not deliver a question reformulation, nor a candidate answer, though the circumstances would allow for it.

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(52/9F)

- 1.Regina:sikkert fordi vet du hva skjedde Vidar .hh  
**surely because do you know what Vidar .hh**
2. da jeg begynte på Skole2 (.5) Olaug ønske seg  
**when I began in School2 . Olaug wished that**
3. at jeg opp- opprette noen gruppe med . ((kl))  
**I fo- form a group from . ((cl)) .hh from the**
4. .hh fra mottak fordi jeg var ansvarlig bare  
**foreign class<sup>85</sup> because I had responsibility**
5. for mottak (.3)  
**just for the foreign class**
- 6.Vidar: mm
- 7.R: ((kl)) men-e: det var ((kl)) vanskelige  
**((cl)) but-e: it was ((cl)) difficult**
8. det må ha i blod noe sånna ting . .hh og  
**you have to have in blood such thing . .hh and**
9. jeg var i kor og jeg spilte i orkiestra da  
**I was in a choir and I played in an orchestra**
10. jeg var som . barn og så dansa . [på det samme  
**when I was child and danced . in the same way**
- 11.V: [mm
- 12.R: måte for jeg har det i blod [.3 og jeg kan  
**because I have it in blood . and I can**
- 13.V: [mm
- 14.R: gjøre det (.7) det er litt annerle[des  
**do it it is a bit different**
- 15.V:→ [så Olaug  
**so Olaug**
16. ga deg liksom oppfordra deg  
**gave you sort of encouraged**
17. [. fikk liksom (-- ) liksom  
**you got kind of (-- ) kind of**
- 18.R: [ja: det er derfor det blir noe også i min .  
**ye:s that is why I also got an idea .**
19. i mitt hode gå at kanskje vil en gruppe  
**in my head go that maybe will a group**
20. opprette på Skole2  
**form in School2**
- 21.V: mm

---

<sup>85</sup> *Mottak* refers to a class where children who do not speak Norwegian are placed for the first year of their schooling. During this year they learn Norwegian so that in the following year they can join a regular class.

In this extract, Regina and Vidar are discussing a student group that Regina has established in the school she works in, as we find out in line 2. Olaug has been previously mentioned in the talk as Regina's supervisor, and Vidar is also acquainted with her. In lines 3-14 Regina gives a rather chaotic account of her reasons for creating a student group. Yet, in lines 15-17, Vidar delivers a paraphrase of Regina's statement from line 2, confirming his understanding that it was the supervisor who had wished for the group to be established. At the same time, Vidar retables the topic that Regina has "drifted away" from in the course of her talk. So, the reformulation has a double agenda of confirming understanding and restoring coherence in the dialogue.

#### 6.1.2.4 Rejecting inferring paraphrases

Paraphrases based on the speaker's inference are especially liable to rejection. The reformulation is then the onset of a side-sequence of negotiating consensus, as can be observed in the following extracts (53-55).

(53/11U)

1. Julia: a ikke noe spesielt akkurat det altså  
**a nothing special**
2. men (.4) jeg liker å se på sport så i  
**but . I like to watch sports so**
3. helga [skal jeg se på skihopping he [he  
**in the weekend I'm going to watch ski jumping**
4. Gunhild: [aha [så  
**aha so**
5. → du er skikkelig sportsentusiast  
**you are a real fan of sports**
6. J: nei ikke så skikkelig men-e . jeg liker  
**no not so real but-e . I like**
7. å se på skiskyting  
**to watch biathlon**
8. G: u-hm (.7)
9. J: og skihopping er litt mer kjedelig men-e  
**and ski jumping is a bit more boring but**

Extract (53) comes from the stretch of talk in which the participants discuss their pastimes. In lines 1-3, Julia mentions she enjoys

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watching sports and reveals her plans for the weekend. In lines 4-5, Gunhild provides an interpretation of Julia's prior turn, which is rejected in lines 6-7 by means of downgrading *ikke så skikkelig* 'not so true'. A rejection of the paraphrase is also visible in the following extract, however in this case it is the NNS who delivers the paraphrase of her interlocutor's statement:

(54/13U)

- 1.Magda: så det er veldig bra [. har du barn?  
**so this is very good . do you have children**
- 2.Randi: [ja  
**yes**
3. nei jeg har ikke nei (.6)  
**no I don't no .**
- 4.M: → bare mann [. og du har ikke tid  
**just husband . and you don't have time**
- 5.R: [mm bare mann  
**mm just husband**
- 6.M: for barn [. nei  
**for children . no**
- 7.R: [eh he he he jo: jeg kunne jo  
**jo: I could**
8. da (--) men jeg har ikke det ikke ennå  
**(--) but I don't have children at least not**
9. i hvert fall nei  
**yet no**
- 10.M: → broren min også har ikke tid for barn  
**my brother also doesn't have time for children**
- 11.R: nei  
**no**

Randi's statement in lines 2-3 that she does not have children is interpreted by Magda as the result of not having time for children (lines 4 and 6). Such reasoning is rejected by Randi in lines 7-9, it seems however that Magda did not treat Randi's turn as an objection, as in line 10 she likens Randi to her brother, who 'also doesn't have time for children'<sup>86</sup>. As a result, Randi might feel that an interpretation is imposed on her. However, as the extract shows,

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<sup>86</sup> Notably, Magda uses an erroneous form in this statement, as *også* cannot be correlated with a negative statement. The form *heller* should have been used instead.

she does not oppose the comparison in the subsequent turns, which might suggest that she attributes Magda's turn to her lacking language command. The following extract is another case of a wrong inference delivered by the other speaker. However, unlike in extract (54), the subsequent rejection of the reformulation is acknowledged.

(55/14F)

- 1.Tomasz: ja jeg synes det var veldig bra: egentlig (.5)  
**yes I think it was very good actually . how .**
2. hvordan . de andre dagene var bare økonomi 1.1  
**the other days it was just economy .**
- 3.Eirik: okei  
**ok**
- 4.T: hele hele dag med tall og drit o:g=  
**whole day with numbers and shit a:nd**
- 5.E: → =kjedelig .  
**boring .**
- 6.T: å ja var kjedelig men [nyttig da  
**oh yes [it] was boring but useful then**
- 7.E: [ma- man må liksom kunne det da  
**yo- you have to know it kind of**
- 8.T: ja (1s) det var veldig sånn grunnleggende  
**yes . it was very basic**
- 9.E: ja  
**yes**

Tomasz and Eirik are talking about a course that Tomasz has lately attended. Eirik does not have first-hand knowledge about the event, so his suggestions can only be based on his own experiences or on inference from Tomasz's expressions. In line 4, Tomasz explains that the second day of the course was just about *tall og drit* og 'numbers and shit and', a statement which is interpreted by Eirik as meaning that Tomasz values this part of the course negatively. Hence, in line 5 he offers a candidate understanding of Tomasz's account of the course as *kjedelig* 'boring'. However, in line 6 Tomasz confirms the understanding only partially, suggesting that it was also useful. His opinion is immediately taken up by Eirik in line 7 who aligns with his interlocutor by delivering a

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paraphrase of his prior turn as *man må liksom kunne det da* 'you just have to kind of know this'.

### 6.1.2.5.Paraphrases prompted by a signalled problem

Some paraphrases however seem to be triggered by difficulties signalled by the other party in formulating his or her utterances. Such a case is illustrated by the following extract:

(56/13U)

- 1.Magda: bare den er som e:hm . som har ikke .  
**just those are who e:hm . who don't have .**
2. så mye penger hjemme  
**so much money at home**
- 3.Randi: ja  
**yes**
- 4.M: jeg tro- ehm  
**I think ehm**
- 5.R: → ja for det kommer an på familiens- [. økonomi  
**yes because it depends on family's . finances**
- 6.M: [ja  
**yes**
7. ja ja  
**yes yes**
- 8.R: ja?  
**yes?**
9. (-- ) du trenger ikke å betale men da: (.5)  
**(-- ) you don't have to pay but then .**
10. men (.4) en kjempe: kjempe kjempe kjempe eh  
**but . a lot lot lot lot eh**
11. ehm: (1.5) hva jeg vil å sa (.7) jeg vil å si  
**ehm . what I want to said . I want to say**
12. at ehm . eh (.5) det er vanskelig å:  
**that ehm . eh . it is difficult to**
13. fikk . denne penger [for på skolen  
**got . this money for to school**
- 14.R: [ja ja okei ja  
**yes yes ok yes**
- 15.M: veldig vanskelig  
**very difficult**
- 16.R: → ja så det er stor konkurranse eller ja  
**yes so there is a big competition or yes**

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- 17.M: veldig stor konkurranse [og du: . kan ikke ha:  
**very big competition and you: . cannot have .**
- 18.R: [ja  
**yes**
- 19.M: (1.2) du kan ikke ehm . du kan ikke ha (.7)  
**you cannot ehm . you cannot have .**
20. du må ha ingenting heh he heh he  
**you have to have nothing heh he heh he**
- 21.R: uhm ja  
**uhm yes**
- 22.M: så: (1s) [dem har  
**so: . they have**
- 23.R [men jeg hørte det er mange mange  
**but I heard there are many many**
24. universiteter i Polen . så det er liksom uhm (.7)  
**universities in Poland . so there is kind of uhm .**
- 25.M: mange  
**many**
- 26.R: men det er jo stort land også . i og for seg  
**but it is jo a big country as well . in itself**
27. [så det er jo: ja (2s)  
**so it is jo: yes .**
- 28.M: [mhm det er stor det (1.2)  
**mhm it is big it .**
- 29.R: ja (1.8)  
**yes .**

The topic discussed here concerns student funding offered by the Polish state. Magda attempts to explain the specificity of the Polish system, and in lines 1-2, explains the so called "social scholarships", offered to students from families with low incomes. Upon her hesitation in delivering a turn, Randi provides a reformulation in line 5, offering a candidate understanding. Her suggestion is accepted by Magda, who subsequently delivers a long turn full of hesitation markers displaying the difficulty in formulating her utterance (lines 9-13 and 15). The explanation is accepted by Randi and reformulated into an or-inquiry to confirm the understanding (line 16). In the paraphrase, Randi offers the lexeme *konkurranse* 'competition' which is taken up by Magda in the following turn and used to develop a further explanation. However, the explanation in lines 17-20 is delivered in a hesitating manner with a serious grammatical mistake which seems to impede Randi's

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comprehension. In line 21, Randi provides a support signal *uhm ja*, yet her following turn is not coherent with Magda's prior talk. It can be considered an unsuccessful attempt to change the topic. In lines 25 and 28, Magda offers only minimal contributions to the topic, which results in its abandonment by both parties. This extract is an example of reformulations that actually enable the topic to be continued. When the paraphrase is not provided, the mutual understanding is lost and needs to be built up anew.

### 6.1.2.6 Paraphrases as co-constructed turns

Some instances of paraphrases are delivered while the other speaker is still completing his/her turn, which means that they to some extent precede the upcoming utterance and reformulate it before it is delivered. Those COLLABORATIVE COMPLETIONS have been found to perform "the textual function of back-referencing, the interpersonal function of creating solidarity and the ideational function of checking understanding" (Skovholt, 1999: 75, my translation, PH). The collaborative completion may be triggered by a signalled problem, as in the following extract.

(57/13U)

1. Magda: og så faren min også jobber i: i i ambulans?  
**and my father also works i:n in in ambulance?**
2. så at han kan ikke fordi han har ikke  
**so that he cannot because he does not have**
3. mye tid [. så  
**much time . so**
4. Randi: → [ja ja så han er ambulanse:-[  
**yes yes so he is ambulance:-**
5. M: → [sjåfør  
**driver**
6. R: ja  
**yes**
7. M: ja så: det er vanskelig å ha dyr  
**yes so: it is difficult to have animals**
8. R: ja  
**yes**

Magda is telling Randi about her parents' work. In lines 1-3, she provides an utterance concerning her father's work being the



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turn with the conjunction *selv om* 'although', synonymous to the conjunction *enda* 'though' used by Gunhild. Consequently, Gunhild's paraphrase can be interpreted as a token of alignment, claiming common ground as regards the topic discussed. The following extract exhibits a similar example of an inference based on common knowledge:

(59/4F)

1. Greta: det var helt tilfeldig fordi: . han som skulle  
**it was purely coincidental because: . he who**  
gjøre det [han dukka ikke opp=  
**was to do it he didn't come**
3. Frøydis:→ [nei som vi alle =nei og  
**no as we all no and**
4. du fikk ikke tak i ham og du ringte og ringte  
**you could not get in touch with him and you**  
[og ringte så vidt jeg skjønnte=  
**kept ringing as far as I know**
5. G: [nei =men så  
**no but so**
6. også jeg var så fortvilt  
**also I was so desperate**

In extract (59), Frøydis claims common knowledge by referring to an event she does not have first-hand knowledge of, in Greta's stead (lines 3-5). By doing this, she frames herself as a knowledgeable speaker, but also as an eager participant.

(60/14F)

1. Tomasz: veldig lett vint å skrive:  
**very easy to write:**
2. Eirik:→ skrive meldinger  
**write messages**
3. T: ja meldinger o:g .  
**yes messages a:nd .**
4. E: .ja  
**.ja**

Extract (60), on the other hand, exhibits an example of a conversational inference. The participants are discussing a particular type of a cell phone, and in line 1 Tomasz provides an

opinion that it is very easy to write, prolonging the last vowel. This strategy is interpreted by Eirik as a word search, and hence in line 2 he fills in, providing the lexeme *meldinger* 'text messages'. Tomasz accepts the suggestion, but elaborates the turn, adding other functions which the phone is useful for (line 3 and subsequent talk not rendered here). By offering a completion of the prior turn, Eirik displays understanding and at the same time involvement in constructing the conversation. A similar fill-in, yet overlapping with the interlocutor's turn, is exhibited in the following extract:

- (61/4F)
1. Greta: @jeg sier men jeg tør ikke hvis alt bare  
**@I say but I dare not if everything just**
2. faller av@ ikke sant så [blir det-  
**falls out not true so it will be**
3. Frøydis: → [så står du der  
**so you stand there**
4. uten-[  
**without**
5. G: → [uten vindu (-- )og han sier  
**without a window (-- )and he says**
6. nei jeg fikser det  
**no I fix it**
7. F: .ja  
**.ja**

The participants are talking about refurbishing old houses. Lines 1-2 are Greta's narrative concerning her house. In lines 3-4, Frøydis offers a collaborative completion of Greta's turn, even though the latter seems perfectly capable of completing her utterance herself. However, in line 2 Greta delivered a tag question *ikke sant* 'not true', thus requesting her interlocutor's confirmation. Hence, Frøydis' turn can be interpreted as a comprehension signal rather than a correcting item. The practice is repeated in line 5, where Greta fills in her interlocutor's incomplete utterance by repeating the last item and continuing her narrative. In a way, Greta incorporates the suggestion of her interlocutor into her own talk, a strategy that Frøydis does not challenge. The effectiveness of collaborative completions in 4F is remarkable and may be attri-

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buted to the relation between the participants, which has been described as “very close to friendship” by Greta. The overall impression of the talk is that its participants align with one another to a great extent. 4F conversation has a very fast pace, and as a result yields the largest number of words of all conversations while not being the longest (4F lasted for thirty minutes, which was the average length of conversations recorded in the study). The following extract from 4F exhibits even more frequent collaborative completions:

- (62/4F)
- 1.Greta: fordi den . tjukke ledningen som går fra  
**because this . thick cable that goes from**
2. den boksen som står utenfor huset  
**that box that stands outside the house**
- 3.Frøydis: j[a  
**yes**
- 4.G: [(-) sånn boks  
**(-) such box**
- 5.F: fordelingsgate eller sikringsgate heter det ja he he he  
**division box or fuse box it is called yes he he**
- 6.G: slik at den ledning må være sånn på måte  
**such that that cable must be such**
7. at den kan inspiseres  
**that it can be checked**
- 8.F: → .j[a =synlig  
**.ja visible**
- 9.G: [ikke sant= synlig altså så jeg  
**not true visible so I didn't get it**
10. skjønnte ikke men det er for å forebygge at  
**but this is to prevent that someone just**
11. noen kan bare koble seg til ikke sant  
**connects up to [the network] not true**
- 12.F: → ja [ja [stjele  
**yes yes steal**
- 13.G: [du kan [koble (-) til sikkerhetsboksen og  
**you can connect (-) to the fuse box and**
14. da kan du stjele strømmen det tenkte jeg ikke på  
**then you can steal electricity I did not think about it**

The topic of the extract is housing again, and in lines 1-2 Greta explains some details of her home electric installation. Her turn is

acknowledged by Frøydis in line 3, yet in line 4 Greta focuses on the detail again. Only then does Frøydis provide her with the correct lexeme (line 5). The topic is further developed, with Frøydis granting reception by *.ja* in line 7, upon which Greta delivers a tag question *ikke sant* 'not true', asking for a comprehension signal, which is provided by means of a paraphrase of the phrase *den kan inspiseres* 'it can be checked' (lines 6-7) as *synlig* 'visible' (line 8). The suggestion is incorporated by Greta into her following utterance. The same practice of requesting confirmation through *ikke sant* and granting it by paraphrase is observed in lines 11-12. Frøydis' second suggestion is also incorporated in the further talk by Greta (*stjele* 'steal' in line 14).

Collaborative completions analysed in this section are in many ways functionally synonymous with instances of paraphrasing interlocutors' statements, in that they show alignment and claim common ground. However, the practice seems not fully in line with the Norwegian conversation pattern, where interrupting is not valued positively. However, in extracts (58) and (60) the completions are delivered after a pause or a prolonged vowel, respectively, which means they cannot be perceived as interruptions. Extracts (61) and (62) do provide evidence of interrupting, but at the same time the data shows that the paraphrase is triggered by the tag question *ikke sant*, functioning as an involvement request. Hence, the initial hypothesis of interruptions being dispreferred in Norwegian conversation is not discarded, but does indeed seem to general to account for all instances of interruption.

#### 6.1.2.7 Lexical paraphrases

Another group of paraphrases is different from the previously discussed ones in that they do not introduce any new perspective on the given topic, and as such do not contribute to the topical development. These reformulations merely render the same meaning in a different linguistic form. In some cases, the paraphrase is a reaction to a problem signalled by the other speaker, as in extract (63):

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(63/13U)

1. Magda: nå: (1s) mora mi har jobb (.6) hun-e ja hun vil ikke  
**now . my mother has a job . she yes she does not want to**
2. så mye job- å jobbe som eh på farm [. ja hun-e  
**so much wor- to work as eh on a farm . yes she**
3. Randi: [nei  
**no**
4. → hun ville ha en annen jobb enn hun ville ikke  
**she wanted a different job than she did not want**
5. jobbe med dyrene [. nei  
**to work with animals . no**
6. M: [ja  
**yes**

In lines 1-2, Magda talks about her mother not keeping farm animals anymore. Her turn is delivered with hesitation markers, using the lexeme *farm*, which is indeed used in Norwegian, but rather referring to English conditions. Randi's paraphrase in lines 4-5 is hence both an understanding confirmation, and an instance of other-repair. A somewhat similar example is found in extract (64), though the Norwegian participant does not provide the proper lexeme and follows her interlocutor's descriptive method of arriving at common meaning:

(64/4F)

1. Greta: og så tar du en ryggsekk og så: .  
**and so you take a rucksack and so: .**
2. sånne tjukke tunge ski  
**such thick heavy skis**
3. Frøydis:→ .ja fjell- sånne fjellski=  
**.ja mountain such mountain skis**
5. G: =ja  
**yes**
6. F: uhm

In delivering the reformulation in line 3, Frøydis confirms the comprehension of Greta's prior turn, offering a lexeme more specific than Greta's descriptive suggestion *tjukke tunge ski* 'thick heavy skis'. However, the item *fjellski*, delivered together with the attribute *sånne* 'such', has the form of just another suggestion, not a



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- 6.R: .hh hvilken hun er (.4) rektor eller lærer  
**.hh what kind of she is rector or teacher**
- 7.V: ja  
**yes**
8. → ja etikken og [moralen som er viktigst mhm  
**yes ethics and morality which is the most important mhm**
- 9.R: [etikken ja . etter min mening  
**ethics yes . in my opinion**
- 10.V: det var det . .ja  
**it was it . .ja**

In lines 1-6, Regina delivers an opinion on what she considers to be factors vital for a good relation between colleagues at work. She provides a story of her colleague from Poland (referred to as *hun* in the talk). In line 8, Vidar reformulates her statement to change the personal matter into a more general comment on the topic. By doing this, he shows understanding of what Regina means by her story. His inference is confirmed in line 9, where Regina takes up his suggestion and incorporates in her own turn. The pro-repeat in subsequent turn (line 10) replicates the content from line 8. Thus, both turns do not offer any new information, repeating the “established” facts instead. The following extract provides a similar instance of paraphrase:

(67/11U)

- 1.Julia: men jeg blir . også å lære norsk  
**but I will be . also to teach Norwegian**
2. da vil jeg jobbe med innvandrere  
**then I want to work with immigrants**
- 3.Gunhild:→ uhm (.4) norsk som andrespråk=  
**uhm . Norwegian as a second language**
- 4.J: =ja ja jeg  
**yes yes I**
5. har tatt faget norsk som andrespråk så  
**have taken the course Norwegian as a second language so**

In lines 1-2, Julia talks about her prospective work. Her statement *jobbe med innvandrere* ‘work with immigrants’ is acknowledged by Gunhild in line 3, upon which she provides a paraphrase of the prior statement, using the name of the field and at the same time the course that prepares one to be an immigrant teacher. In lines 4-

5, Julia refers to that understanding, saying that she has taken the course and is as such prepared for her work. The same practice is also applied by NNSs, however not as frequently as by the NSSs:

(68/7U)

- 1.Gina: og som . trengte tegnspråk [. (1s) så det  
**and who . needed sign language . so it**
- 2.Agnieszka: [mm
- 3.G: trenges jo det=  
**is needed jo it**
- 4.A: → =ja det er stort behov [for (.6)  
**yes there is a great need for**
- 5.G: [mhm
- 6.A: (for det) (.4) .ja (-- ) så klart  
**(for it) . .ja (-- ) of course**
- 7.G: ja he he  
**yes he he**
- 8.A: he he

In extract (68), Agnieszka reformulates Gina's statement from lines 1 and 3, substituting the verbal form *det trenges* 'it is needed' but a verb+noun composition *det er stort behov* 'there is a great need'. The paraphrase is additionally justified by the use of inclusive particle in Gina's statement *jo* (line 3) which defines the delivered opinion as belonging to the common knowledge. Hence, Agnieszka's turn seems a natural understanding confirmation, at the same time showing alignment with her interlocutor's opinion. The following three extracts also include paraphrases of subjective opinions, thus signalling agreement with the interlocutor:

(69/4F)

- 1.Greta: for du vet du har det sånn som du vil  
**because you know you have it just the way you**
2. ha det [ikke sant  
**want to not true**
- 3.Frøydis: [ja  
**yes**
4. → jo det er (-- ) kan få bestemme helt sånn sjølv  
**jo it is (-- ) can decide by oneself**
- 5.G: ikke sant  
**not true**

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In lines 1-2, Greta expresses an opinion on furnishing a house, followed by a tag question *ikke sant*. As previously observed, the question invites interlocutor's agreement and triggers a paraphrase, in this extract delivered in line 4.

(70/11U)

1. Julia: og skikkelig artig @å høre på samtalene og@ .  
**and lots of fun to @listen to the conversations@ and .**
2. [men det var litt slitsomt å transkribere  
**but it was a bit tiring to transcribe**
3. Gunh.: [mhm
4. J: [he he he  
**he he he**
5. G: → [ja transkripsjonsoppgaver er de verste  
**yes transcribing are the worst**

In extract (70), Julia states two contrastive opinions regarding the language data she used for her master's thesis, connected with the conjunction *men* 'but'. Her latter opinion on doing the transcriptions (lines 1-2) is reformulated by Gunhild to refer to a general state of facts, signalled by the temporal change (*var* to *er*).

(71/5U)

1. Joanna: det er viktig for meg . å ha kontakt med dem  
**it is important for me . to have contact with them .**
2. (1.3) jeg trives . (i jobben) mhm [ja  
**I like . (my work) mhm yes**
3. Tone: [det er  
**it is**
4. → veldig givende synes jeg å jobbe med barn  
**very rewarding I think to work with children**
5. J: mhm
6. T: det er det  
**it is**
7. J: mhm
8. T: det det er givende  
**it it is rewarding**
9. J: mhm . det er veldig vanskelig jobb  
**mhm . it is a very difficult job**
10. T: → ja krevende  
**yes demanding**

- 11.J: ja (2s) fordi barna . er . forskjellig .  
**yes . because children . are . different .**
- 12.T: ja  
**yes**

Extract (71) is similar to the previous one when it comes to giving contrasting opinions. In lines 1-2, Joanna is talking about her work as a teacher. In lines 3-4, Tone continues the topic by offering the general opinion on being a teacher, using the lexeme *givende* 'rewarding'. Joanna acknowledges the statement only with a minimal response which does not explicitly show comprehension of the Tone's turn. As a result, Tone delivers a minimal paraphrase of her own turn<sup>87</sup> (line 6), and repeats the opinion in line 6. Joanna's subsequent reaction may be interpreted twofold: it may be treated as a sign of misunderstanding, since Joanna's contribution does not align with her interlocutor's statement and lacks the proper marking of misalignment (as for instance *men*, observed in extract 70). Alternatively, Joanna might have understood the turn but failed to mark contrast by means of a proper conjunction. Tone's reaction shows that she adopts the former interpretation, rather attributing Joanna's turn to a confusion between two words *givende* 'rewarding' og *krevende* 'demanding' (line 10). As a result, mutual comprehension in this extract seems somewhat distorted.

#### 6.1.2.9 Conclusions

Reformulations analysed in this section confirm that one of their functions is to check understanding, which is achieved by means of suggesting a possible interpretation and awaiting its confirmation/rejection, or by means of a collaborative completion. Notably, few instances of explicit reformulations of the form *så du mener/synes* 'so you think' were found, which would suggest that the practice is perceived as a face-threatening act, overtly displaying the other party's incomprehensibility. This finding is con-

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<sup>87</sup> As this section deals with paraphrasing the interlocutor's turn, minimal paraphrases on one's own turn will not be discussed in depth here. However, they seem an interesting phenomenon of Norwegian conversations.

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sistent with the fact that other-corrections have been found to be dispreferred in Norwegian conversations. That paraphrases are delivered exclusively by NSs leads to a conclusion that they feel more responsible for maintaining mutuality in the conversation. On the other hand, the practice fulfills other functions alongside confirming understanding. It contributes to the topical development of the talk and can be employed to re-table a previous topic or introduce a topical shift. It also serves to display alignment with the interlocutor and thus maintain harmony in the conversation. At the same time, even when rejected in the course of talk, reformulations prompt a consensus negotiation sequence, and thus contribute to the agreement building process that is being conducted in the conversation. Successful collaborative completions, delivered while the other party is telling about their subjective opinion or experience, will contribute to the impression of being alike, which also strengthens the harmony between the interlocutors. Therefore, paraphrases are characteristic for Norwegian discourse in general, even though they may be more frequent in interethnic conversations, where the risk of misunderstanding is at least potentially greater.

Paraphrases, alongside pro-repeats and echo-turns analysed in the subsequent sections, can also perform the function of slowing down the pace of the conversation and thus preparing "ground" for a topic change. By repeating the interlocutor's statements, the speaker signals a fading involvement in the topic discussed and the willingness to bring about a new issue. At the same time, such practice leaves the interlocutor the possibility of choosing whether he/she wishes to continue or introduce a topic change. Thus, the practice of paraphrasing allows the speakers a non-distinct and non-invading management of the interaction.

## 6.2 Pro-repeats

As previously stated, pro-repeats reformulate the prior statement in a form typical for Norwegian short answers, that is, by substituting an auxiliary for the verb, and the pronoun *det* for the object/adverbial of the sentence. Instances of the practice can also be found in the NoTa corpus:

(72/Be\_003-004)

- 1.A: men på den annen side så kan det jo .  
**but on the other hand so can it jo .**  
 2. k- det er jo ikke så sosialt  
**c- it is jo not so social**  
 3.B: → nei det er ikke det hehe . nei . mm  
**no it is not hehe . no . mm**

(73/Ukj\_055-056)

- 1.A: ja [. mm [. ja det er f- setre  
**yes . mm . yes there are pastures**  
 2.B: [men [ja  
**but yes**  
 3.A: innover fjellet hele veien der  
**in the mountains the whole way there**  
 4.B: → det er jo det  
**there are jo them**

As extract (73) shows, the paraphrase may be equipped with an additional particle (*jo*), strengthening the speaker's commitment to the content of the reformulated statement. There are 11 identified pro-repeats in the study data, which accounts for approximately 15% of all instances of paraphrasing. Only one of these has been delivered by the NNSs

### 6.2.1 Pro-repeats as continuers

The majority of pro-repeats found in the data serve to mark the speaker's participation in the talk, and as such can be treated as continuers, as found in the following extract:

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(74/5U)

- 1.Joanna: ja (2s) fordi barna . er . forskjellig .  
**yes . because children . are . different**
- 2.Tone: ja  
**yes**
- 3.J: mhm
- 4.T: → dem er det  
**they are**
- 5.J: mhm (2s)

Extract (74) is a continuation of the stretch of talk presented in extract (71), the topic being teaching. In the previous extract, the participants agreed that teachers' work is demanding, and in line 1 Joanna offers an explanation as to why it is so. In line 2, Tone minimally accepts the suggestion, which is followed by a support signal *mhm* from Joanna. Upon that, Tone delivers a pro-repeat (line 4). The practice functions as an understanding token, but even more than that it serves as a means of returning the floor to the previous speaker. The same situation can be observed in the following extract:

(75/14F)

- 1.Tomasz: det er litt sånn (.8) det er litt ekkelt da  
**it is a bit such . it is a bit unpleasant then**
- 2.Eirik:→ja det er det (.6)  
**yes it is .**
- 3.T: mm

Tomasz is telling Eirik about the tasks they were performing on a course he attended. In line 1, he offers an opinion on how he feels about the activity, upon which Eirik delivers a pro-repeat *det er det 'it is'* (line 2), followed by a pause and a support signal *mm* from Tomasz (line 3). Again, more than confirming understanding, Eirik's turn functions as a conversation continuer, immediately returning the floor to the prior speaker, who may choose to close the topic or provide additional information, as illustrated in extract (76):



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4. helt prosjekt  
**a real project**
5. Frøydis: → jo det er [sikkert det  
**jo surely it is**
6. G: [ja altså nå  
**yes well now**
7. på vinteren så pleier jeg ikke åpne fordi .  
**in the winter I don't open [them] because .**
8. dem tar inn vann . og så (0.8)  
**they take in water . and so .**

Extract (77) exhibits a pro-repeat equipped with the particle *sikkert* 'surely', the use of which has already been discussed for extract (38). However, in this case, rather than marking certainty, the particle shows strong alignment with the interlocutor's statement. In lines 1-4, Greta is referring her habits of washing windows, claiming that it is *helt prosjekt* 'a whole project', which naturally is her own subjective impression. Frøydis' utterance in line 5 confirms the statement, aligning with Greta in her perception of the difficulty of the task. At the same time, the paraphrase serves only to mark understanding and immediately "hands" the floor back to the other speaker.

The two following extracts exhibit mitigating examples of pro-repeats, downgrading the prior speaker's statement by used of particles (extract 78) and litotes (extract 79).

- (78/1U)
1. Grażyna: men også de mellom . segimellom hverandre .  
**but also they between . between themselves .**
2. så det var jo så veldig . rolig og .  
**so it was jo so very . calm and .**
3. Eli: ja  
**yes**
4. G: sparsom  
**sparse**
5. E: → ja det er [nok forskjell uhm det er nok det  
**yes it probably is different it probably is**
6. G: [så det-  
**so that**
7. [mens jeg likte det veldig godt  
**while I liked it a lot**

8. det var så fin stemming  
**it was such a nice atmosphere**  
 9.E: mhm

The topic of extract (78) is the Norwegian way of being, on which Grażyna offers several comments. In lines 1-2 and 4, she compares Norwegians from northern parts of the country to people inhabiting *Trøndelag*, claiming that the latter group is less talkative and quieter. Her statements are paraphrased by Eli in line 5, with the use of the particle *nok* 'probably'. The reformulation is formally a weak agreement with the claims put forward by Grażyna, but practically it may function as a disagreement signal (see chapter 8 on disagreement signals in Norwegian). Grażyna's turn in lines 7-8 serves as means of downplaying the criticism by focusing on the positive aspects of social gatherings in Norway. At the same time, it shows Grażyna's understanding that she has indulged in a verbal behaviour which possibly may lead to a disagreement, which would not be an accepted situation, especially between strangers. Hence, her move is a method to restore mutual agreement and come back to the safe conversation.

- (79/14F)  
 1.Tomasz: han ser gjennom deg (1s) tvers gjennom deg  
**he sees through you . though you**  
 2.Eirik:→ gjør sikkert det (.4)  
**he surely does .**  
 3.T: faen de:t skummelt altså [he he  
**hell it is scary indeed he he**  
 4.E: → [det er det ja:  
**it is ye:s**  
 5. det er litt skummelt  
**it is a bit scary**

In extract (79), the paraphrases equipped with mitigating signals serve to mark the distance between speakers. In line 1, Tomasz talks about a psychologist present at the course he has attended, and offers a humorous opinion of his skills. In line 2, Eirik accepts his opinion by repeating the turn in a pronominalised form, and signals comprehension of the joking mood of the utterance by the

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sarcastic use of the particle *sikkert* 'surely, I bet'. Similarly, Tomasz's statement from line 3 is reformulated in line 4, first minimally *det er det ja* 'it is that yes' and then accompanied by litotes *det er litt skummelt* 'it is a bit scary'. Eirik's utterances in this extract show minimal involvement and rather a strong preference to leave the floor to the other participant, which might be interpreted as lack of interest in the topic. His reformulations offer only a minimal feedback and do not contribute to the topical development of the dialogue, other than by signalling listening.

### 6.2.3 Conclusions

Summing up, the predominant function of minimal paraphrases is to signal participation in the conversation without taking the floor to such extent as paraphrasing requires. The practice can be hence considered to serve as a continuer, which is also the predominant function of some echo-turns, discussed below. Moreover, the reformulated turns may also be equipped with an upgrading or a downgrading particle, the former signalling stronger and the latter - weaker commitment to the supposition included in the prior turn.

## 6.3 Echo-turns

Echo-turns have previously been assigned to label instances of repeating the prior turn, or a part of it, in virtually the same form, as the examples from the NoTa corpus show:

(80/Fam\_005-006)

- 1.B: ja vi må jo dra innen Norden  
**yes we have to travel in the Nordic countries**
- 2.A: → vi må dra innen Norden  
**we have to travel in the Nordic countries**
- 3.B: så det er jo grenser for hvor man kan  
**so there are jo limits as to where we can**

(81/Ukj\_055-056)

- 1.A: ja . det er liksom  
**yes . it is sort of**
- 2.B: det er lett vint og greit  
**it is simple and easy**
- 3.A: → lett vint og greit (--)  
**simple and easy (--)**
- 4.B: slepper jeg å drive med @drive med maten selv da@  
**I do not have to @prepare food myself@**

As previously discussed, echo-turns have been interpreted as signalling the need for obtaining further information, rather than displaying agreement or understanding (Foppa, 1995). However, language data studied in this section seems to contradict this claim. Echo-turns can be attributed several discursive functions, which will be presented below. Moreover, the majority of the identified echo-turns (30 instances) have been delivered by the NSs, whereas echo-turns produced by the NNSs account for only 4 of them. Such a discrepancy points to the echo-turn being a practice characteristic for Norwegian spoken discourse. Alternatively, the frequency of delivering echo-turns by the NSs might be lead to perceiving echo-turns as a practice restricted to interethnic conversations. However, as previously stated, the practice has also been found frequent in native conversational data from the NoTa corpus.

### 6.3.1 Echo-turns as corrections

Three of the analysed instances can be attributed to the interethnic character of the talk, as they exemplify embedded corrections (cf. chapter 5).

(82/7U)

- 1.Gina: ja hvor lenge har du bodd i Norge?  
**yes how long have you lived in Norway?**
- 2.Agn.: mm ja . i Norge i nesten em: . tre og halv? .3  
**mm yes . in Norway almost em: . three and half**
- 3.G: → tre og et halvt år ja (.5)  
**three and a half yes .**
- 4.A: .ja  
**.ja**

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Extract (82) comes from the beginning of the dialogue, and exhibits the opening question of Gina (line 1). The answer is delivered in a hesitant manner, with frequent pauses, and includes two grammatical errors, namely the omission of the article *et* and the incongruent form of the numeral (*halv* instead of *halvt*, line 2). Gina's turn in line 3 functions both as a correction and as a reception token. A similar embedded correction can be seen in the following extract.

(83/4F)

1. Frøydis: pipegreiene er montert det så vi mangler  
**the chimney is installed so we only need**
2. Greta: så det kan bare brukes  
**so it<sup>n</sup> can be just used**
3. F: → så den kan brukes [. så det var jo greit  
**so it<sup>m</sup> can be used . so it was jo good**
4. G: [ja  
**yes**
5. F: å få til før da  
**to make it before then**

Extract (83) comes from a stretch of talk concerning the oven in Frøydis' newly renovated cabin in the woods. In line 2, Greta fills in with a paraphrase *så det kan bare brukes* 'so it<sup>n</sup> can just be used'. In the following turn Frøydis repeats the statement, yet using a pronoun *den* 'it<sup>m</sup>', referring to the oven which is masculine genus (*en ovn*). The delivered echo-turn is confirmed by Greta (*ja* in line 4), after which Frøydis continues with the topic. Unlike the two previous examples, the following extract exhibits a minor lexical error being corrected in the form of an echo-turn.

(84/13U)

1. Magda: jeg jobber som-e: (.5) ja alt . som jeg  
**I work as-e: . yes everything . what I**
2. trenger og bare ikke bare ikke . ikke bare  
**need and just not just not . just not**
3. me:d jeg jobber ikke me:d (1.4) uhm mm  
**wi:th I do not work with . uhm mm**
4. regneskap [. bare fordi jeg  
**accounts . just because I**

- 5.Randi: → [nei ikke regnskap . det hører ikke  
no not accounts . it does not belong
6. med men alt annet  
to [it] but everything else
- 7.M: alt  
everything
- 8.R: ja ja  
yes yes

In lines 1-4, Magda is telling Randi about her work. However, she struggles to explain that she does not do accounting, as seen in the repetition of the expression *bare ikke* 'just not', and the long pause before finally delivering the desired lexeme, yet in a slightly distorted form *regneskap*. Hence, in line 5 Randi accepts the word used, and at the same time corrects the lexeme to the proper *regnskap* 'accounting'. Immediately after the echo-turn, Randi delivers a candidate understanding of Magda's turn, suggesting that accounting does not belong to her duties, but all the other works do (*men alt annet* 'but everything else'). Magda confirms the understanding by repeating the single lexeme *alt* 'everything' (line 6)<sup>88</sup>. The miniature side sequence started by Randi in line 5-5, serves as reconfirming understanding of the talk delivered by Magda.

On the whole, the instances of NNS repeating the NS's turns in 13U are more frequent than in other conversations. The fact might be attributed to the fact that Magda's language command is among the weakest compared to other participants. Her repetitions are most recurrent in cases of word-searches, when she repeats the proposed lexeme as if trying to memorize it. Moreover, she treats Randi's repetition as correction, even if they are not intended to perform such function, as seen in extract (85):

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<sup>88</sup> Notably, repeating a part of the previous statement is not an idiomatic way of confirming understanding in Norwegian. It bears resemblance to echo-answers, being a natural response to polar interrogatives for speakers of such languages as Russian, Finnish and Urdu, yet not for Norwegian (see Svennevig, 2003b: 304).



aligns with her interlocutor (in the following talk, not rendered here). The following extract is a continuation of the topic, and exhibits another instance of an echo-turn delivered by Magda, which is not linguistically correct:

(86/13U)

- 1.Randi: ja fordi de er for små til å forstå  
**yes because they are too little<sup>PL</sup> to understand**
2. [. sånne ja ja  
**. such yes yes**
- 3.Magda:→ [ja hun er for små til å forstå (.3)  
**yes she is too little<sup>PL</sup> to understand .**
4. veldig vanskelig (.7) men  
**very difficult . but**
- 5.R: ja  
**yes**
- 6.M: det er bare for kort tid  
**it is just for a short time**
- 7.R: → ja det er for kort tid og så . ja  
**yes it is for a short time and so . yes**
8. om noen år så blir det nok  
**in a few years so it will probably be**
- 9.M: mhm

Prior to the rendered extract, Magda explained that her daughter gets spoiled when she is visiting her father, who buys her everything she wants. Randi reformulates the problem to refer to children raising in general<sup>91</sup>, and in lines 1-2 delivers a paraphrase *ja fordi de er for små til å forstå* 'yes because they are too little<sup>PL</sup> to understand'. This utterance is repeated by Magda in lines 3-4, thus confirming Randi's understanding. However, Magda's statement contains an incongruent form of the adjective *liten* 'little', which has a feminine form *lita* and plural *små*. Magda repeats Randi's utterance without inflecting the adjective to correspond to the subject *hun* 'she'. In the following turns, Magda develops the topic by presenting the situation as temporary (line 6). Her utterance is echoed and reformulated by Randi (lines 7-8), who thus displays alignment with her interlocutor.

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<sup>91</sup> Generalisations can be considered as means of distancing oneself from the discussed topics and avoiding personal topics.

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### 6.3.2 Echo-turns as alignment display

Similarly to the second example of echo-turn analysed in extract (86), the following extract also exhibits an echo-turn, the function of which is to align with the other speaker:

- (87/11U)
1. Julia: ja jeg liker for eksempel desember og november  
**yes I like for instance December and November**
  2. for da er jeg veldig glad i vinteren .  
**because then I like winter .**
  3. men når det kommer til februar  
**but when it is February**
  4. [og mars da begynner jeg å bli skikkelig  
**and March then I begin to be really**
  5. Gunh.: [mhm da begynner man å bli  
**mhm then you begin to be**
  6. J: lei [av det  
**fed up with it**
  7. G: → [mhm man blir lei  
**mhm you are fed up**
  8. J: av all snøen og vinteren ja (.3)  
**with all the snow and winter yes .**

In this stretch of talk, the participants are discussing winter. In lines 1-4, Julia delivers her opinion on winter by means of contrasting two time periods: *desember og november* (line 1) and *februar og mars* (lines 3-4). The contrast makes it easy for Gunhild to infer what the following utterance will be. As a result, she attempts a collaborative completion (line 5), yet interrupts, and delivers an echo-turn, repeating Julia's statement (line 7). Both the paraphrase attempt and the echo-turn serve the function of displaying a shared opinion on the matter. One can also align with the other speaker by upgrading her statements, thus agreeing with the opinion presented in it.

- (88/4F)
1. Greta: ellers så . ja men det er det veldig  
**otherwise so . yes but it is very**
  2. avslappende=  
**relaxing**

- 3.Frøydis: =ja men det er utrolig  
**yes but it is incredibly**
4. → avslappende for du . du får  
**relaxing because you . you get**
5. noe helt annet å [tenke på . du jobber  
**something totally different to think about you work**
- 6.G: [ja  
**yes**
- 7.F: litt og litt sånn fysisk aktivitet [og (.5)  
**a bit and a bit of such physical activity and**
- 8.G: [mhm

The participants are talking about gardening, and in line 1 Greta utters an opinion on that topic. In lines 3-45, Frøydis agrees with her and repeats Greta's utterance exchanging the adverb of degree *veldig* 'very' to a stronger *utrolig* 'incredibly'. In doing this Frøydis delivers an upgrade, which has been found characteristic for environments where agreement is preferred (Pomerantz, 1978 after Wierzbicka, 2003: 138). As previously stated, 4F is on the whole characterised by a strong alignment between the interlocutors.

### 6.3.3 Echo-turns as requests for further information

Extracts (83-88) all exhibit instances of echo-turns which commence a continuation from the "echoing" speaker or leave the floor open to both speakers. The following extracts (89-91), on the other hand, hand the floor back to the prior speaker. As such, they may be perceived as fulfilling the primary function of echo-turns as claimed by Foppa (1995), namely eliciting further information..

(89/9F)

- 1.Vidar: så sjef- så sjefen hans er polsk?  
**so bos- so his boss is Polish?**
- 2.Regina:nei han er norsk  
**no he is Norwegian**
- 3.V: → han er [norsk ja . ja  
**he is Norwegian yes . yes**
- 4.R: [han er norsk men han arbeider noe på  
**he's Norwegian but he works somewhere**
5. S2 eller noen plass (.2) de bygger kanskje noe  
**in S2 or somewhere . they are maybe building something**
- 6.V: mmm

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In line 1, Vidar delivers a clarifying question, which is negatively responded to by Regina (line 2). Vidar's turn in line 3 repeats Regina's answer accompanied by reception token *ja*. However, before he completes the turn his interlocutor embarks on an explanation which she perceives as required. Nonetheless, the explanation need not have been triggered by the echo-turn. Regina could have been prompted to clarify the misunderstanding signalled by Vidar's question. In the following extract, however, the echo-turn functions as a request for further information:

(90/13U)

- 1.Magda: en gang i året er nok  
**once a year is enough**
- 2.Randi: hva da?  
**what then?**
- 3.M: en gang i år er nok  
**once a year is enough**
- 4.R: → en gang i året er nok ja . hm  
**once a year is enough yes . hm**
- 5.M: fordi pappa til Cecylia er veldig travelt så han har ikke  
**because Cecylia's father is very busy so he has no**
- 6.R: ja  
**yes**
- 7.M: (--) så: bare på sommeren  
**(--) so: just in summer**
- 8.R: ja  
**yes**

In extract (120), the topic concerns again Magda's daughter, Cecylia, visiting her father. Prior to the rendered extract, Magda is providing details about Cecylia's father, talking about his work and family. Her statement in line 1 is hence not fully congruent with the prior talk, and not easily comprehensible for Randi. As a result, she delivers a clarification request *hva da* 'what then' (line 2), being an elliptical question about the subject 'what is enough one time a year'. However, Randi's turn is interpreted as a request for repetition or correction by Magda, who in line 3 delivers the statement once again, this time changing the noun form from the definite *en gang i året* 'once a year<sup>DEF</sup>' to the bare *en gang i år* 'once a year'. The following echo-turn (line 4) may hence be interpreted as

a backchannel signal triggering further talk from the previous speaker. At the same time, it is a correction of the noun form to the correct one, which notably has been delivered in the first place.

(91/13U)

1. Magda: og så: (.8) men jeg vet ikke . fordi jeg  
**and so: . but I do not know . because**
2. har vært i Polen (.8) jeg jeg jeg går ikke  
**I have been to Poland . I I I do not go**
3. så ofte til Polen [nei  
**so often to Poland no**
4. Randi: [nei  
**no**
5. M: det er en gang i året  
**it is once a year**
6. R: → en gang i året [ja  
**once a year yes**
7. M: [så det .  
**so that .**
8. R: hvor lenge har du vært i Norge nå (.4)  
**how long have you been in Norway now .**
9. M: fire og halv år åh ja det blir fem år  
**four and half years oh yes it will be five years**
10. [snart neste neste år det blir fem år så:  
**soon next next year it will be five years so:**
11. R: → [fem år ja ja ja .ja ja  
**five years yes yes yes .ja yes**

Extract (91) exhibits a situation similar to the previous one, namely the echo-turn triggering a further clarification from the previous speaker. In lines 1-3 and 5, Magda states the frequency of her visits in Poland. Her last turn (line 5) is echoed by Randi in the following turn. Before the echo-turn is completed, Magda takes the floor and delivers a continuer *så det* 'so it', followed by a pause. The pause constitutes a possible transition point, and is used by Randi to deliver an inquiry (line 8). The crucial information from Magda's answer (lines 9-10) is echoed by Randi in her following turn (line 11), accompanied by repeated reception token *ja* (including the ingressive *.ja*). The function of the latter echo-turn is solely to signal understanding, which seems to be the case for all echo-turns repeating only the most significant information of the prior turn.

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### 6.3.4 Echo-turns as retardations

Yet another group of echo-turns does not seem to fulfill any function other than “putting” the conversation in neutral, with not much real content being exchanged. Instances of such echo-turns are exhibited in extracts (92-95).

(92/7U)

- 1.Agnieszka: der var det skikkelig vinter der  
**there was a real winter there**
- 2.Gina: → der var vinter [. ja (1.3)  
**there was winter . yes .**
- 3.A: [ja hm (1.6)  
**yes hm .**

The participants are discussing winter conditions in different places in Norway. The echo-turn in line 2 merely repeats the statement from line 1, neither signalling understanding nor asking for clarification. Notably, in the pause following the echo-turn, Agnieszka could have continued the topic by depicting the winter conditions in the mentioned place, as she is the only one with first-hand knowledge. Similarly, Gina could have delivered an inquiry into the topic. It seems however, that neither of the participants wishes to take the floor. Consequently, the echo-turn starts a topic closing procedure, characterised by pauses and minimal continuers, such as *ja* and *hm* observed in lines 2-3. In the following extract, even less information is exchanged:

(93/13U)

- 1.Magda: ja . jeg kan gjøre det og det og det .  
**yes . I can do that and that and that .**
2. ja vi skal se hva  
**yes we will see what**
- 2.Randi: → ja vi skal se ja  
**yes we will see yes**
- 3.M: og vi skal se . så (1s) det er sånt  
**and we will see . so . it is like that**
- 4.R: → ja nei men det er nok sånt ja .  
**yes no but it is probably like that yes .**

The stretch of talk comes from the end of the conversation, during which the participants are discussing future plans. Randi echoes Magda's statements two times, once in line 2 and the other time in line 4. The latter echo-turn is slightly modified by the use of a mitigating particle *nok* 'probably'. Both echo-turns do not contribute to the development of the conversation, and serve primarily as means of sustaining the talk rather than developing it in any given direction. The echo-turns hence provide a harmonious transition to the next topic or a harmonious ending of a conversation. A similar exchange is found in the following extract:

(94/14F)

- 1.Tomasz: så nå skal jeg prøve å ringe .  
**so now I will try to call .**  
 2.Eirik: uhm (1.2)  
 3.T: det blir bra  
**it will be good**  
 4.E: → det blir nok bra ja  
**it will probably be good yes**

As we can see, in the extract Tomasz is more active in maintaining the conversation. His turn in line 1 is only minimally acknowledged by Eirik in line 2, and followed by a long pause. Tomasz's consequent turn does not introduce any new content and serves the role of sustaining the talk by filling in the silence. Eirik's echo-turn in line 4 marks his reluctance to take the floor, but at the same time conveys a signal that he is still participating in the talk as a listener.

(95/14F)

- 1.Tomasz:og han var det (.7) han Per Arne ansvarlig .  
**and he was that . he Per Arne responsible**  
 2. i hele Europa tror jeg (2s)  
**in the whole of Europe I think .**  
 3.Eirik: såpass ja  
**such yes**  
 4.T: så: han har jo peiling (.7) [. han er a:  
**so: he has jo an idea . he is a:**  
 5.E: → [ja det (--)  
**yes it (--)**

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6.           ha litt peiling det (.6)  
              **have a bit of an idea it .**
- 7.T:        han jobba i forsvaret og  
              **he worked for the defence and**

Extract (95) comes from the stretch of talk concerning a course Tomasz has attended. In line 4, Tomasz delivers an opinion on one of the course's organizers, mentioned in line 1 (Per Arne). In the following line, Eirik echoes the statement, yet with a slightly different reference. Although his turn is not fully understandable, from the pronoun use and the verb form we may assume that he presents the argument in a general form, as for instance *det er godt å ha litt peiling* 'it is good to have some knowledge'. Eirik's turn then, serves as a generalization, and thus weakens the praise included in Tomasz's statement (line 4). The mitigation is additionally strengthened by the quantifier *litt* 'a little, some'. Nonetheless, the echo-turn does not contribute to the topical development of the conversation, and marks participation in an indistinctive way.

### 6.3.5 Conclusions

The last group of the analysed echo-turns bears both functional and formal resemblance to the pro-repeats analysed in section 6.2, in that they constitute weak tokens of participation in the conversation. Other echo-turns, however, are predominantly employed to convey alignment with the interlocutor, and display shared opinions or knowledge. In this respect, they resemble collaborative completions. Some of the echo-turns additionally deliver corrections of the prior speaker's utterance. The fact that in interethnic conversations the other-corrections are in most cases embedded in an unmarked next turn (which is suggested to be the predominant tendency, Kurhila, 2003) proves that echo-turns may indeed be perceived natural in all Norwegian conversations, not only the ones perceived as interethnic.

## 6.4 Discussion and conclusions

In this section, around 100 instances of paraphrases and 30 instances of echo-turns have been analysed. The majority of paraphrases consisted of the NSs reformulating NNSs' statements, while the others were instances of NSs performing reformulations of their own questions. As the analysis has proved, the practices simultaneously perform several conversational functions. Besides "securing" mutual understanding, both paraphrasing and echo-turns belong to the Norwegian repertoire of conversational moves signalling alignment with one's interlocutor. Reformulating questions shows orientation towards the interlocutor by means of offering candidate answers. As a result, the other party does not have to construct the turn by him-/herself, and may choose among the suggested answers. This function of question reformulations would partially justify the fact that the practice was solely found in conversation between participants previously unknown to one another. As already suggested, in these conversations, the native-non-native dichotomy is to begin with the only variable known to the participants. Hence, the perception of their interlocutors as NNS could have affected the NSs' strategic choice of practices employed to maintain comprehension. At the same time, suggesting contents that are expected to be delivered displays alignment with the interlocutor ('I know what you mean even before you say it'). In this respect, question reformulations serve a similar function as collaborative completions and inferring paraphrases. Nonetheless, candidate answers might also be used as a dominating move, suggesting the speaker's expectations towards the answers, or restricting the interlocutors' range of possible interpretations of the question. Through specifying the kind of answer they expect, the NSs maintain control of the topical progress of the conversation. This fact may validate the claim that was suggested in the opening of this section, namely that in interethnic conversations, the responsibility for the interaction's success is not equally distributed among the participants, with the NSs contributing to a greater extent to the topical development of dialogues. This goal is

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also achieved by reformulating the NNSs' statements, which retables the previous topic (concluding paraphrases) or suggest a new perspective on the topic discussed (inferring paraphrases). However, the type of relationship seems to be a crucial factor in perceiving the conversation as predominantly interethnic or not. This perception is not detectable in cases of conversations between life partners, and visible only to some extent in conversations among friends.

Additionally, pro-repeats and echo-turns share the function of a weak support token, signalling listenership and "handing" the floor back to the prior speaker. They are often found in stretches of talk characterised by a slow pace, frequent pauses and little topical development. Hence, such instances often accompany topic transitions, and seem to constitute a harmonious method of bringing about a topical change in Norwegian conversation. Echo-turns and pro-repeats signal the speaker's weakening involvement in the talk, and hence allow for the topical change to be introduced, yet only when the other party is also willing to.

In other cases however, the analysed practices can also function as alignment signals or even upgraders, strengthening the speaker's commitment to the repeated statement. This is true especially in case of instances of echo-turns and pro-repeats equipped with intensifiers. Conversely, the practices accompanied by mitigating particles (such as *nok*, *vel* and others) and litotes function as downgraders.

As the analysis shows, practices serving the function of maintaining understanding that have been suggested uncommon (Foppa, 1995) seem to be rather frequent in Norwegian conversations. Moreover, they realise a variety of conversational and interpersonal goals. The fact that the NNSs do not employ them while conversing can be attributed to several factors. First of all, they may feel less inclined to performing moves which secure mutual comprehension, due to the fact that they perceive themselves as not fully accountable for the progress of the conversation. This explanation is not fully convincing, as even second language users are "answerable" to the social requirements

of protecting one's own and one's interlocutor's face as competent members of society. Secondly, the practices could be too difficult for the NNSs to employ. This reason seems however rather tentative, as many of the participants are very competent speakers of Norwegian, while the practices, having the form of simple sentences, do not require any extraordinary skills (such as e.g. ingressive sounds do). Of all the studied practices, only pro-repeats might pose some difficulty to non-native users, as such constructions are not found in all languages (the construction does not exist in Polish). Still, a more plausible explanation is that the NNSs do not see the need to perform preventive moves and explicitly mark their understanding of specific utterances as long as general comprehension is assumed maintained. Likewise, they need not perceive signaling alignment or maintaining harmonious interaction as essential for their conversational success. Moreover, the diverse functions of the studied practices is not easily detectable by second language users, being rather subconsciously applied and expected by native speakers. The absence of idiomatic Norwegian practices for maintaining mutual understanding need not have immediate observable impact on the course of conversation. However, it may influence the subjective perception of the interlocutor in a given way. By not delivering the practices studied in this section, the NNSs run the risk of giving the impression of not being supportive enough for their interlocutors, and not maintaining the harmonious progress of the conversation, which might affect their future contacts with their interlocutors.



## Chapter 7.

### Projecting the forthcoming turn

In general terms it can be stated that every utterance delivered in the course of talk is equipped with the speakers' expectations regarding their interlocutors' following turn. In the CA-terminology the phenomenon is known as PREFERENCE ORGANISATION of talk (Pomerantz, 1984, after Lindström, 1999)<sup>92</sup>. As such, preference system also performs the function of maintaining mutual comprehension:

“At any one point they [participants] design their contributions in such a way as to display understanding of the immediately preceding move and project what is expected in order to establish local coherence. That means that each sentence in its surface form must contain some direct or indirect indication as to how it fits into the stream of talk.” (Gumperz, 1995: 119)

Being familiar with what is the preferred or expected next turn facilitates the flow of conversation, yet the access to such knowledge may be limited in case of non-native speakers of a given language. As a result, the “mutualities of inferencing, on which the ability to establish conversational coordination also

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<sup>92</sup> In the strict CA analytical studies, it is claimed that the distinction between preferred and dispreferred turns is not a psychological, but a purely formal one: the preferred responses are delivered promptly and in a simple form, whereas the dispreferred ones are invariably produced in a hesitating manner. Such claim would suggest that utterances are to a large degree disconnected from speakers' expectations. It seems however that the notion of preference can, and indeed should be linked to the level of expectations, for instance through the theory of politeness (Cameron, 2001: 97).

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rests" (Gumperz, op.cit.: 102) may be disrupted. In this section, the focus is on two complementing practices and their application by NS and NNS in the course of talk:

- a) or-inquiry completing a yes/no interrogative;
- b) response particles *ja*, *jo* and *nei* initiating answers to wh-questions.

Additionally, this chapter deals with a phenomenon that has been observed in the studied data, namely the practice of avoiding wh-question in favour of yes/no-questions. These practices have in common the fact that they are closely linked to the preference structure, as will be shown in analysis. In the data material, approximately 50 instances of or-inquiries have been identified, including the following excerpt:

7U

- 1.Gina: → ja skal vi bare begynne eller?  
**yes shall we just begin or?**
- 2.Agnieszka: he he he .
- 3.Gina: ja hvor lenge har du bodd i Norge?  
**yes how long have you lived in Norway**

Initiating responses to wh-questions by means of response particles was found less frequent (27 instances), and can be illustrated by the following example from the data material:

14F

- 1.Tor: hva skal du gjøre i: . jula .  
**whar are your plans for . Christmas .**
- 2.Eirik: → nei: jo jeg skal hjem til mor a  
**no: jo I am going home to mother**

The latter practice seems formally and functionally correlated to the practice of commencing statements with response particles, instances of which will also be incorporated in the analysis. The practice can be illustrated by the following excerpt:

1U (simplified)

1. Eli: men det var noen ri- noen sånn mellommenn da  
**but there were some ri- such between-men**
2. som tjente en god del penger på dette [...] **who earned a great deal of money on it [...]**
3. sendte folk hit og tok mesteparten av lønna deres  
**sent people here and took the majority of their salaries**
4. Grażyna: → nei det . det . mange norske y: e:  
**no that . that . many Norwegian y: e:**
5. en del norske bedrifter som driver med  
**some Norwegian companies which**
6. utleie. av arbeidskraft [...] men .  
**outsource . work force [...] but .**
7. også mange polske firmaer  
**also Polish companies**

## 7.1 The or-inquiry

The phenomenon of ‘or’ completing a yes/no interrogative has been studied for such language communities as American, Finnish and Japanese (see Lindström, 1999: 56-60 for a full account). In the Swedish language studies, it was initially treated as a tag, and interpreted as underscoring “the interrogative nature of an utterance” (Ahrenberg, 1987, after Lindström, *ibid.*: 77). However, both the prosodical and the interactive features prove that the final particle *eller* is a constitutive component of its host turn (Lindström, *ibid.*: 76). Hence, the practice differs from other Swedish tags, such as *inte sant* ‘not true’ which constitutes a unit of its own, separate from the previous utterance. The function of the practice is to “relax the preference structure of the turn to facilitate a non-aligning response” (*ibid.*: 77). The fact that there exists a conventional method of relaxing the preference structure of Swedish conversation substantiates the claim that it is rather fixed and does not allow for deviations without risking consequences. It has been claimed (Schlegloff, 1995, after Lindström, *ibid.*: 80) that “an unmarked yes/no interrogative generally prefers a ‘yes’-type response”. Such claim seems however too general and as a result,

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not very convincing. It is possible that it “suffers” from an ethnocentric bias, as in conversation analytical studies a great many findings are obtained from English language data and declared universal for conversation in general<sup>93</sup>.

Although it has been claimed that the or-inquiry is “a turn on its own right” (Lindström, *op.cit.*), the practice bears resemblance to paraphrasing a question by equipping it with candidate answers (studied in chapter 6.1.1). Indeed, several or-inquiries are followed by providing a candidate answer. Moreover, or-inquiry is a frequent conversational move for suggesting a possible understanding of the interlocutor’s turn in a clarifying question. Hence, some of the examples analysed in this section have also appeared in the previous chapter on paraphrasing.

Unlike the practices discussed in the previous chapter, that is reformulations and echo-turns, the or-inquiry is employed both by native and non-native speakers. Out of 50 identified instances, 60% of them have been delivered by the NSs. However, among the NNSs, the practice is applied only by the most advanced speakers<sup>94</sup>, and used in a less idiomatic form, if at all, by the less competent ones. Moreover, the NSs and NNSs employ the practice for different functions. In the data material, the or-inquiries are found in the following contexts:

- a) in clarifying questions;
- b) in questions concerning the interlocutor or his knowledge/opinion;
- c) in suggestions/propositions.

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<sup>93</sup> See chapter 1 for a description and criticism of conversation analysis.

<sup>94</sup> Interestingly enough, Tomasz (14F) whose Norwegian command is among the most native-like of all participants, does not use this practice at all. One possible explanation of that fact is that the practice is by some speakers of Norwegian perceived as a feminine trait (private conversations with Norwegians). Hence, it might be a conscious decision on the side of Tomasz not to use the or-inquiry.

## 7.1.1 Clarifying questions

In the first of the mentioned environments, *i.e.* clarifying questions, the or-inquiry is delivered only by the NSS. This application is illustrated with the following example from the NoTa corpus:

(96/Ukj\_29-30)

- 1.A: da jeg kom hit så var det sånn  
**when I came here so was it so**
2. "å kjenner ingen så kult"  
**"oh I don't know anyone how great"**
- 3.B: → ingen i Oslo i det hele tatt eller?  
**noone in Oslo at all or?**
- 4.A: jeg kjente noen i Oslo ja men de er i litt  
**I knew someone in Oslo yes but they are in a bit**
5. jeg vanker vanligvis med . eldre folk enn meg  
**I hang out normally with . people older than me**
- 6.B: ja  
**yes**

The or-inquiry in line 2 is a clarifying question regarding A's statement in line 1, which seems somewhat unexpected or unbelievable in B's eyes. The same situation is observable in the following extract:

(97/1U)

- 1.Graž.: kanskje derfor . .hh det . kanskje stor e: .  
**maybe that's why . .hh there . maybe big e:**
2. mer fokus på y: . familieliv [. familieliv  
**more focus on y: . family life . family life**
- 3.Eli: [uhm
- 4.G: det skj- det var ikke uvanlig et flere generasjoner  
**it hap- it wasn't abnormal that many generetions**
5. levde sammen [ (.5) og så det det-[  
**lived together . and so it it**
- 6.E: → [uhm [også i  
**uhm also**
7. byene eller= okei  
**in the cities or ok**
- 8.G: =ja  
**yes**

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This part of conversation deals with what was typical for Poland in the 1990s (hence the past tense). Only one of the participants, Grażyna, can be perceived as a knowledgeable speaker (Eli has previously admitted that she has never been to Poland). Eli's clarifying question in lines 6-7 signals that Grażyna's statement in lines 4-5 has not been fully expected, as it is not confirmed immediately, but instead developed into a side sequence confirming the understanding. The following extract exhibits a different instance of a clarifying question, not arising from the unexpectancy of the previous statement.

(98/14F)

- 1.Tomasz: jada . jeg håper jeg starter . starter med  
**yes . I hope I'll start . start with**
2. fire i hvert fall fra andre uka i januar (.3)  
**four at least from the second week of January**
- 3.Eirik: ja  
**yes**
- 4.T: så:  
**so:**
- 5.E: → F1 eller?  
**F1 or?**
- 6.T: ja det er to på F1 en på F2 (.4)  
**yes there are two in F1 and one in F2 .**
- 7.E: ja okei  
**yes ok**

In extract (98), the participants are talking about work-related matters. In lines 1-2, Tomasz expresses his hope that he will soon have several employees outsourced to other companies (both participants work for a HR company). In line 3, Eirik delivers a single *ja* which is rather interpretable as a topicalizer, meant to elicit further explication, rather than as an acceptance of the prior turn. However, Tomasz does not provide additional information and proceeds without supplying the previous turn with additional information ('so' in line 4 suggests a concluding remark rather than specifying the delivers information). Hence, Eirik's turn in line 5 is an explicit request for clarification. A similar situation is presented in the following extract:

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(99/9F)

- 1.Regina:((kl)) men han=  
**((cl)) but he**
- 2.Vidar: =og det finnes en sånn . for  
**and there is such a . cause**
3. → det er folkedans dere driver med mest eller?  
**it is folk dancing you're doing mostly or?**
- 4.R: ja det er [dans og sang  
**yes it is dance and song**
- 5.V: [for jeg har sett jeg har sett  
**cause I have seen I have seen**
6. vi var i Bergen en gang på en . forestilling  
**we were in Bergen one time on a . performance**
7. og der .hh der var det en gruppe som ha-  
**and there .hh there was a group there that ha-**
8. dreiv med (1s)  
**did .**

Prior to the rendered excerpt, Regina has given an account of her being responsible for a group of Polish pupils engaging in some form for folk culture performance. However, Vidar is not able to infer from her talk what the main focus of the group's activity is. His turn in lines 2-3 is a request for an explicit clarification of the topic. The clarification is consequently used to provide the turn in lines 5-8 in a coherent way<sup>95</sup>.

In the data material there have been found no instances of the NNSs applying or-inquiry in the above mentioned function. The lack of NNSs' delivering clarifying questions framed as an or-inquiry is connected to the fact that generally the NNSs do not perform explicit understanding checks as frequent as the NSSs<sup>96</sup>. Consequently, the or-inquiry cannot be put to practice in this function.

<sup>95</sup> Notably, the turn in lines 5-8 is an explicit clarification of the situation that the other speaker has not participated in. In delivering his account, Vidar initially begins with the experience, but after the initial statements he decides to explain the whole background *vi var i Bergen en gang* before he continues with the comment referring to the topic. Explicit markers of coherence are discussed in 7.3.

<sup>96</sup> The reasons for this state of facts have been discussed in the conclusions of chapter 6.

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### 7.1.2 Inquiries about personal matters

Unlike the previous environment in which the or-inquiry occurs, when it comes to questions concerning the interlocutor, the practice is employed by both NSs and NNSs.

(100/7U)

- 1.Gina:→ja (1.4) har du lyst til å flytte tilbake til  
**yes . do you want to move back to**
2. Polen eller (.8)  
**Poland or .**
- 3.Agn.: jeg trives her [. så: . ja (1.8)  
**I like it here . so: . yes .**
- 4.G: [ja  
**yes**
- 5.A: mannen min er norsk o:g Per har et norsk pass  
**my husband is Norwegian a:nd Per has a Norwegian passport**
6. så[: (.9) mhm . språket . sluttet  
**so: . mhm . the language . is no longer**
- 7.G: [ja  
**yes**
- 8.A: å være barriere (.6)(så det)  
**a hindrance . so that**

Extract (100) comes from stretch of talk in which the interlocutors exchange information about one another. In lines 1-2, Gina inquires about Agnieszka's future plans. In lines 3 and 5-8, instead of providing a polar answer that would seem natural after a yes/no question, Agnieszka gives a moderate account of her reasons for not performing the activity suggested in the or-inquiry. By delivering such a turn Agnieszka is managing the conversational achievement of balancing between responding the question according to the facts and manifestly rejecting the suggestion in the or-inquiry. The utterance's form enables Agnieszka to avoid producing a negation, which is indeed not frequently delivered after or-inquiries, as we will see in the following extracts. Extract (101) exhibits a similar sequence, yet with reversed participant roles:

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(101/7U)

- 1.Agn.:→men-e når du er ferdig . med å studere skal du  
**but-e when you're done . studying are you<sup>SG</sup>**
2. flytte tilbake . til Skien eller? (.5)  
**planning to move back . to Skien or? .**
- 3.Gina: e: det vet jeg ikke nå (.6) [men jeg har (.4) hæ?  
**e: I don't know yet . but I have . huh?**
- 4.A: [skal dere  
**are you<sup>PL</sup>**
5. skal DERE . [he he he  
**are YOU<sup>PL</sup> . he he he**
- 6.G: [ja he he he he ja det er det  
**yes he he he he yes that's it**
7. at vi må bestemme oss sammen  
**we have to decide together**
- 8.A: ja  
**yes**
- 9.G: så . for han har . fast jobb i på S4 (1s)  
**so . cause he has . a job in in S4 .**
10. em: . og så har vi kjøpt leilighet her og  
**em: . and so we have bought a flat here and**
- 11.A: ja (.6)  
**yes .**

In this extract, Agnieszka is inquiring about Gina's future plans and frames her turn (lines 1-2) as an or-inquiry. Gina's answer does not include a simple response particle *ja* or *nei*. Instead, she embarks on listing reasons for her not performing the action suggested in the or-inquiry, interrupted only by Agnieszka's joking correction (side sequence in lines 4-8). It seems that instead of delivering a straight answer, the participants prefer to provide their justification of the present state of facts, which indeed may be complex. So instead of relaxing the preference structure, the practice invites to delivering an objective explanation rather than indulging in subjective opinion on the matter. The following extract exhibits a deviation from this pattern, notably delivered by the NNS:

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(102/11U)

1. Gunh.: → på: er det i Norge du tenker på å jobbe da eller?  
**in is it in Norway that you plan to work then or?**
2. Julia: ja jeg er gift med en trønder så: nå har jeg ikke  
**yes I am married to a trønder so: now I have no**
3. noe valg [jeg må bare bo her [. selv om jeg .  
**choice I just have to live here . although I**
4. G: [nei akkurat [mhm  
**no indeed mhm**
5. J: savner skikkelig mye Norg- e: Polen jeg savner  
**really miss Norw- e: Poland I miss**
6. Polen veldig mye=  
**Poland a lot**
7. G: =mhm (1.7)
8. J: men-e . ja (.7) sånn er livet he [he  
**but-e . yes . that's life he he**
9. G: → [ja (.3)  
**yes .**
10. og hva slags klassetrinn er det videregående  
**and which level is it secondary school**
11. eller [ja  
**or yes**
12. J: [litt avhengig av hvor kompetanse jeg  
**a bit depending on where competence I**
13. underviser i: a: på grunnskolen og videregående  
**teach in a: in primary and secondary school**
14. G: mhm

In line 1, Gunhild inquires Julia about her preferences of work place. Julia's answer in lines 2-3 is rather decisive and frames the fact of being in Norway as an obligation rather than a choice of her own. Furthermore, Julia's turn in lines 5-6 gives account of her negative feelings connected to the fact of being in Norway. As previously stated, explicit display of negative feelings is in the Scandinavian societies considered a topic endangering the harmony of the conversation (Mårtensson, 1990), a claim that seems to be confirmed in this extract. Throughout the passage, Gunhild does not take the floor and offers only minimal reception tokens, before changing the topic to a "safer" one, namely Julia's work competence (lines 9-11).

The objectivity observed in extract (101) can also be found in the following extract. However, the or-inquiry delivered here is

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not fully according to the standard form, as it appears after a pause and seems rather a beginning of a reformulation than a proper or-inquiry:

(103/13U)

- 1.Magda: for[di det er mange som er protestant ja mhm  
**because there are many who are protestant yes**  
 mhm
- 2.Randi: [nei altså det er mange i verden heh  
**no well there are many in the world heh**
3. for det er jo ja men-e  
**there are yes but-e**
- 4.M: → du er protestant? (.4) eller [en  
**you are protestant? . or a**
- 5.R: [ja altså jeg er  
**yes well I am**
6. ehm (.5) ja altså nordmenn er jo generelt  
**ehm . yes well Norwegian are jo generally**
7. protestanter men (.3) jeg er ateist  
**protestants but . I am atheist**
- 8.M: åh ja ate[ist  
**oh yes atheist**
- 9.R: [ja så jeg er en ja . heh he  
**yes so I am yes . heh he**
- (lines omitted)
- 10.R: altså det er mange jeg kjenner som er . som er  
**well there are many whom I know who are . who are**
11. kristne som er protestanter . ja (.8) så det er ja (.4)  
**Christian who are protestants . yes . so that is yes .**
- 12.M: koselig  
**nice**
- 13.R: ja  
**yes**
- 14.M: → men dere går bare på kirken å: gifte seg? [. eller  
**but you<sup>PL</sup> go to the church just to: get married . or**
- 15.R: [ehm .  
**ehm .**
16. det er vel sånn at de som er . ehm . det er jo  
**it is probably like that that those who are . ehm . it's**
17. en blanding på en måte at de som er religiøse  
**a bit mixed in a way that those who are religious**
18. bruker kirken mer og kan gå i kirken på  
**use the church more and can go to the church**



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(104/9F)

- 1.Regina:det var sånn om Fatima-Maria ja kanskje  
**it was about Fatima-Maria yes maybe**
2. du vet ikke hva dreier seg om det (.3)  
**you don't know what it is about .**
- 3.Vidar: nei jeg kan lite [om Maria  
**no I know little about Maria**
- 4.R: [ja . at de . bøytet sauer og  
**yes . that they . were with the**
5. så k- dukker opp Maria og så videre ((kl))  
**sheep and so c- Maria appears and so on ((cl))**
6. → ja men . det er ikke så viktig kanskje i deg  
**yes but . it is not so important maybe for you**
7. som du er protestant [ja  
**who is protestand yes**
- 8.V: [.hh e: ja:  
**.hh e: ye:s**
9. jeg vet [ikke jeg vet ikke om jeg skal  
**I don't know I don't know if I would**
- 10.R: [eh he he he
- 11.V: kalle meg prote[stant heller da men [eh hm  
**call myself protestant either then but eh hm**
- 12.R: → [ja [a okei nei  
**yes a ok no**
13. men unn[skyld  
**but sorry**
- 14.V: [jeg vet ikke riktig hva det er  
**I don't know exactly what it is**
- 15.R: det e: jeg=  
**it e: I**
- 16.V: =du jeg . jeg er jeg er døpt i kirka  
**you I . I am I am baptised in the church**
- 17.R: mm
- 18.V: jeg er konfirmert i kirka  
**I have received confirmation in the church**
- 19.R: mm
- 20.V: jeg er gift i kirka  
**I am married in the church**
- 21.R: uhm
- 22.V: og jeg er utmeldt av kirka [. så jeg  
**and I am signed out of the church . so I**
- 23.R: → [ah er du utmeldt  
**ah are you signed out**

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24. men unnskyld at jeg-  
**but excuse me that I**
- 25.V: [det er helt i orden (.4)  
**it's completely ok .**
- 26 em: . så jeg er vel det kanskje mest man kan  
**em: . so I am probably what maybe most people can**
27. kalle [. ateist man vil kalle anta[kelig  
**call . atheist you'd probably call it [that]**
- 28.R: [mhm ja  
**mhm yes**
29. det er mange som er men jeg  
**there are many who are but I**
30. for eksempel har venninne .  
**have a friend for instance .**

In this extract, Regina is talking about a presentation about catholicism that she has conducted in her work place. In lines 1-2 she mentions commemorating Mary's revelation at Fatima, but suggests her interlocutor might not be familiar with the event, a suggestion indeed confirmed by Vidar in line 3. Hence, Regina embarks on an explanation (lines 4-5) but abandons it as irrelevant for Vidar who "is protestant" (lines 6-7). This statement is an unconfirmed assumption about the interlocutor, and as such imposes on him. In his turn in lines 8-11, Vidar uses seemingly an acceptance token *ja*, yet with a prolonged vowel quality and rising intonation contour ("curled *ja*"), which has been identified by Lindström (1999) as means of projecting disalignment<sup>97</sup>. The curled *ja* is followed by a mitigated disagreement (*jeg vet ikke om jeg skal kalle meg protestant* 'I don't know if I would call myself protestant', lines 7-8 and 10). In lines 12-13, Regina recognizes her action as imposing and attempts to validate it by delivering an apology, which is not manifestly accepted by Vidar who simply continues the topic, giving a precise account of the state of facts (lines 16-22). Throughout Vidar's passage, Regina attempts to deliver the apology for a second time so that it could be properly received (line 15) and succeeds only in lines 24. Regina's apology is then accepted, upon which the topic is continued in a straightforward way (lines 28-30). The topic is further developed by Regina to

<sup>97</sup> Different expressions of disalignment and disagreement are analysed in chapter 8.

concern the irrelevance of religion for interpersonal contacts (not rendered here). All Regina's utterances since her turn in line 6 can be interpreted as mitigating moves meant to re-establish harmony in the conversation. At the same time, she displays herself as a competent and polite speaker who is familiar with the fact that religion is a delicate matter. This recognition is not displayed in Magda's inquiry about religion in extract (103).

### 7.1.3 Inquiries about the interlocutor's opinion

As for questions concerning the interlocutor him-/herself, inquiries about the interlocutor's opinion on given subjects may be perceived as harmony threatening and hence framed as an or-inquiry. Such instances are exhibited in extracts (105) and (106), with the latter not being fully idiomatic.

- (105/7U)
- 1.Gina: er du blitt godt mottatt i Norge da? (1s)  
**have you been well received in Norway then .**
- 2.Agnieszka: eh hh ja . ja? (.7) [. kan ikke klage=  
**eh hh yes . yes? . I cannot complain**
- 3.G: [ja =nei  
**yes no**
- 4.A: mhm=
- 5.G: → =er det vanskelig å bli kjent med  
**is it difficult to get to know**
6. nordmenn eller? (1.7)  
**Norwegians or .**
- 7.A: eh jeg synes at de:t finnes nordmenn  
**eh I think that there are Norwegians**
8. som er: (.8) vanskelig å bli kjent med og  
**who are .difficult to get in touch with and**
9. det finnes nordmenn som er lett å bli kjent  
**there are Norwegians who are easy to get in touch**
10. med [som . i alle land [. synes jeg  
**with as . in all countries . I think**
- 11.G: [ja [mm  
**yes mm**
12. → ja mhm (2.2) du har jo kanskje den fordel  
**yes mhm . you probably have jo that advantage**
13. i og med at du er . gift med en nordmann da  
**since you are . married to a Norwegian so then**

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14. så er det kanskje lette[re å: (1.4)  
**it is maybe easier to .**
- 15.A: [ja ja je-  
**yes yes I**
- 16.G: komme i kontakt med nordmenn (2s)  
**get in touch with Norwegians .**
- 17.A: det er sikkert  
**it's for sure**
- 18.G: mhm

Extract (105) exhibits an or-inquiry concerning Agnieszka's reception in Norway (line 1). The question puts the interlocutor in a difficult position and requires a balanced answer. The processing evoked by the question can be traced in the long pause before the answer in line 2 is delivered, and in the hesitating manner it is delivered in. Moreover, Agnieszka fails to follow the topic by any utterance, which allows Gina to take the floor again and produce another possibly problematic question, concerning her opinion on the stereotypical view of Norwegians being difficult to get in contact with (lines 5-6). Agnieszka's answer comes after a long pause of 1,7 second and discards the suggestion from Gina's inquiry, presenting Norwegians as not being different than any other nation (lines 7-10). In lines 12-14, Gina reformulates the statement by suggesting additional reasons for Agnieszka's opinion, substantiating the suggestion from her own turn and simultaneously accepting Agnieszka's view on that matter. What is observed here is a meticulous conversational work aiming at establishing commonality of opinions which is crucial for maintaining a harmonious interaction.

The following extract also includes a problematic question, yet with reversed participant roles:

- (106/5U)
- 1.Tone: vi har jo egentlig original tekster på filmer  
**we have jo actually original texts on movies**  
og alt sånt [. ja  
**and all that . yes**
- 3.Joanna: [mhm og polsk språk . hvis du  
**mhm and Polish . if you hear**

4. → hører det er morsomt eller ikke (1s)  
**it's funny or not .**
- 5.T: jeg synes det er topp jeg  
**I think it's great I**
- 6.J: ja?  
**yes?**
- 7.T: mhm jeg er veldig glad i språk (.7) har veldig  
**mhm I really like languages . [I] want to**
8. lyst å lære meg . fransk igjen . og spansk og  
**learn . French again . and Spanish and**
9. portugisisk (.4)  
**Portuguese .**

In this extract, the participants are discussing films being dubbed or subtitled in Norway and Poland. The topic originates from Tone's narrative about her watching a film with a Polish lector, which she incidentally has experienced. Joanna uses the opportunity to request opinion on Polish language, framed as a polarized statement (*det er morsomt eller ikke* 'it is funny or not', line 4). The addition of *ikke* is not idiomatic Norwegian and has been claimed to restrict the interlocutor's possibilities of responding to two alternatives (Ahrenberg, 1987, after Lindström, 1999). However, as has been claimed previously, outright negative responses seem dispreferred in Norwegian conversations. Consequently, one can claim that such question form leaves the interlocutor practically no other alternative than the affirmative answer. Tone's positive response (line 5) is followed by a request for substantiation (*ja* with a rising intonation in line 6), after which Tone delivers a multi-turn answer giving account of her general interest in languages, Polish among them (lines 7-9 and further talk).

#### 7.1.4 Inquiries about the interlocutor's knowledge

The following examples, in which the or-inquiry is used in questions regarding the interlocutor's particular knowledge, provide evidence that such questions also are perceived as threatening the harmony in Norwegian conversations:

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(107/6M)

- 1.Teresa:treng- tenker ikke restauranter men ten-  
**need I am not thinking about restaurant but**
2. tenkte sånn-e: .  
**rather such-e:**
- 3.Anders:u[te  
**outside**
- 4.T: [spiserier og (.4) for liksom Chinatown i  
**diners and . cause sort of Chinatown in**
5. San Francisco (.4) kinesisk .  
**San Francisco . Chinese .**
- 6.A: → ja er det mye sånn eller (1s) borti Amerika (.7)  
**yes is there much of that or . in America .**
- 7.T: ja . jeg tror det=  
**yes . I think so**
- 8.A: → =mm mange sånne (-- ) [. eller  
**mm many such (-- ) . or**
- 9.T: [nei  
**no**
10. ja  
**yes**
- 11.A: restauranter ja (1.3)  
**restaurants yes .**
- 12.T: mhm (1s)

In extract (107), Teresa and Anders are discussing details of their trip to the USA. As Teresa has been to the place, she acts as the knowledgeable speaker on the topic, presenting facts she is familiar with (lines 1-2 and 4-5). In line 6, Anders reconfirms the facts by making a general inquiry about the topic *er det mye sånn eller borti Amerika* 'is there a lot of these or in America'. His inquiry is not fully grammatically correct, which results in a self-correction in line 8, notably in which the or-inquiry is also used. The following extract exhibits the same application of practice, this time with reversed conversational roles:

(108/6M)

- 1.Anders:vi så en . kamel en liten en=  
**we saw a . camel a little one**
- 2.Teresa: → =er er n høy  
**it is big**

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3. eller . en sånn kan- kamel hvor [høy-  
or **.such a cin- camel how big**
- 4.A: [vi så bare  
we **just saw**
5. en sånn unge ja (.3) en sånn (1.3)  
**such young one yes . such .**
6. den var ikke så veldig høy  
**it wasn't so very big**

Previously in the talk (not rendered here), Teresa has introduced the topic of camels which Anders has seen, as he states in line 1. The following turn is a request for information that Anders now has confirmed he has, namely about camels' size (lines 2-3). The answer that follows first gives the reasoning and only then the conclusion, which indeed is negative in respect to the inquiry (lines 4-6). The two latter examples seem to prove that in Norwegian conversation the very possibility of "forcing" the interlocutor to deliver a negative statement is seen as imposing on him/her and handled cautiously, among others through or-inquiry.

### 7.1.5 Inquiries about B-events

Lastly, or-inquiries appear also in questions concerning B-events, that is events that involved the interlocutor only and which the speaker does not have first-hand knowledge of. In some cases, the practice might serve to re-introduce a topic previously interrupted or abandoned, such as in the following extract from the NoTa corpus:

- (109/Ve\_123-124)
- 1.A: mm . men du sa du hadde møtt noen . mm .  
**mm . but you said you had met someone . mm .**
2. → møtte (--) noen vi har jobba sammen med eller?  
**met (--) someone we have worked with or?**
- 3.B: ja . møtte henne fra . barnevernet  
**yes . met her from . child care**

In lines 1-2, speaker A re-tables a topic that was mentioned previously in the talk, yet not developed into a full topical sequence. However, as he/she does not have first-hand knowledge

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about the event, the inquiry is equipped with the final 'or'. In the following two extracts, the practice is applied in inquiry based to some extent on the speaker's knowledge:

- (110/4F)
- 1.Frøydis:men du skal hjem til jul skulle du det?=  
**but you're going home for Christmas aren't you**
- 2.Greta: =uhm  
**yes**
3. jeg skal til jul  
**I'm going for Christmas**
- 4.F: → har du fått fri eller?  
**did you get some time off?**
- 5.G: ja du skjønner jeg hadde sånt jeg hadde  
**yes you know I had such I had**
6. avspasering i uka i jula  
**compensatory time-off in the Christmas week**
- 7.F: .ja  
**.ja**
- 8.G: etter planen [. sant .  
**according to the schedule . right**
- 9.F: [ja  
**yes**
- 10.G: så nå forandret det fra mid-oktober fordi de  
**so now changed it from medio-October because**
11. forandret planen min så jeg mistet min avspasering  
**they changed the schedule so now I lost my time-off**
12. i uka og jeg sa at jeg drar uansett  
**in the week and I said that I'm going anyway**
- 13.F: .ja (1s)  
**.ja .**

In extract (110), the participants discuss their Christmas holiday. As they work together, Frøydis' inquiry in line 4 seems rather unnecessary (it belongs to their common knowledge). However, the reason for "weakening" the inquiry is that their work schedule was changed and the days off initially planned have been rescheduled. The use of or-inquiry displays Frøydis' expectations that Greta did not get a time off, but at the same time does not state it explicitly. In the following talk, Greta gives an account of the situation, in which she actually answers negative to the question in line 4 (lines 5-6, 10-12), even though the negative response token

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has not been delivered. In fact, the only instance of a negation following an or-inquiry can be found in the following extract:

- (111/4F)
1. Frøydis: det er klart det blir jo litt sånn derre men  
**it's obvious it will jo be a bli such there but**
2. men du vil jo liksom prøve da i hvert fall=  
**but you want to kind of try at least then**
3. Greta: =ja  
**yes**
4. F: å det å nei gud he he he he  
**and it oh no God he he he he**
5. G: → men er dere ferdige eller  
**but are you done or**
6. F: nei vi er ikke helt ferdig nå  
**no we are not jquite done now**
7. **vi har [hatt noe listing**  
we have had some moulding
8. G: [hva hva med det- skulle være noen  
**how how about there was supposed to be**
9. → sånt peis eller=  
**a fireplace or**
10. F: =ja  
**yes**
11. G: fikk dere til [sluttet  
**did you get it done in the end**
12. F: [ja den er ferdig  
**yes it's done**
13. G: den er ferdig  
**it's done**
14. F: den er ferdig (--) greier opp i taket  
**it's done (--) thing up on the roof**
15. som mangler det bare  
**that are missing just that**

The topic of this stretch of talk is Frøydis' cabin. Previously to the rendered talk, and in lines 1-2 and 4, Frøydis is saying that it takes a lot of time to renovate the house. Consequently, Greta can assume that the answer to her inquiry (line 5) will be negative. In line with Lindström (1999: 79) findings, the or-inquiry is applied to questions that are unwarranted by the prior talk. The second instance of the practice, on the other hand, is not based on conversational inference, but rather on Greta's prior knowledge:

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*det skulle være noen sånt peis eller* 'there was supposed to be a fireplace or' (line 8-9). Framing the question as an or-inquiry gives the impression of a slight uncertainty on Greta's side. Frøydis' confirmation (lines 10 and 12) is repeated by Greta (line 13) in order to elicit continuation from her interlocutor's side. Indeed, in lines 14-15 and in the forthcoming talk, Frøydis elaborates on the topic and is accompanied only by minimal continuers from Greta's side.

Extracts (103-111) all provide examples of or-inquiry being put to practice while inquiring about facts concerning the interlocutor, their opinion or knowledge. The or-inquiry is seldom responded to with a negative response token, and the most frequent reaction to the practice is an objective account of the state of facts.

### 7.1.6 Suggestions

The third of the identified functions borders on the two previously analysed, though strictly speaking it is formally different as it does not relate to interrogative sentences. However, the use of 'or' for mitigating a suggestion or opinion reinforces the perception of the practice's general function as weakening imposition on the interlocutor, whether it being produced in an interrogative or affirmative form.

(112/7U)

1. Agnieszka: ja ja det kan jeg tenke meg . jeg har  
**yes yes I can imagine . I have**
2. aldri vært der om høsten (1s) bare om sommeren  
**never been there in autumn . just in summer**
3. og om vinter en gang (.5) [. uhm  
**and in winter once .**
4. Gina: [ja  
**yes**
5. → det er kanskje ikke så mye turister eller (1s)  
**there are maybe not so many tourists or .**
6. A: om?=  
**in?**
7. G: =om vinteren  
**in winter**

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- 8.A: ja om vi- ja det er ikke mange turister  
**yes in wi- yes there are not many tourists**
- 9.G: nei (.6)  
**no .**
- 10.A: .nei  
**.nei**

In the extract, participants are talking about Prague, as it turned out to a topic common for them. Previously to the rendered talk Gina says that she has been to Prague in the autumn. Agnieszka continues the topic, giving account of her visits to Prague (lines 1-3). In response, Gina suggests a fact concerning the topic that she does not have first-hand knowledge of (as she has never been to Prague in winter time, line 5). The suggestion ends with *eller* in order to mark uncertainty and allow for Agnieszka to correct, if the suggestion was wrong. This extract is somewhat similar to the questions concerning the interlocutor's knowledge, found in extracts (110) and (111). In the following extract, on the other hand, the or-inquiry is used in a proposition:

(113/6M)

- 1.Teresa: → vi kan: ja (.6) ta de tre siste ukene  
**we can yes . take the last three weeks**
2. hvis du vil eller .hva som helst . dine (1s)  
**if you want to or . whatever . your .**
3. tre siste uker (2s)  
**last three weeks .**
- 4.Anders:mhm (1s) vi må komme att til e til  
**mhm . we have to come back for**
5. syttende mai ja [(1.5) så vi ikke mister  
**the 17th of May yes . so that we don't miss**
- 6.T: [he he he
7. mai syttende mai-toget  
**May the 17th of May parade**

In lines 1-3, Teresa makes a suggestion concerning the time of the planned trip to the USA. Her proposition is framed as an or-inquiry, which makes it less imposing on the interlocutor. The practice allows Teresa to mark that although she has proposed one solution, she is still open for other suggestions. The two examples

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analysed above bear functional resemblance to the following example, found in the NoTa corpus:

(114/Ukj\_55-56)

- 1.A → er det greit om vi holder på til halv to eller?  
**is it ok that we continue until half one or?**
- 2.B: ja  
**yes**
- 3.C: du kan da holde på [. noen minutter  
**you can then manage . a couple of minutes**
- 4.B: [ja  
**yes**
- 5.C: til @hvis det er nødvendig@  
**more @if it's necessary@**
- 6.B: ja ja . ja ja  
**yes yes . yes yes**

In line 1, the interviewer in charge of the recording delivers a request for a certain action on the side of the participants. The request has an interrogative form, and is equipped with a final 'or' that serves the function of relaxing the preference structure and thus not imposing on the speakers. Otherwise, the practice marks uncertainty about the stated fact. In the following extract the marked uncertainty arises from the fact that the suggestion puts the interlocutor in a bad light of not knowing the law:

(115/4F)

- 1.Greta: jeg tør ikke=  
**I don't dare**
- 2.Frøydis:→ =nei altså jeg vet ikke om det er  
**no well I don't know if it is**
3. helt lovlig eller= [jeg tror ikke det=  
**completely legal or I don't think so**
- 4.G: =nei det [tror jeg ikke  
**no I don't think so**
5. nei . og det var veldig sånn . spesielt fordi  
**no . and that was really such . especially**
6. den . tjukke ledningen som går fra den boksen  
**cause the . thick cable that goes from the box**
7. som står utenfor huset  
**that stands outside the house**

In the extract, Greta tells the story of renovating the house and fixing the electrical installation. Previously to the rendered extract, she says that she hired authorised electricians to perform the reparation, stating the reason for it: *jeg tør ikke* 'I wouldn't dare' (line 1). In lines 2-3, Frøydis cautiously suggests that such action would be illegal as well. Notably, her suggestion is additionally mitigated by the use of litotes *ikke helt lovlig* 'not fully legal' instead of using the direct method of putting it *ulovlig* 'illegal'. Her suggestion is immediately confirmed by Greta, who thus dismisses the threat of conflict that could have arisen in the conversation if Frøydis delivered a more decisive, and thus patronising statement (e.g. *men det er jo ulovlig* 'but it is *jo* illegal').

### 7.1.7 Conclusions

To sum up, there have been identified three environments in which the or-inquiry appears: clarifying questions, questions regarding the interlocutor and suggestions. The former application has been observed only in NSS' talk, whereas the latter two are applied both by NSS and NNSs. Nonetheless, the analysis has shown examples of a less idiomatic usage of the practice in case of some NNSs (extracts 103 and 106), as well as an unsuccessful reaction to the or-inquiry (extract 102). It can be therefore concluded that the function of the practice is not fully transparent for all non-native users of Norwegian, which may result in their being negatively perceived by their interlocutors as imposing or authoritarian.

Although the or-inquiry is claimed to relax the preference structure, the negation *nei* occurs very seldom in the answer sequences. The most frequent adjacent turn includes delivering an objective and balanced description of the state of fact, often being an indirect negative answer to the question. As a result, it seems reasonable to reformulate the claim of or-inquiry's function as marking non-imposition on the interlocutor rather than actually "opening up" for a direct negation. This hypothesis is substantiated by the use of or-inquiry in affirmatives such as suggestions or propositions, where the practice serves to weaken the obligation to accept the offer. This in turn brings about a more general

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conclusion concerning Norwegian interactions that as a rule seem to be oriented towards negotiation rather than domination, and predominantly focused on maintaining harmonious interaction which does not invite to open expressions of disagreement.

### 7.2 Yes/no-answers to wh-questions

This section deals with *ja*, *jo* and *nei* used as initiating responses to wh-questions. Such use does not correspond to the traditional functions of response tokens, which is giving affirmative or negative answer to yes/no questions. Although the practice has been to some extent discussed in Scandinavian studies, scholars seem to have arrived at contradictory conclusions about it (for the literature discussion, see Svennevig, 2001a). *Ja* is claimed to project both a non-aligning response as well as an expected answer. Similarly ambiguous is *jo*, treated either as an affirmation or a negation of the implicit assumption present in the question. Svennevig (ibid.) identifies several consistent functions of each particle:

- a) *ja* signals a delayed answer, an answer consisting of several turns or displays the speaker's need for additional processing;
- b) *nei* signals that the answer is "not fully consonant with the expectations or projections implied by the question" (ibid.: 148);
- c) *jo* is functionally the opposite of *nei*, as it introduces preferred responses and upgrades the affective commitment of the speaker.

As follows from his findings, *ja* is an important interactional signal regulating the flow of the conversation, whereas *nei* and *jo* perform interpersonal functions. By marking that the upcoming answer is consistent (or not) with interlocutor's expectations, the speaker reveals his/her understanding of the implicit presupposition present in the preceding question. Consequently, answers

commenced with response particles prepare one's interlocutor for what lies ahead and allow for maintaining harmony even when breaches of expectations occur. This function seems especially vital for non-native speakers who are not necessarily familiar with the non-transparent implications that questions carry.

Among the identified 27 instances of the practice, the NNSs deliver 10, which stands for approximately 1/3 of the total number. The ratio is comparable to the percentage of or-inquiries produced by native and non-native speakers, analysed in the previous section (7.1).

### 7.2.1 *Ja* projecting a multi-turn answer

As previously stated, *ja* performs predominantly interactional functions, as for instance marking a multi-turn response, as observable in the following extract from the NoTa corpus:

(116/Be\_187-188)

- 1.A: hva har du gjort i helgen din?  
**what have you been doing in the weekend?**
- 2.B:→ ja på fredagen . så var jeg bare hjemme .  
**yes on Friday . so I was just at home .**
3. slappet av . måtte ta vare på pusen min for  
**resting . had to take care of my cat cause**
4. da hadde jeg vært hos mamma . dagen før  
**I've been to my mother's place . the day before**
5. så jeg overnattet hos henne  
**so I slept there**

In this extract, participant B commences his answer to a wh-question in line 1 with a *ja* and a paraphrase of the vital part of the question: *helgen din-på fredagen* 'your weekend-on Friday'. Afterwards, a long narrative concerning the topic follows. A similar example can be observed in the following extract:

(117/11U)

- 1.Julia:når jeg er i Polen så . eller noe sånt (2.2)  
**when I am in Poland so . or the like .**
2. oioioi hva skal du gjøre i jula? (.9)  
**oioioi what are you going to do for Christmas**

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- 3.Gunh.: →ja i julen da skal jeg . ehm jeg har  
**yes for Christman then I will . ehm I've**
4. vokst opp i Bergen så der har jeg en farmor  
**grown up in Bergen so there I have a grandmother**
5. så der skal jeg en tur (.4) i begynnelsen av  
**so there I will go . in the beginning of**
6. julen (.3) og så skal jeg tilbake hit for her  
**Christmas . and so I'll come back here cause here**
7. har jeg masse familie [.5 og feire . familiejul  
**I have family . and celebrate a family Christmas**
- 8.J: [okei  
**ok**
- 9.G: sammen med (.6) onkel og søskenbarn og  
**together with . uncle and cousins and**
10. besteforeldre og foreldre og sånt så det blir  
**grandparents and parents and such so it'll be**
11. . sånn skikkelig familiejul med masse folk  
**. such a real family Christmas with lots of people**
- 12.J: uhm
- 13.G: så skal jeg prøve å få bakt @litt da@  
**so I will try to do some baking then**

In lines 1-2, Julia suggests a new topic, namely Christmas plans. Gunhild begins her subsequent turn with *ja* and an echo of the vital part *i jula* 'for Christmas', and continues with a narrative of her Christmas plans that stretches across several turns (lines 3-13). Thus, the response particle *ja* projects an upcoming multi-turn answer.

Turning to the NNSs'talk, one can observe somewhat unmotivated or unsubstantiated use of the practice, as shown in the two following extracts:

- (118/5U)
- 1.Tone: ja men det er sånn som i Norge så har vi mye  
**yes but it is so like in Norway so we have many dialects**
2. dialekter [. og i Trondheim så snakker dem jo trøndersk  
**. and in Trondheim so they speak jo Trondheim-dialect**
- 3.Joanna: [åh ja  
**oh yes**
4. ja ja mange bruker bare  
**yes yes many use just**

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5. T: åssen åssen åssen er det i Polen?  
**what what what it's like in Poland?**
- 6.J: → ja vi har også . kanskje ikke så: det samme .  
**yes we have also . maybe not so: the same .**
7. som her i Trondheim i Norge kanskje i Norge er  
**as here in Trondheim in Norway maybe in Norway**
8. det . førti? dialekter?=  
**there are . forty? dialects?**
- 9.T: =nei mye mer  
**no much more**
- 10.J: mye mer?  
**much more?**
- 11.T: ja det jeg tror det er en dialekt per .  
**yes I think so there is one dialect per .**
12. kommune omtrent  
**municipality around**  
*(lines omitted - a long narrative from Tone about Norwegian dialects)*
- 13.J: ja i Polen kanskje . men jeg er ikke sikker på det .  
**yes in Poland maybe . but I'm not so sure about that .**
14. kanskje det er bare fem . dialekter [. ja (.4)  
**maybe there are just five . dialects . yes .**
- 15.T: [åh ja  
**oh yes**
- 16.J: og der er også me:d mellom ungdom åh hva det  
**and there is also wi:th between youths oh what's it**
17. heter slang?=  
**called slang? many young people use slang**
- 18.T: =ja  
**yes**

The excerpt comes from a stretch of talk concerning Norwegian dialects. In lines 1-2, Tone presents the linguistic situation in Norway from the position of the knowledgeable speaker, excluding Joanna from this knowledge (mark the exclusive use of the pronoun *vi* [*i Norge*] in line 1). In line 4, Joanna confirms that she is familiar with this fact, upon which Tone delivers an inquiry for comparison with the situation in Poland (line 5). Joanna's next turn begins with the response particle *ja*, which might suggest that a lengthy explanation will follow. However, instead of giving account of the Polish dialectal variation, Joanna returns to the topic of Norwegian dialects, requesting a confirmation of her knowledge

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about it (line 6-8). As can be observed in the further talk (lines 13-14), Joanna needed to confirm her understanding of the dialectal variety in Norway in order to compare it to the situation in Poland. Hence, the *ja* particle can be interpreted as a projection of a answer delayed by the need of additional understanding check. Only after the check has been performed can the actual response follow. Such use of *ja* has also been identified by Svennevig (2001a: 157) as one of the idiomatic Norwegian applications of the particle. Nonetheless, another interpretation of the course of events can be suggested, namely that Joanna treats the question in line 1 as presupposing a positive answer. The form of the answer in turn 6 *ja vi har også* 'yes we also have' suggests that initially Joanna intended to deliver an agreement, suggesting that there are dialects in Poland as well, though probably not as many as in Norway. However, after Tone's description of the extent of the dialectal variety in Norway (in the omitted stretch of talk), Joanna delivers a contrasting (*det er bare fem dialekter* 'there is only five dialects', lines 13-14) rather than a parallel statement.

The use of *ja* in extract (118) is not easily attributable to a particular function. The following extract also exhibits similar examples:

- (119/11U)
1. Gunhild: hvordan er polsk juletradisjon i forhold til  
**what's the Polish Christmas tradition like**
  2. det [som er  
**compared to what is**
  3. Julia: → [ja veldig annerledes og da mannen min er  
**yes very different and my husband is**
  4. litt sånn . skeptisk til av og til fordi  
**a bit so . sceptical to sometimes**
  5. det er ikke . kjøttkak som mora hans lager  
**cause it is not . meat balls that his mother makes .**
  6. [og . ribbe og [ja sånn  
**and pork ribs and yes such**
  7. G: [mhm [uhm
  8. J: [j-
  9. G: [hva er typisk polsk julemat da?  
**what is typical Polish Christmas food then?**

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- 10.J:→ ja vi spiser ikke kjøtt på julaften (.6)  
**yes we don't eat meat on Christmas Eve .**
11. så: den er litt annerledes enn her da  
**so: it is a bit different from here then**
- 12.G: ja (.8) det varierer jo litt i Norge og  
**yes . it differs jo a bit in Norway and**
13. jeg vet at det er noen som spiser . torsk  
**I know there are some who eat . cod**
14. på julaften og [ikke .  
**on Christmas Eve and not .**
- 15.J: [okei (1.5) og . ja men  
**ok . and . yes but**
16. i familien . i familien til mannen min da  
**in the family . in my husbands family**
17. [. da spiser de kjøtt  
**. they eat meat**
- 18.G: [ja mhm (.8)  
**yes mhm .**

Prior to the talk rendered in extract (119), Julia states that she is going home to Poland for Christmas, together with her Norwegian husband. As a result, Gunhild's question in line 1 is treated as contributing to the topic of the visit in Poland. Her response commences with a *ja* and a non-elaborate statement *veldig annerledes* 'very different', after which Julia returns to the topic of her husband's feelings about celebrating Christmas in Poland (lines 3-6). Her answer might seem somewhat curt and dismissing, since Gunhild's initial question was meant as a general inquiry about cultural differences, as can be seen in her re-tabling the topic in a different form in line 9. Gunhild's second inquiry is a more direct request of substantiation, as suggested by the use of *da* (identified as a standard particle appearing in such requests by Lind, 1994, after Svennevig 2001a). It has been found (Svennevig, *ibid.*) that the turns adjacent to such follow-up questions usually commence with the particle *jo*, projecting a forthcoming preferred response. However, Julia initiates the answer with a *ja* instead, and continues by delivering a single line comparison *vi spiser ikke kjøtt på julaften* 'we don't eat meat on Christmas Eve' (line 10). Following this statement is a downgraded opinion on differences between Polish and Norwegian Christmas customs, which in line 3 was delivered

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with a intensifier *veldig* 'very' and with a hedging *litt* 'little, a bit' in line 11. The second part of the turn in lines 10-11 functions as a summary and signals that the speaker is about to complete her utterance. However, the use of *ja* initiating the response would rather signal that the speaker has intended a lengthy multi-turn answer listing several different aspects of Christmas traditions. Consequently, Gunhild's *ja* followed by a pause of 0,8 second (line 12) can be interpreted as a continuer, which in lack of Julia's response functions as an initiator of the turn in lines 12-14, being a weak disagreement on the suggested topic.

Extracts (118) and (119) show instances of the NNSs' applying the studied practice in an ambiguous and possibly unmotivated way. This in turn suggests that the function of initiating answers to wh-questions with a response particle, analogous to applying or-inquiry, is not easily interpretable and applicable by non-native users of Norwegian.

### 7.2.2 *Ja* signalling delayed response

Otherwise, *ja* commencing a response to a wh-question can signal the need of additional processing, as observed in the following two extracts:

- (120/7U)
1. Agnieszka: mm (1.3) når var det? (.6)  
**mm . when was it? .**
  2. Gina: → ja når var det da det var .  
**yes when was it then it was .**
  3. kanskje i nittiåtte eller nittini?  
**maybe in ninety eight or ninety nine?**
  4. A: ja  
**yes**

In this extract, the response to a simple wh-question (line 1) consists of the response particle *ja* followed by an echo-question, which both signal the speaker's need for reflection before delivering an answer. Notably, the answer is marked with uncertainty particle *kanskje* 'maybe'. A similar example, with reversed interactional roles can be found in the following extract:

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(121/7U)

- 1.Gina: men hvorfor det da? (1s)  
**but why [that] then? .**
- 2.Agn.:→ ja . hvorfor [d(h)et he he he  
**yes . why [that] he he he**
- 3.G: [ja @hvorfor lærer dere  
**yes why are you learning**
4. tegnspråk@? bare for [gøy eller?  
**sign language just for fun or?**
- 5.A: [ja: . n:ei ja både og .  
**ye:s . no yes both**
6. e: (.3) jeg kunne: polsk tegnspråk  
**e: . I knew Polish sign language**
7. [eller jeg var tolk i Polen (.2)  
**or I was an interpreter in Poland .**
- 8.G: [oi ja oi  
**oi yes oi**
- 9.A: så savnet jeg kjempe  
**so I missed a lot**
- 10.G: ja  
**yes**
- 11.A: tegnspråk jeg (-- ) (1s) og så er vi Jehovas vitner (.7)  
**sign language I (-- ) . and so we are Jehovah's witnesses**
- 12.G: uhm
- 13.A: o:g det var et kurs som var organisert  
**a:nd it was a course organised**
14. av Jehovas vitner  
**by Jehovah's witnesses**
- 15.G: ja  
**yes**

Gina's question in line 1 is an inquiry about Agnieszka's reasons for learning sign language, which was mentioned previously in the talk. In line 2, Agnieszka produces *ja* and echoes the question, marking that the answer cannot be delivered promptly. Gina reacts to this utterance by repeating the question and paraphrasing it by means of suggesting candidate answer (lines 3-4). The overlap in lines 4 and 5 shows that Agnieszka has begun responding to the initial question when Gina is delivering her candidate understanding. Consequently, one can assume that the *ja:* with a prolonged vowel in line 5 is a marker of a multi-turn answer, similar to the ones observed in extracts (116) and (117). However,

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since Gina suggested a possible understanding, Agnieszka is obliged to react to it, and delivers a response token *nei ja både og* 'no yes both', thus marking that the answer is complex and requires providing additional information, which is done in lines 6-14 (also in the following talk not rendered here).

### 7.2.3 *Nei* renouncing the answer

Not unlike *ja*, the negative response particle *nei* initiating answer to wh-questions performs several functions, among them to renounce providing the answer and stating the reasons for it (Svennevig, 2001a: 148). This usage is observed in the following extract :

- (122/7U)
- 1.Gina: ja og så blir det vel ett år ekstra med  
**yes and so there will be one extra year with**
2. pedagogikk da hvis jeg vil (.4) [bli lærer  
**pedagogy if I want to . become a teacher**
- 3.Agnieszka: [åh ja (.7)  
**oh yes .**
4. .ja . vil du det? (.3)  
**.ja . do you want that? .**
- 5.G: jeg vet ikke hh he [he men-e: .  
**I don't know he he he but-e: .**
- 6.A: [nei hva ellers kan du?  
**no what else can you do?**
- 7.G: → nei det er det som er litt usikkert at de:t  
**no this is exactly what is a bit unsure that .**
8. (.4) sier at man kan jobbe innenfor (.6)  
**say that you can work in the .**
9. offentlig og privat nærings[livet ja .  
**public sector and private business yes .**
- 10.A: [ja  
**yes**
- 11.G: ting som ja men det er sånn diffust så det  
**things like yes but it's so vague so it**
12. kommer litt an på du (.4) sjøl finner ut  
**depends a bit on what you . decide yourself**

The instance of initiating answers to wh-questions with a response token is found in line 7, where Gina uses the negative token *nei* in reply to Agnieszka's inquiry in line 6. Gina's reaction serves to

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signal her inability to deliver a precise answer due to uncertainty: *det er sånn diffust* 'it's a bit diffuse' (line 11). Examples of such application can also be seen in extracts (123) and (124).

(123/6M)

1. Teresa: er er n høy eller . en sånn kan- kamel  
**is is it big or . such a cin- camel**
2.        hvor [høy-  
**how big**
3. Anders:        [vi så bare en sånn unge ja (.3)  
**we saw just such a little one yes .**
4.        en sånn (1.3) den var ikke så veldig høy  
**such . it wasn't so very big**
5. T:        tror du mennesker kan gå under? (.5) kameler .4  
**do you think people can go under . camels .**
6. A:        nei::[: je-  
**no::: I-**
7. T:        [no to /pl/ hvorfor er det så vanskelig  
**so /pl/ why should it be so difficult**
8.        å hoppe . av den (2.3)  
**to jump .from it .**
9. A: → nei jeg vet ikke . bare forestilt meg at det  
**no I don't know . just imagined that .**
10.        (.5) det er vanskelig=  
**. it is difficult**
11. T:        =kanskje det er vanskelig  
**maybe it's difficult**
12.        å ta den ene foten . over (.8)  
**to put one leg . over .**
13. A:        nei jeg tror jeg den er høyere enn en hest altså (.3)  
**no I think it's bigger than a horse .**
14. T:        no /pl/ . helt sikkert . men hvor mye høyere 1s  
**yeah . for sure . but how much bigger? .**
15. A: → nei vet ikke . meter ja (1s) heh he  
**no don't know . a meter yes . heh he**
16. T:        heh HH ja ja ja . en meter høyere (.8)  
**heh HH yes yes yes . a meter higher .**

In this extract, Anders renounces to provide the information Teresa requires twice, in line 9 and in line 15. The topic of the extract is the size of camels, which Anders is supposed to have some knowledge about. Nonetheless, he refuses to act as a knowledgeable speaker on the topic and claims lack of certain knowledge *nei (jeg) vet ikke*

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'no (I) don't know'. Another interesting feature observable in this excerpt is Teresa's use of Polish particles to initiate her inquiries *no to* and *no* (lines 7 and 14), which can be roughly translated as 'so' and 'yeah', respectively. Throughout their conversation, Teresa uses the particle *no* several times, which suggests that Anders is at least partially familiar with this practice. In Polish, commencing a turn with *no* signals a slight irritation with the interlocutor's answer, interpreting it as avoiding or not relevant. As such, equipping the utterance with this particle is a dominating move on the side of speaker. From the extract one can see that Anders downgrades his responses to a large extent, firstly by commencing the answers by *nei*, and additionally by admitting the lack of knowledge and hedging the opinion (*bare forestilt meg at* '[I] just imagined that', line 9). Consequently, apart from renouncing the answer and giving the reason for this, the use of *nei* adds to the general intention of downgrading the speaker's commitment to the delivered turn. The following extracts shows a similar application of the practice, this time employed by a NNS:

(124/1U)

- 1.Eli: ja: (.3) hva synes du om . Polen Polens  
**ye:s . what do you think about Poland**
2. styre og stell for [øyeblikket  
**the governance of Poland for the time being**
- 3.Grażyna: → [nei- . nei du du . som jeg  
**no . no you you . as I**
4. sa jeg har bodd nesten tretten år i Norge  
**said I have lived almost 13 years in Norway**
- 5.E: mhm
- 6.G: og . i . jeg fulgte ve:ldig lite (.3) y: (.5)  
**and . in . I followed very little . y: .**
7. det som skjer i Polen [. av forskjellige  
**what happens in Poland . for various**
- 8.E: [mhm
- 9.G: grunner (.5) så: . når jeg var i år (.5)  
**reasons . so: . when I was this year .**
10. i Polen . o:g (1s) og hadde anledning å se på  
**in Poland . a:nd . and had the opportunity to watch**
11. nyhetene [. sånn kanal non-stop nyheter  
**the news . such canal non-stop news**
- 12.E: [mm

- 13.G: .hh så det var stort kontrast [. mellom  
**.hh so there was great contrast . between**
- 14.E: [mm
- 15.G: politisk liv i Norge [. og i Polen  
**the political life in Norway . and in Poland**
- 16.E: [uhm mhm

Grażyna's answer to Eli's inquiry in lines 1-2 commences with *nei*, signalling the speaker's inability of providing a justified answer to the question<sup>98</sup>. In lines 3-4 and 6-7, Grażyna hedges her forthcoming answer by framing it as not based on objective arguments. Hence, she recognizes the need for objectivity while delivering an opinion. Only after applying this precautionary measure does she continue with the actual answer to Eli's question (lines 9-11ff). In this extract, Grażyna shows native-like competence handling a possibly difficult topic of politics, which has been claimed (cf. chapter 3) to be shunned in Norwegian conversations.

#### 7.2.4 *Nei* dismissing the question's presupposition

Another function of *nei* initiating answers is to refute the presupposition inherent in the *wh*-question (Svennevig, 2001a: 150). This function is observable in extracts (125-129). In some cases, however, this function overlaps to some extent with the previously discussed usage, as can be seen in the following extract:

- (125/12M)
- 1.Stig: det der har de (gavekortet) til han Einar (1s)  
**this there they have (gift card) for Einar .**
- 2.Helena: ja (1s) har du send det? [ha-  
**yes . have you send it? ha-**

<sup>98</sup> In the inquiry in line 1, Eli uses the expression *styre og stell*, consisting of two almost synonymical lexemes. Thus, the use of the second noun seems somewhat superfluous. Such pair expressions belong to a highly idiomatic use of Norwegian, and can be found for both nouns, verb and adjectives. In the case of adjectives, the other part of the compound often represents values attached to the first attribute, such as in *enkel og grei* 'simple and fine'. Though worthy of note and already noticed in Swedish (Maciej Zaremba, a lecture held at *Svenska Språkkdagar* 23.05.2009 in Poznań), the phenomenon has so far not received much attention.

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- 3.S: [ja han har fått  
**yes he has got [it]**
- 4.H: ja (.8) ja . så bra (.3) og hva skal han kjøpe seg?  
**yes . yes . so good . what is he going to buy?**
- 5.S: nei jeg har ikke spurt . han er så sjelden  
**no I haven't asked . he is so rarely**
6. på nettet av [en merkelig grunn (3s)  
**on the Internet for some weird reason .**
- 7.H: [jo:  
**jo:**
8. i hvert fall ikke så ofte .  
**in any case not so often .**

The question delivered by Helena in line 4 implies that Stig knows what Einar, a common acquaintance, has bought for the gift card he received from them. Stig's subsequent turn is initiated with *nei*, countering Helena's presupposition and at the same time signalling his lack of knowledge necessary for proving the answer.

(126/7U)

- 1.Agnieszka: hvordan kjenner dere hverandre? (.4)  
**how do you know each other? .**
- 2.Gina: nei vi kjenner hverandre vel egentlig ikk(h)e  
**no actually we don't know each other**
3. he [he så veldig mye det var bare .  
**he he so much it was just .**
- 4.A: [nei he he he  
**no he he he**
- 5.G: vi fikk hjelp av . Paulina . for et par uker  
**we got some help from . Paulina . a couple of**
6. siden til noe opptaksutstyr og bare spurte om  
**weeks ago with some recording devices and just**
7. jeg . ikke kunne hjelpe ho  
**asked if I . was not willing to help her**

The presupposition inherent in the question in line 1 is that Gina and the researcher know one another. As a result, Gina's *nei* initiating the response in line 2 refutes the presupposition. Only afterwards is the proper answer delivered, explaining the situation (lines 5-7).

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(127/3F)

- 1.Per: det blir jo gøy  
**it will be fun**
- 2.Hanna: ja det blir det  
**yes it will**
- 3.P: [ja  
**yes**
- 4.H: [hva skal vi snakke om . vi fikk vi:  
**what shall we talk about . we got we:**
- 5.P: → nei vi skulle finne på det sjølv .  
**no we're supposed to find a topic ourselves**
- 6.H: okei  
**ok**
- 7.P: og bare snakke som vanlig sånn som vi bruker  
**and just talk as usual like we use to**
8. å gjøre (.3)  
**do .**
- 9.H: okei  
**ok**
- (lines omitted)
- 10.P: ja (1s) men forresten du og Radek ja .  
**yes . but by the way you and Radek yes .**
11. når skal vi finne på det? (1.2)  
**when shall we do it? .**
- 12.H: når skal vi: (1.4) [mener du den k-  
**when shall we: . do you mean r-**
- 13.P: [du og Radek  
**you and Radek**
- 14.H: kongekrabbe o:g  
**red king crabs a:nd**
- 15.P: ja komme og spise  
**yes come and eat**
- 16.H: → okei (.8) nei du må bare bestemme  
**ok (.8) no you just have to decide**
17. når det passer deg .best  
**when it suits you . best**
- 18.P: kanskje vi kunne ha tatt det på: søndag (1s)  
**maybe we could take it o:n Sunday .**
19. er det dårlig dag? (.4)  
**is it a bad day? .**

In extract (127), *nei* is delivered twice, by each participant. The first instance is a reply to an inquiry about the topic they have been given to discuss by the researcher conducting the study (line 4).

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Hence, Per's subsequent turn refutes the presupposition, referring the setting of the recording (lines 5 and 7-8). Consequently, Per introduces the topic of a common dinner (lines 9-10) that apparently has been previously known to Hanna, as she comprehends his move, notably not without initial problems. After a clarifying side-sequence (lines 12-15), Hanna delivers an answer, initiating it with *nei*, thus refusing Per's suggestion that she choose the date for the meeting. Her turn seems the right reaction, as it is immediately appreciated by Per who continues to suggest the date himself and asks for his interlocutor's acceptance (lines 18-19).

In the following extract one can also observe a side-sequence of confirming the understanding following the wh-question:

- (128/6M)
1. Anders: og har du undersøkt . hvilke flyselskaper  
**and have you checked . which companies**
2. da har du undersøkt (.8) [(--)  
**then have you checked . (--)**
3. Teresa: [hvilke flyselskaper  
**which companies**
4. har jeg undersøkt?=  
**have I checked?**
5. A: =uhm
6. T: → nei jeg søkte bare på kelkoo elle:r  
**no I just checked on kelkoo o:r**
7. A: ja  
**yes**
8. T: sånne websider som sjekker alle (.8)  
**such websides that check all .**
9. men det e:r (2s)det er ikke noe annet enn F1  
**but it i:s . there is noone else than F1**
10. og F2 som . flyr dit (.4)  
**and F2 that . fly there .**

In order to assure proper understanding, Teresa echoes Anders' question from lines 1-2. When acceptance is provided, she continues by answering to the original inquiry, countering the inherent presupposition that she has investigated some particular airlines by stating she has just checked websides common to several different airlines (lines 6-10).

However, in other cases the “hidden” meaning of a wh-question does not arise from the question itself. The implicit message is in such cases warranted by the prior talk that can lead to a given interpretation of the wh-question.

(129/4F)

1. Greta: når begynte dere?  
**when did you start?**
2. Frøydis: → nei ett år siden litt over ett år .  
**no one year ago a bit over one year .**
3. [sommeren i fjor  
**summer last year**
4. G: [oi såpass så fort  
**oh so quick**
5. F: jo men det tar nå sin tid [herregud hi hi hi  
**yes but it takes its time my God hi hi hi**
6. G: [ja  
**yes**
7. F: men i hvert fall der var jo ikke verken strøm  
**but in any case there was neither electricity**
8. eller vann så vi og har bora etter vann  
**nor water so we also had to drill a well**

Greta’s inquiry from line 1 is responded to by Frøydis as if the question was indeed intended to mean *er det lenge siden dere begynte* ‘did you begin a long time ago’. Frøydis’ understanding might be substantiated by the fact the previously to the inquiry in line 1, she has given an account of several repairs that have already been made in the cabin. As a result, Greta might have inferred that the work has been going on for a long time, a presupposition thus dismissed by the negative response token offered by Frøydis in line 2.

### 7.2.5 *Nei* dismissing the prior statement’s presupposition

The negative response particle *nei* appears also in the beginning of statements that are not in themselves answers to questions (neither wh- nor yes/no-type). *Nei* may also initiate a statement that contradicts a prior statement, the function which is correlated with the

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previously analysed functions of negating a presupposition inherent in the questions.

(130/1U)

- 1.Eli: jeg vet ikke om det ulovlig i Polen .  
**I don't know if it is illegal in Poland .**
- 2.Grażyna: → ja: det nei jeg tror-  
**ye:s it no I think**
- 3.E: [dere har jo  
**you do have**
4. [tradisjoner for solidaritet i Polen  
**traditions of solidarity in Poland**
- 5.G: [sikkert sikkert ja  
**surely surely yes**
- 6.E: [i tidligere tider i hvert fall .  
**earlier at least**
- 7.G: → [he he he  
**he he he**
8. .hh nei saken er den at (2s) fagforening i  
**.hh no the thing is that . labour union in**
9. kommunistisk Polen . spilte ikke  
**the communist Poland . didn't play**
10. så stor rolle egentlig (.5)  
**such a bit role actually .**
- 11.E: uhm
- 12.G: mens solidarność JA: . det gjorde veldig mye .  
**while Solidarność YE:S . it did a lot**
- 13.E: uhm
- 14.G: men-e . det var stort sett . politisk organisasjon  
**but-e . it was predominantly . a political organisation**
- 15.E: uhm okei  
**uhm ok**

In the extract, the topic circulates around the phenomenon of social dumping and its grounds in the illegal practices of employers. Prior to the rendered talk, Eli has suggested that many Polish companies make profit from sending their employees to Norway and collecting a fixed percent of their wages, a practice which is illegal in Norway. In line 1 she expresses her doubt whether it is also forbidden in Poland. In line 2, Grażyna takes the floor and commences a turn, apparently contradicting the previous turn. Her attempt is however interrupted by Eli, who in lines 3-4 and 6 refers

to the labour union movement in the communist Poland known as *Solidaritet* in Norway, thus displaying at least partial knowledge of the topic. However, in lines 7-15 the suggestion of *Solidarność*-activity is dismissed as not fully relevant for the topic, as *det var stort sett politisk organisasjon* 'it was mainly a political organisation' (line 14). The dismissal is initiated by *nei* (line 8), which suggests that the forthcoming turn will downplay the previously delivered statement.

What is especially interesting, however, is the use of *nei* that does not seem to negate any of the talk's prior statement, as observed in the two following extracts. Skarbø (1999) analysed yes/no-particles' function for introducing topics, and came to the conclusion that both tokens mark a shift in the topical development. *Ja* is used for introducing statements that to some extent can be seen as coherent with the overall topic of a given stretch of talk, whereas *nei* initiates a greater breach of the topical consistency. Thus, response particles can be said to perform an interactional function of regulating the talk.

(131/1U)

1. Grażyna: i: fra: mitt liv jeg kan . under  
**i:n fro:m my life I can . in the**
2. kommunistisk styre kan finne en god del veldig  
**communism can find a great deal of very**
3. fi[ne . sider [. og en del  
**good . sides . and some**
4. Eli: [mhm mhm
5. G: veldig dårlige sider  
**very bad sides**
6. E: mhm det er jo sånn med det meste=  
**mhm it is jo such with the majority**
7. G: =så:  
**so:**
8. E: → *nei* som ideologi betraktet seg sikkert kommunistene  
**no as an ideology seemed communists for sure**
9. egentlig . en god ting [. som teori=  
**actually . a good thing . as theory**
10. G: [mhm =ja (1s)  
**mhm yes .**

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The extract is a conclusion of a lengthy stretch of talk concerning Grażyna's life in Poland. The turn initiated with *nei* (line 8-9) in some ways repeats the previously stated fact that communism has both positive and negative sides (as delivered by Grażyna in lines 1-3), yet frames it as a general, more objective opinion. It seems therefore that the use of *nei* enables the speaker to deliver a statement that has been earlier produced by the other speaker, possibly as a more objective utterance. At the same time Eli's turn is marked as not immediately coherent with the previous talk, introducing a shift of perspective on the topic (from a personal to a general one).

*Nei* initiating an utterance is also found in semantically empty turns functioning as continuers, such as in the following extract:

- (132/6M)
- 1.Anders:ja er det mye sånn eller (1s) bort i America (.7)  
**yes is there much of such or . in America**
- 2.Teresa:ja . jeg tror det=  
**yes . I think so**
- 3.A: =mm mange sånne (-- ) [. eller  
**mm many such (-- ) . or**
- 4.T: [nei  
**no**
5. ja  
**yes**
- 6.A: restauranter ja (1.3)  
**restaurants yes .**
- 7.T: mhm (1s)
- 8.A: → nei det blir bra det (2s) ja (1s)  
**no it will be good it . yes .**
- 9.T: vi får bare ta ut av de:t . det som vi kan .  
**we're just going to have to . enjoy as much as**
10. kan ha . med Geir (.4)  
**we can with Geir .**

In the excerpt, the participants discuss the details of their holiday plans. The stretch of talk rendered here constitutes transitional talk between the topic of restaurants and the topic of travel route, suggested by Anders in the following turns (not rendered here). It

seems therefore that Anders' turn in line 8 does not negate any previous statement and functions as a continuer only, filling in the silence. As one can infer from the number and length of the pauses, the extract depicts conversational "slowing down" before a topical transition, in which participants await confirmation that their interlocutors do not wish to take floor. Such practice has previously been discussed while analysing echo-turns and pro-repeats which also seem to fulfill the function of slowing the pace of conversation so as to enable a smooth topical change (see chapter 6).

The instances of *nei* applied in extracts (131) and (132) functionally resemble the structure *nei men* 'no but' which marks a new perspective on the topic currently discussed. However, as the following extract shows, it is also applied in semantically empty repetitions:

(133/13U)

- 1.Randi: ja vi skal se ja  
**yes we will see yes**
- 2.Magda: og vi skal se . så (1s) det er sånt  
**and we will see . so . it is like that**
- 3.R: → ja nei men det er nok sånt ja .  
**yes no but it is probably like that yes .**
- 4.M: ikke . [kanskje det er ikke bra men  
**not . maybe it is not so good but**
- 5.R: [realistisk kvinne er du  
**a realistic woman you are**
6. jo det tror jeg er veldig bra eller fordi .  
**jo I think it is very good or because .**
7. jeg tenker sånn at  
**I think so that**

Such use of the structure seems to contradict its semantic meaning, as the utterance preceded by *nei men* simply repeats what has been done before, instead of offering some new information. However, as Lindström&Londen found out, the function of connectives in Swedish (thus, also Norwegian) conversational language is "to expand the *discourse* rather than to expand sentential packages, which is probably more typical of written language" (2008: 143ff). Thus, it can be said that the structure applied by Randi frames the

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turn as a new contribution to the topic, even though it in fact initiates a repetition. In case of extract (133), the turn in line 3 is a indistinct method of taking over the floor in order to drive the interaction forward, here by delivering a comment (lines 5-7). The use of connectives for interactional purposes is also addressed in the conclusions of this chapter.

### 7.2.6 *Jo* as an upgrader

The final response particle that will be analysed in this chapter is *jo*, which original function is to negate a negative question. Svennevig (2001a) claims the main function of *jo* initiating an answer to a wh-question to be the opposite of *nei*. Consequently, *jo* functions as an upgrader of an affective commitment, the case observed in extract (134):

- (134/14F)
- 1.Tomasz: hva skal du gjøre i: . jula .  
**what are you going to do for Christmas**
- 2.Eirik: → nei: jo jeg skal hjem til mor a  
**no: jo I am going home to my mother**
- 3.T: drikke og ete?  
**drink and eat**
- 4.E: drikke og spise o:g .  
**drink and eat a:nd .**
- 5.T: he he he he
- 6.E: ja . stort sett det .  
**yes . generally that .**

Interestingly enough, extract (134) combines the use of *nei* and *jo* at the same turn. While *nei* can be interpreted as dismissing the presupposition inherent in the question (i.e. *skal du gjøre noe spesielt i jula* 'are you going to do something out of the ordinary for Christmas'<sup>99</sup>), *jo* serves the function of upgrading the speaker's commitment to the statement.

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<sup>99</sup> Notably, the same situation, that is inquiry about one's holiday plans, is used as the prototypical usage of response particles in reaction to wh-question in the comprehensive Norwegian grammar by Faarlund *et al.* (1997: 970).



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(136/11U)

1. Julia: eller . kusina mi bor i . Hall Hall  
**or . my cousin lives in . Hall Hall**
2. jeg aldri vet kossen det skal uttales  
**I never know how to pronounce it**
3. Gunhild: nei  
**no**
4. J: eh (.3) altså ikke så langt fra der (1s)  
**eh . well not so far away from there .**
5. så vi dro til York  
**so we went to York**
6. G: mhm . hva syntes du om byen da (.8)  
**mhm . what did you think of the city then .**
7. J: → jo den var koselig men det er så mange  
**jo it was nice but there was so many**
8. turister der [og  
**tourists there and**
9. G: [ja det er jo det (.3)  
**yes there are jo .**

The topic of extract (136) is England, which both participants turned out to be to some extent familiar with. Julia is telling the story of her trips to England (lines 1-2 and 4-5), upon which Gunhild inquires about her opinion of York (line 6). Julia's answer is formed as the structure *jo... men... 'yes... but...'*, which is an idiomatic Norwegian method of expressing weak disagreement, as can be observed in the following extract from the NoTa corpus:

(137/Be\_079-080)

1. A: så det kan jo gjøre noen ting med din naturlige  
**so that can jo do something with you natural**
2. autoritet på måte [. i jobben  
**authority in a way . at work**
3. B: → [ja det er jo jo det er jo  
**yes it is jo jo it is jo**
4. mulig men altså samtidig hvor mye respekt  
**possible but well at the same time how much respect**
5. må man ha for at det skal funke liksom  
**do you have to have so that it will work kind of**

Hence, Julia's turn in line 7 suggests that she has interpreted Gunhild's question as requiring an affirmative answer, which led

to her applying a syntactic structure allowing for disagreement without directly contradicting the interlocutor. Julia's inference is possibly based on the fact that Gunhild has presented herself as an anglophile. Thus, delivering a negative opinion about York could endanger the harmony of the conversation. Julia's turn is immediately accepted and agreed upon by Gunhild in her subsequent turn (line 9), which shows that the practice's application has been successful.

### 7.2.7 Conclusions

The practice of initiating the answers to wh-question with response particles performs vital conversational and interpersonal functions in Norwegian verbal interactions. In the analysis, most of Svennevig's (2001a) findings have been confirmed, with *ja* performing predominantly interactional roles, and *nei* and *jo* referring to the presuppositions inherent in the inquiry. Additionally, another function of *nei* has been suggested, namely the function of retarding the pace of the conversation as to enable a topic transition. This function of *nei* seems vital for the harmonious progress of the conversation, as it acknowledges both speakers' needs of expressing themselves before the topic is closed. At the same time, *nei* opening repeated statements (as found for instance in extract 131) allow for a consensus to be built across the interlocutors' opinions on a given topic. As these opinions might to some extent be diverse, statements introduced with *nei* give the impression of performing a placatory function, through providing a weak agreement and at the same time expressing the speaker's objectivity. The topic of expressing disagreement will also be discussed in the subsequent chapter 8.

The analysed extracts show that although non-native speakers also adopt the practice in their talk, only some of them do it in an idiomatic way. This fact can suggest that in order for practice to be acquired, the non-native speakers of Norwegian require not only a lengthy exposure to native talk, but also some conscious understanding of the numerous functions of response particles adopted in such environment.



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7. har du . [tenkt å komme inni faget ditt igjen  
**have you . planned to come back to your field**
- 8.G: [nei det-  
**no that**
9. det det lang historie jeg var ansatt  
**it it long story I was employed**
10. midlertidig . (1.4)  
**temporary .**

Extract (138) comes from a stretch of talk concerning Grażyna's occupation. In lines 2-3, Eli reformulates Grażyna's previous account of her education and work experience, thus producing an understanding check. Reformulation preceding further inquiry seems a typical method of maintaining coherence of the talk, and can also be observed in extracts (141-143) (see section 7.3.3. for a discussion of the phenomenon). After the confirmation has been delivered (line 4), Eli continues by posing a question concerning Grażyna's reasons for not working within her field of expertise. As the inquiry is actually a request for substantiation, the turn in lines 5-7 could have had the form typical for such request: *hvorfor ikke det (da)* 'why not then'. However, it seems that Eli chose a "safer" strategy of , thus offering several candidate answers for Grażyna to choose from. Nonetheless, Grażyna's answer reveals her perception of Eli's question as a request for substantiation.

(139/5U)

- 1.Tone:→ ja ja (3s) mm (3s) er det noe spesielt  
**yes yes . mm . is there something special**
2. du gjør hh på fritida? he he  
**you do hh in your spare time? he he**
- 3.Joanna: spesielt? (.4) a:h . å jeg vet ikke  
**special? . o:h . oh I don't know**
4. jeg liker å: lese boka (.3)  
**I like to: read the book .**
- 5.T: hæ?  
**huh?**
- 6.J: jeg liker å lese boka [. og vi går også på  
**I like to read the book . and we also go to**
- 7.T: [ja  
**yes**



In extract (140), Randi not only uses a yes/no-question with an extraposition, but also equips it with a reformulation offering a candidate answer (lines 1-2). This practice seems to a large degree superfluous, as by the time Randi has completed her reformulation, Magda has already delivered the answer, which is consequently incorporated into Randi's reformulation.

### 7.3.2 Direct questions as problematic talk

The last of the extracts analysed in this section is a lengthy stretch of talk, exhibiting several instances of direct questions which seem to impose on the interlocutor and put her on the defensive.

- (141/11U)
1. Gunhild:de: (.6) ja resten (1.3) så akkurat nå så  
**they . yes the rest . so actually now I am**
2. holder jeg på med (.4) jeg har blitt involvert  
**working on . I have become involved**
3. i: et nasjonalt ordboksprosjekt  
**i:n a national dictionary project**  
 (lines omitted)
4. Julia: uhm hva slags bok e ordbok er det?  
**uhm what kind of dictionary is that?**
5. G:\*<sup>103</sup> em det er en . nå vet jeg ikke altfor mye om  
**em it is a . now I don't know so much about**
6. den om det er . en-e: tenkte å være en  
**it if it is . a: planned for it to be a**
7. nasjonal ordbok (.3) der man tar med (.7)  
**national dictionary . where as many words as**
8. så mange ord som mulig . av både dialektord .  
**possible are included . of both dialects**
9. men det det er fokus på nynorsk så det er  
**but that there is a focus on nynorsk so it is**
10. ikke en bokmålsordbok det er en nynorskordbok  
**not a bokmål dictionary, it is a nynorsk dictionary**
11. med . dialektord og nynorskord (.2) som .  
**with .words from dialects and nynorsk . which**

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<sup>103</sup> The asterisk in a transcript indicates that the turn has been simplified in order for the meaning to be more transparent for the reader. Throughout passages marked with an asterisk the interlocutor receiving the narrative provides only minimal continuers such as *ja, mm* etc.

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12. skal brukes . og da: (.5) har jeg som oppgave  
**will be used and the:n . my task is**
13. å registrere de (.6) em de matordene som er  
**to register . food terms from**
14. fra Trøndelag . em som står i de forskjellige  
**Trøndelag . from different**
15. bøker og litteratur og sånt . så jeg skal  
**books and literature and such . so I will be**
16. gjøre det så det er no det  
**doing that so this is what**
17. jeg har holdt på med siden da  
**I've been working on since then**
- 18.J: mhm hva er typisk trøndersk mat (.3) [he he he  
**mhm what is typical food from Trøndelag . he**
- 19.G: [eh @ja  
**eh @yes**
20. hva er det@ heh [em:  
**what is it@ heh em:**
- 21.J: [i hvert fall litt (-- ) (1.2)  
**at least some (-- ) .**
- 22.G:\* em: (1.4) jeg holder på å skrive opp det  
**em: . I'm working on registering more**
23. som var mer . e: sånne lister av ulike ord og  
**what was . e: such lists of different words**
24. sånt . det er (1.1) em: (.7) forskjellige  
**and such . it is . em: . different types**
25. typer bakverk o:g fiskeretter og forskjellige  
**of pastries and fish dishes and different such**
26. sånt og da er det jo tradisjonsmat fra gamle  
**and then it is jo traditional food from old**
27. dager så da står gjerne om (.7) em: andre  
**days so then there is often about . em: different**
28. skikker enn det vi har nå ja for eksempel når  
**customs than what we have now yes for instance**
29. folk ble bedt til (.3) bryllup eller til-e  
**when people were asked to . a wedding or to-e**
30. (.8) e: . eller et barn var blitt født så kom  
**. e: or a child was born so people came on**
31. folk på besøk . og da måtte de ha med seg (.6)  
**a visit . and then they had to have with them**
32. eh mat det var skikken .  
**eh food that was the custom .**
- 33.J: uhm uh hva hva er vitsen med sånn  
**uhm uh what what's the point of such**

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34. gammeldags ordbok nå? (.3)  
**an old-fashioned dictionary now? .**
- 35.G: eh . ja det kan du si altså . det representerer (.2)  
**eh . yes you can say that . it represents .**
36. em kanskje en del av kulturarven å . ta vare  
**em maybe a part of the cultural heritage to .**
37. på . [fordypning og (.5)  
**protect . proficiency and .**
- 38.J: [ja ja så jeg synes det finnes  
**yes yes so I think there is not**
39. ikke så mange gode . ordbøker ehm på norsk  
**so many good . dictionaries ehm in Norwegian**
40. (.7) jeg liker ordboka som er på nettet  
**. I like the dictionary that is on the**
41. sånn nynorsk- og bokmåls[ordboka .  
**Internet such nynorsk- og bokmålsordboka .**
- 42.G: [mhm
- 43.J: den er veldig bra  
**it is very good**
- 44.G: ja  
**yes**
- 45.J: men ellers så er det litt (.3) ehm det finner  
**but otherwise so it is a bit . ehm it finds**
46. det finnes ikke så mange synonymordbøker og  
**there are not so many dictionaries of synonyms**
47. sånne em tema (.4)  
**and such em tematical .**
- (lines omitted)
- 48.J: det finner man ikke på norsk=  
**you can't find that in Norwegian**
- 49.G: =nei så det savner du  
**no so you miss that**
- 50.J: ja (.6)  
**yes .**

Lines 1-3 exhibit the introduction of Gunhild's work as the topic for conversation. In the following lines (omitted) she gives account of her activities within the dictionary project. In line 4, Julia delivers a request for additional information on the project. In response, Gunhild gives a mitigated and lengthy account (stressing her uncertainty already to begin with, line 5) of what kind of dictionary it is meant to be, and what her involvement in it consists of (lines 5-17). After she delivers her concluding remark *så det er no*

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*det jeg har holdt på med siden da* 'so this is what I've been doing since then' (lines 16-17), Julia develops the topic and inquiries about specific knowledge she assumes Gunhild has gained in her work (line 18). Her question is echoed accompanied by a smile, which suggests that Gunhild finds responding to the inquiry rather difficult. At the same time, the turn in lines 19-20 serves to gain time to formulate a proper answer, which comes in lines 22-32. Julia's subsequent question, notably considerably aggressive through the choice of words (the expression *hva er vitsen* 'what's the point' conveys strong criticism and/or scepticism), puts Gunhild in defense of the idea behind the project. In the following lines (35-37) she delivers a weak agreement *ja det kan du si altså* 'well you can say so', and she provides her defense of the initiative afterwards. In the subsequent turns, Julia attempts to explain her strong reaction to the dictionary idea by complaining about the lack of modern Norwegian dictionaries (lines 38-47). The analysed stretch of talk can nonetheless be perceived as a domination struggle, triggered, even if unintentionally, by Julia's verbal behaviour. In the interview that followed the recording, Julia admitted that she at times had had the feeling that her expressions "run her interlocutor down", and that some topics engage her to such a degree that "she doesn't pay attention to whose turn it is to speak". By stating those facts, Julia indirectly expresses her perception of Norwegian conversations as characterised by strict rules concerning turn-taking and demands for a moderate display of emotional involvement.

### 7.3.3 Explicit marking of coherence

The following extract uses the same practice as the three previously analysed, yet at the same time the inquiry is delivered repeatedly and incorporated in a lengthy account explicitly stating its coherence with the previous talk and the general context of the conversation:

(142/1U)

1.Eli: du vet nordmenn . det heter seg at nordmenn er  
you know Norwegians . one says that Norwegians

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2. født med ski på beina ikke [sant  
are born with skis on not true
- 3.Grażyna: [j(h)a jeg hørte det .  
y(h)es I heard it
- 4.E: \* er det noe spesielt som polakker er- vi  
is there something special that Poles are- we  
5. kjenner jo ikke Polen så veldig godt annet enn  
don't know jo Poland so very good other than  
6. det jeg har lest om Polen og så (.3) og de jeg  
what I have read about Poland and so . and those I  
7. kjenner som er fra Polen men . har aldri vært  
know who are from Poland but . have never been  
8. i Polen selv om jeg gjerne skulle dratt dit  
to Poland although I would like to go there  
9. en gang så: . det kan jo hende at jeg får en  
one day so: . it might be that I'll get a  
10. anledning da (anonymous)  
chance when
11. men-e: . er det noe spesielt som kjennetegner  
but-e: . is there something special that characterises  
12. polakker? (1s) altså . hvis du sier at  
Poles? . well . when you say that Norwegian  
13. nordmenn altså når jeg spør studenter som er  
well when I ask students that come  
14. her på sommerkurs og sånn eller (.5) i den  
for summer school and such or . when  
15. tida jeg drev med det . om hva de forbinder  
I worked with it . about what they associate  
16. med nordmenn (1s) o:g da sier de gjerne at ja  
with Norwegians . a:nd then they say often  
17. . det er ski og ryggsekk og nisselue og ut på  
that yes . it is skis and rucksack and a cap and on  
18. tur og på hytta og sånne ting selv om det ikke  
a trip and to the cabin and such things although not  
19. er alle nordmenn som har det sånn men er det  
all Norwegians do that but  
20. noe sånn typisk som polakker gjør? .  
is there something typical that Poles do? .  
21. som jeg burde vite om  
that I should know about
- 22.G: hh (1s) du vet jeg oppvokste under  
hh . you know I grew up  
23. kommunistisk styre  
in communism

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In lines 1-2, Eli produces a stereotypical opinion on Norwegians and awaits Grażyna's confirmation in order to proceed with her inquiry. After the confirmation is delivered, Eli embarks on a multi-turn narrative, accompanied only by Grażyna's minimal continuers. In the course of the narrative, Eli delivers the same inquiry, namely about what is typical for Poles, three times, twice reformulating it so as to explicitly mark her standpoint. The first question, delivered in line 4 is accompanied by reasons for asking such a question (lines 4-10) and several small side-sequences (as the one in lines 8-10). In line 11, the question reappears, introduced by a topic shift marker *men* 'but'. As the inquiry is followed by a lengthy pause of 1 second, Eli decides to deliver a reformulation, exemplifying what she means by her question (lines 12-19). Finally, the inquiry is delivered once more in lines 20-21, and afterwards Grażyna takes the floor and commences an answer (notably, also preceded by some explaining turns).

Coming back to lines 1-2 of the previous extract, one notices that the inquiry is preceded by a reformulation of the prior talk, a practice observed also in extract (138). The paraphrase provides a smooth transition between the topics, explicitly marking the coherence and enabling the interlocutor to prepare for the forthcoming topic. It can be perceived as a theme-rheme structure on the level of discourse. The same practice can be observed in extract (133) and (134).

(133/11U)

1. Gunhild: → og du hadde bodd i Norge i fem år  
**and you have lived in Norway for 5 years**
2. Julia: ja: nesten .  
**ye:s almost .**
3. G: → mm . kunne du noe norsk før du kom hit? (.4)  
**mm . did you know Norwegian before you came here? .**
4. J: nei bare . jeg begynte å lære litt på egen  
**no just . I began to study a bit on my**
5. hånd før jeg kom hit  
**own before I came here**
6. G: ja  
**yes**

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- 7.J: men det var jeg kunne veldig lite  
**but it was I knew very little**
8. når jeg kom . til Norge (.9)  
**when I came .to Norway .**
- 9.G: mm (4s)
- 10.J: hih (2.4, ser på forslaget til samtaleemner)  
**hih . (looks at the topic suggestions)**
11. he he (1s) ja hva liker du å gjøre  
**he he .yes what do you like to do**
12. i fritida? (.5)  
**in your spare time? .**

In line 1, Gunhild reintroduces an issue previously delivered by Julia, thus re-tabling the topic and at the same time confirming her knowledge. After Julia's confirmation (line 2), Gunhild delivers the inquiry, which is followed by an explanation (lines 4-5 and 7-8). However, the topic seems not to be preferred by Julia, who in lines 10-12 changes the topic to one of suggested by the researcher.

Similarly to extract (133), the inquiry in the following extract is also preceded by a statement repeating a previously stated issue:

- (134/11U)
- 1.Gunhild:→ nei men-e: du har nettopp levert inn  
**no but-e: you have just handed in**
- 2.Julia: ja (.8) nes-[  
**yes . alm-**
- 3.G: → [masteroppgave og hva handlet  
**master's thesis and what was**
4. den om da  
**it about then**
- 5.J: hm?
- 6.G: hva handlet den om?  
**what was it about?**
- 7.J: ja den handla litt om kodeveksling og  
**yes it was a bit about code switching and**
- 8.G: ja  
**yes**

In extract (134), the participants resume the talk after a short break in which the coffee was brought into the room. Hence, Gunhild initiates her confirmation check in line 1 with a marker of a new

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topic or topic shift *nei men-e*: 'no but-e'. Julia delivers the confirmation immediately, even before the check is completed. Consequently, immediately after completing her previous turn Gunhild proceeds to the inquiry about the dissertation's topic (lines 3-4).

The above analysed extracts show the practice of providing an explicit link between adjacent turns. The following excerpt exemplifies a situation when the link between the inquiry and the prior talk has not been explicitly marked. As a result, a misunderstanding occurs:

- (135/11U)
1. Gunhild: eh . det er såne mer overfladiske ting  
**eh . it is such more superficial things**
2. som man observerer nå som turist da .  
**that one observes as a tourist then .**
3. Julia: → hva liker du i England? (.6)  
**what do you like in England? .**
4. G: eh (.4) i generelt i England [ja .  
**eh . in generally in England yes .**
5. J: [mhm
6. G: eh der (.3) [merker man ikke religion  
**eh there . one doesn't notice religion**
7. J: [hm
8. G: noe særlig i det hele tatt . så: (1s)  
**too much at all . so: .**
9. J: → men-e hvorfor drar du så ofte til England=  
**but-e why do you travel so often to England**
10. G: =ja  
**yes**
11. du tenker på hvorfor jeg drar?  
**you are thinking about why I travel?**
12. J: ja ja  
**yes yes**
13. G: ja ehm (.9) vel jeg synes jo det er hyggelig  
**yes ehm . well I think jo it is nice**
14. å være der [selv om det kan være litt stress  
**to be there although it can be a bit of stress**
15. J: [eh he
16. G: innimellom så prøver jeg ikke å oppsøke de  
**sometimes so I try not to come**
17. stressende tingene da .  
**in the stress situations then .**

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The topic discussed in this stretch of talk is England as a travel goal. Previously to the rendered extract, Gunhild has compared England to Ireland, which she recently has visited, and analysed the factors contributing to the differences between the two countries, including religious differences. Lines 1-2 of the extract are a continuation of the topic. Julia's inquiry in line 3, although to some extent coherent with the general topic of visiting England, fails to provide an explicit link to the previous talk. As a result, Gunhild struggles to understand the question in the given context (as can be inferred from the hesitation markers and false starts in line 4) and as a result delivers an answer that is not expected by Julia (lines 6 and 8). Her turn damages mutual understanding in the conversation, and lead to the repair sequence in lines 9-12, during which Julia reformulates her question and Gunhild echoes it in order to assure proper comprehension and at the same time gain time to formulate the answer. Only afterwards does Gunhild provide the proper answer to the question (lines 13ff.)

Another instance of misunderstanding, though not as obvious as in the previous extract, can be observed in the following talk:

(136/13U)

1. Magda: og hun går på Skole<sup>104</sup> her . a du bor her  
**and she goes to School here . a you live here**
2. her i S1?=  
**here in S1?**
3. Randi: =ja jeg bor her i S1 [ja  
**yes I live here in S1 yes**
4. M: [du er xxx<sup>105</sup>?  
**you are xxx?**
5. R: ja nei jeg er ikke XXX jeg er født  
**yes no I am not XXX I have been born**
6. og oppvokst i Oslo (.4)  
**and grew up in Oslo .**
7. M: åh ja da  
**oh yes**

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<sup>104</sup> Common nouns written with capital letters replace proper names (in this case, the name of a school).

<sup>105</sup> The symbol XXX stands for a noun denoting where Randi comes from, which has been made anonymous.

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Extract (136) comes from the beginning of the conversation, in which the participants establish facts about each other. In lines 1-2, Magda changes the topic from the one concerning her daughter (as seen in line 1 *hun går på skole her* 'she goes to school here') to Randi's place of living. Randi's response in line 3 echoes the inquiry completely, the only change being the deictic amendment. The response is immediately followed by another direct question in line 4 *du er xxx* 'you are a xxx (=person from a certain region)'. As a response to the question, Randi delivers a curious turn, initiated by contradicting response particles *ja* and *nei*. It can be argued that the beginning of the turn in line 5 signals Randi's surprise at the posed question, which resulted in delivering an incongruent token at first and a repair immediately afterwards. Notably, both Magda's inquiries have the form of affirmative statements produced with a rising intonation, which is a common method of delivering questions in Polish, yet does not seem equally common in Norwegian (possibly because of the postulated inverted pattern of intonation in spoken eastern Norwegian variety<sup>106</sup>).

### 7.3.4. Conclusions

Extracts analysed in section 7.3 substantiate the claim that wh-questions are dispreferred in conversations among interlocutors previously unknown to each other. The practice can additionally be attributed to the perceived inequality of the speakers, one of whom is a non-native speaker of a given language, and at the same time to a distanced relationship between them. Nonetheless, that avoiding direct wh-questions and replacing them with a yes/no questions with extraposition seems to conform to the rule of non-

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<sup>106</sup> It has been claimed that in the so called *lav-tone dialecter* 'low-tone dialects', spoken in south-eastern Norway and the region of Trøndelag, questions are produced with a falling intonation, whereas affirmative statements have a rising intonation (Haugen, 1982, after Nilsen, 1992). Nonetheless, as Nilsen (*ibid.*) claims this view is somewhat simplified and does not provide the whole picture of the Norwegian intonation pattern, which has not been thoroughly analysed as yet.

imposing on the interlocutor that is characteristic of Norwegian interactions.

Additionally, the extracts analysed in section 7.3.3 suggest that explicit signals of coherence, such as clarification statements, as well as utterances projecting upcoming questions, are frequently found in conversations between participants unfamiliar with one another. Although this fact is hardly surprising, it verifies the claim that harmony is an important factor in Norwegian conversation and that preventing a disruption from happening is one of the basic interactional goals.

#### **7.4 Discussion and conclusions**

In this chapter, three practices assumed to be connected to the preference structure and the display of speakers' expectations regarding subsequent turns have been analysed. The analysis of or-inquiry and its applications has proved the practice to be a vital method of managing problematic issues such as questions about personal matters or concerning the interlocutor's plans or opinion. The "you-oriented" inquiries can be treated as imposing on the interlocutor, as it is the affirmative answers that seems to be preferred as response to yes/no-questions in Norwegian conversation. Hence, the use of or-inquiry opens up for a negative answer, notably not delivered directly, but rather obliquely signalled through an objective statement of facts.

With the or-inquiry being a conversational practice crucial for maintaining a harmonious interaction, its absence in a speaker's talk may have implications for the course of conversation and perception of the speaker as authoritarian or imposing on his or her interlocutor. Likewise, a non-idiomatic reaction to the or-inquiry, such as the direct negation found in extract (102), disrupts the flow of the conversation. Notably, in the analysed extracts there have been found no instances of serious disruptions arising from the absence of the practice or an erroneous response to it. Nonetheless, the very existence of conventional means of allowing

for a negative answer to occur substantiates the claim that in Norwegian conversations there is a strong dispreference for negation, which in turn corroborates the hypothesis that maintaining harmony is one of the most vital goals of a conversational activity.

In section 7.3.1 it has also been showed that yes/no-questions frequently replace wh-questions, especially in case of you-inquiries. The practice has been found primarily in conversations between participants unknown to one another, which leads to a conclusion that its application is interrelated with a distanced relationship between interlocutors. Alternatively, the practice can be treated as correlated with the perception of the interlocutor as a not fully competent speaker. In the data material there is no possibility of distinguishing the factor of distance between the interactants from the factor of perceiving the conversation as interethnic. Hence, determining which factor plays is more crucial for prompting the use of the practice is a task unfeasible in this dissertation. However, on the basis of the data studied in this section, one can suggest a hypothesis for the preference structure of you-inquiries' form in Norwegian conversations between interlocutors whose relation to one another is that of distance:

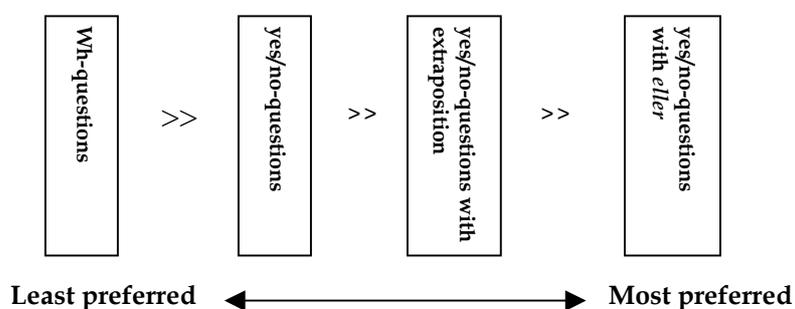


Figure 3. The preference structure of you-inquiries in Norwegian conversations.

As can be seen in figure 3, the least preferred form of inquiry in Norwegian conversation is the simple wh-question. The preferred form of a you-inquiry is the yes/no-question with an extraposition

or accompanied by a final particle *eller*<sup>107</sup>. Although it was not obtainable in this dissertation, the hypothesis would undoubtedly gain validity when verified on a native corpus of data, such as the NoTa corpus. Dregelid (2002) may prove to validate this hypothesis. The study shows that speakers who deliver frequent clarifying yes/no questions receive better marks in an oral exam (*Bergenstesten*) than speakers using wh-questions for the same purpose. Although the author of the study does not attribute the differences in speakers' grades to their sensors' preferences, it is not unthinkable that this factor has influenced the sensors' impression of their interlocutors being competent (or incompetent) language users.

The second conclusion reached in this section concerns projecting the type of the upcoming turn by means of initiating the answer with a response particle. The affirmative particle *ja* signals a slight disruption of the conversation's flow, that is a delayed response, or displays the speaker's intention of delivering a multi-turn response. Especially the latter function seems interesting, as it would suggest that in Norwegian interaction there is a dispreference for long narrative answers which temporarily exclude the interlocutor from the course of talk. Hence, by delivering the response token *ja*, the speaker states beforehand that the turn is not consistent with the fixed pattern of turn-taking. At the same time, the interlocutor is "notified" that the floor will be legitimately taken for a longer period and that he or she should not interrupt before the end of turn is signalled (by a concluding remark or its token). The negative particle *nei* also signals a forthcoming dispreferred turn, yet unlike *ja* the dispreference concerns not the interactional pattern, but a breach of the interlocutor's expectations. By delivering the question, the speaker assumes that his/her interlocutor is able to provide an answer to the question. Hence, if the person does not wish or cannot deliver the answer, *nei* signals this inability already in the beginning of the turn. What usually follows is an account of the reasons for not giving the

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<sup>107</sup> There is no possibility of inferring from the collected data if any of the two latter practices is more preferable than the other one.

expected answer. By means of *nei*, the speakers manage to deliver the dispreferred answer in an indirect way, thus saving their face. *Jo*, on the other hand marks a preferred turn, and is followed by an upgrade of the affective commitment of the speaker.

However, the response particle *nei*, along with re-introducing the prior statements before delivering the inquiry (as analysed in section 7.3.3.) perform one vital function that so far has not been identified and discussed for Norwegian language data, namely retarding the pace of conversation in order to maintain comprehension. This feature seems to be important in topic transition places, where there is the most significant risk of the new topic being incomprehensible by the interlocutor. Hence, semantically empty turns initiated by *nei*, such as the one analysed in extracts (132) and (133), signal the speaker's willingness to allow a topic transition. Another type of practices occurring before the topic transition are echo-turns and pro-repeats that have been analysed in the previous chapter (section 6.2. and 6.3). Only when both participants have delivered the signals, often framed as a conclusion or a beginning of it (*så det...* 'so that', *nei men det...* 'no but that'), the introduction of a new topic takes place. The function of connectives for signalling a potential change of topic has been recognised by Lindström&Londen (2008):

"One very special discourse function is related to the phenomenon that could be called trail-off; that is, a connective can be used as a signal of a potential turn closure. Simultaneously, this possibility provides a flexible means of constructing endings and expansions of turns, since a possibly closing connective can easily be «translated» into an expanding connective according to the needs in the specific interactional juncture." (ibid.: 143ff)

Thus, the use of ostensible signals of upcoming continuation that the connectives normally function as, allows the speaker to leave the discourse open to his/her interlocutor, who can choose to deliver a topic change or continue the same subject by filling in the "slot" opened up by the connective. Hence, the connectives can be

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said to perform a discursive function of contributing to the development of the talk and an interpersonal function of not imposing on the interlocutor. The topical transition is also managed through repeating a statement previously delivered in the course of talk, so as to explicitly signal what topic the forthcoming inquiry will concern. Such slow topic transitions prevent misunderstandings that could endanger the harmony of the conversation, which is especially vital in interactions characterised by distance.

The final conclusion is additionally supported by the extracts analysed in section 7.3.3. As stated in the introduction, “each sentence in its surface form *must contain some direct or indirect indication as to how it fits into the stream of talk*” (Gumperz, 1995: 119, my highlight, PH). Hence, it is defensible to claim that in Norwegian distanced conversations, especially those perceived as interethnic, there is a tendency to maintain coherence through direct devices, such as explicit clarification of the link between utterances.



## Chapter 8.

### Marking disagreement

The notion of disagreement and its management in the course of conversation has been broadly discussed in the literature of the subject. Following Sacks's (1973, after Kakava, 2002) and Pomerantz's (1984, after Georgakopoulou, 2001) work, the expression of disagreement has been widely acknowledged as an action dispreferred in conversation. One argument supporting this view is that there exist conventional means of projecting an upcoming discord. Such practice has been analysed for instance by Lindström (1999), who investigated the interactional features of the Swedish response token *ja* produced with a prolonged vowel and a rising intonation contour (labelled "curled *ja*"), with the conclusion that the practice projects disalignment in the forthcoming turn. In the same time, it allows the recipients to revise their initial utterance to suggest a different stance. Hence, "the curled *ja* is an important tool for the achievement of alignment and affiliation as a negotiated outcome" (ibid: 171). This practice is said to functionally resemble the English discourse marker 'well', although the understanding of 'well' solely as a discord particle (as suggested by e.g. Lindström, ibid; Kakava, 2002) devoid of any lexical meaning has been challenged (see e.g. Schourup, 2001).

Interestingly enough, the perception of disagreement as a dispreferred action has been accepted by many scholars as a universal rule for interpersonal communication in general without

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further ado, regardless of the linguistic community the interlocutors belong to<sup>108</sup>. As a result, in studies concerning disagreement markers such as the above mentioned Lindström (1999), the focus is on discussing *how*, not *why* given actions are realised in the course of conversation. It seems, however, that some linguistic communities favour open expressions of disagreement rather than mitigated actions. The Hebrew language community is claimed to be an example of a society that values straightforward manifestation of discord in the genre of *dugri* speech, as analysed in Wierzbicka (2003). Schiffrin (1984, after Georgakopoulou, 2001) came to the conclusion that Americans of Jewish origin engage in verbal confrontations for “pleasure afforded by the activity itself, rather than in order to resolve issues that were the ostensible matter of disagreement” (Georgakopoulou, *ibid*: 1885)<sup>109</sup>. That view is indirectly in line with claims put forward by Tannen (1984) who describes the Jewish-American style as high-involvement style, characterised by fast pace, overlaps and overt expression of emotions. Similar claims have been put forward as regards Greek conversational style. Kakava argues that “Greek culture may predispose its people towards an open expression of opposition” (2002: 1564)<sup>110</sup>. In the same time, Georgakopoulou suggests that in Greek discourse “disagreements are systematically implied and indirectly managed, rather than being delayed or downtoned” (2001: 1896). The implication is achieved by means of several discord markers (such as *re+first name* and the expression *na su po kati* ‘let me tell you something’) that introduce a sequence of argumentative acts. However, it is not easy to understand why the expression ‘let me tell you something’ is treated as an indirect strategy rather than a direct signal of an upcoming opposition.

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<sup>108</sup> This fact may be connected to the widely accepted politeness theory, as suggested by Brown & Levinson (1987), in which expressing disagreement is considered a face-threatening, and hence dispreferred act (for a discussion of Brown & Levinson’s theory, see chapter 2)

<sup>109</sup> Notably, the same is sometimes claimed for Polish discourse (cf. discussion in chapter 3 on Ronowicz, 1995).

<sup>110</sup> At the same time, it needs to be born in mind that predisposition is not tantamount with obligation: the speaker of Greek language community will not engage in open expressions of disagreement regardless of situation.

Similarly, the author treats the strategy of questioning illustrated in the following extract as “indirect means of doing disagreement”:

- (147)<sup>111</sup>
- 1.Tonia: Nikos and you were a different story  
 2.Vivi: → how come we were?  
 3.T: the guy had shown interest  
 4.V: → had he?  
 5.T: → hadn't he? didn't he always chat to you  
 6. first

Clearly, the interlocutors are not literary stating their differing stance (as for instance ‘I don’t agree with you’), yet one can hardly claim that the disagreement is concealed in any way. The possibility of interpreting the practice as realisation of two contrary principles exposes the flaws of using such labels as ‘direct’ or ‘indirect’ to communicative acts, and thus supports Wierzbicka’s (2003) postulate of abandoning them in favour of explications based in natural semantic metalanguage. Nonetheless, while interesting, further debate on the topic is beyond the scope of this study.

There are few studies devoted solely to the expression of disagreement either in Norwegian or Polish conversations<sup>112</sup>. The previous chapters provide an analysis of several practices serving the function of displaying alignment and avoiding disagreement between interlocutors, such as the or-inquiry (chapter 7.1) or concluding paraphrases (6.2). It has been therefore claimed that the existence of fixed conversational patterns of avoiding disalignment supports the hypothesis that maintaining harmony is one of the most vital goals of a Norwegian conversational activity. In contrast to the Norwegian model, the Polish conversation is sometimes claimed to aim at convincing the interlocutor; hence disagreements tend to be direct and strong so that it is difficult to refute them (cf. chapter 3.4.1, Ronowicz, 1995). As previously suggested, the predominant politeness strategies in Norwegian are those

<sup>111</sup> Extract 10 (Georgakopoulou, 2001: 1893ff), the Greek transcription omitted.

<sup>112</sup> When it comes to Norwegian studies, one can to some extent refer to Svennevig (2001b).

belonging to the repertoire of negative politeness, whereas in Polish there is a prevalence of positive politeness strategies (cf. the discussion in chapter 3). Hence, differences can be expected between means of managing disagreement by Polish and native speakers of Norwegian.

This chapter provides an analysis of 30 stretches of talk exhibiting disalignment among the interlocutors. The majority of extracts have been identified in conversations between couples, yet some instances of disagreement have also been found in dialogues between acquaintances and strangers. Notably, conversation 4F does not exhibit any example of disagreement, which can be inter-related with the participants' relation of friendship (whereas the other conversations labelled as F are predominantly conversations between colleagues). As a result, there is an impression of a perfect agreement and complete support among the participants of 4F (as already suggested while discussing collaborative completions, section 6.2.6).

## 8.1 Projecting disagreement

As already discussed, prefacing the disagreement with a discord marker is a common practice in different linguistic communities. The Swedish curled *ja*, discussed above, is also found in Norwegian conversations. However, in the language data collected for this study there are few examples of curled *ja* applied to signal upcoming disagreement (one of these instances has been exemplified in extract 104, chapter 7)<sup>113</sup>. However, in the data material two other practices for projecting disagreement have been identified:

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<sup>113</sup> In the collected data material, *ja* produced with a prolonged vowel is commonly found in topic transition places, and seems to be a continuer or a weak signal of claiming the floor. A further analysis of the conversational phenomena attached to topic-transition places could provide interesting results concerning the importance of retardations in Norwegian conversations, suggested in chapter 7.

a) *nja*;

b) weak agreement tokens.

In the following analysis, both practices are exemplified and discussed.

### 8.1.1 *Nja* as a disagreement token

*Nja* can be perceived as a compilation of two response particles *ja* and *nei*. Another response token designed according to the same rule is *tja*. While both tokens seem functionally similar, only the latter variant is listed as a response particle in the comprehensive Norwegian grammar (Faarlund *et al.*, 1997: 970), and is said to constitute a “doubting yes”. Yet, the phenomenon is only mentioned in a single sentence and not devoted further attention. In the NoTa corpus, there is a high prevalence of *nja* responses (98 instances) over *tja* (13 instances). Only a number of them serve the function of projecting disagreement, as the following extract shows:

(148/Ukj\_029-030)

- 1.A: men han kan tingene da . det kan n  
**but he can those things then . he does**
- 2.B:→ *nja* men sånn samtidig (--) så han virker  
***nja* but such in the same time (--) he seems**
3. skikkelig sånn slaskete syns jeg  
**really so flabby I think**
- 4.A: ja han s- har sånn litt sånn der halvfeit og  
**yes he s- has such a bit such there half-fat and**
5. bare går rolig [. jeg har aldri sett n løpe  
**just walks slowly . I have never seen him run**
- 6.B: [ja ikke sant  
**yes not true**
7. det er det jeg mener jeg bare (continues)  
**that is it I mean I just**

A's utterance in line 1 is a positive opinion about a person known to both participants. B's turn in lines 2-3 provides a different, rather negative opinion, prefaced by *nja* and an adversary conjunction *men*. A immediately accepts the other opinion and contributes with arguments in support of it (lines 4-5), upon which B

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downgrades the previous statement *jeg mener jeg bare...* 'I mean I just...' (line 7). As one can see, even though initially the interlocutors have different opinions on the matter, the agreement is negotiated and achieved almost instantaneously after the discord has taken place. The negotiation is especially evident in that both participants retreat from their initial strong opinions (expressed by pro-repeat in line 1 and the use of *skikkelig slaskete* 'really flabby' in lines 2-3) in favour of mitigated expressions (*litt sånn* 'a bit such' in line 4 and *bare* 'just' in line 7). A somewhat different situation when *nja* is applied is exhibited in the following extract:

(149/1U)

- 1.Eli: det er vel menneskene som (.3) anvender teoriene som  
**it is probably the people who . apply the theories that**
- 2.Grażyna: mm (.6)
- 3.E: gjør det (1s) vanskelig kanskje (1s) [eh  
**make it . difficult maybe . eh**
- 4.G: [he he
5. men klarte seg ikke økonomisk . dessverre  
**but did not make it economically . unfortunately**
- 6.E: nei . men det var vel de som hadde: (1s)  
**no . but there were probably those who were .**
7. hadde det godt o:g også også rent økonomisk  
**doing fine a:nd also also purely economically**
8. under det kommunistiske styret da  
**under the communist rule then**
- 9.G: → [nja  
**nja**
- 10.E: [jeg mener at hvis . hvis (1.5) de som er  
**I mean that if . if . those who are**
11. høyt oppi partiapparatet og sånn . hadde det  
**high up in the party and such . were probably**
12. vel ganske bra=  
**doing quite good**
- 13.G:→ =ja ja ja men bra og bra .  
**yes yes yes but good and good .**
14. ikke sant på den tiden vi selvfølgelig hadde  
**not true in that time we of course had**
15. den . den informasjon at de er  
**the . the information that they were**
16. korrupte og de har det så veldig bra  
**corrupt and that they were doing so very well**
- 17.E: mm

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- 18.G: vet du hva det betydde de hadde så veldig bla  
**do you know what it meant that they were doing**
19. bra? . at de hadde privathus i skogen  
**so well? . that they had a private house in the forest**
- 20.E: mhm okei  
**mhm ok**
- 21.G: det var så forferdelig luksus [. helt .  
**it was such a terrible luxury . completely .**  
**terrible**
- 22.E: [he he he he he
- 23.G: forferdelig ikke sant=  
**not true**
- 24.E: =.ja ha he he he
- 25.G: he he he

In this extract, the topic is about Poland in the communist period. Thus, Grażyna is the knowledgeable speaker, and Eli's suggestions are delivered in a mitigated form, as seen in the use of hedges such as *vel* 'probably' (line 1) and *kanskje* 'maybe' (line 3). The statement in lines 6-8 is also delivered as a cautious suggestion (*vel* in line 6). Upon Grażyna's *nja* in line 9, Eli reformulates her initial statement, precisely stating her point *jeg mener* 'I mean' (lines 10-11). Eli's turn is predominantly meant as a method of changing the initial statement so as to match Grażyna's upcoming turn, and as such it supports the understanding of *nja* as a disagreement projection. Grażyna's following turns provide a partial agreement with Eli's opinion (lines 13-16), and only then does she present her opinion on that matter, which indeed is rather different from the initial statement (lines 18-19). It seems also that Grażyna's talk was aimed at convincing Eli to her point of view, which seems to be the case judging from her turn in line 20. However, it is interesting to note that immediately after Grażyna's turn in line 25, Eli implicitly suggests that the conversation be ended by asking the researcher about the time elapsed. One can therefore not draw definite conclusions about impact of Grażyna's argumentation on the interlocutor and on the course of conversation.

In the two previous extracts, the deliverance of *nja* prompted an agreement, even if it is only a "dummy" agreement. In the following extract, however, the turn initiated by *nja* is rejected:

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(150/8M)

- 1.Andreas: så det synes jeg er imponerende .  
**so I think it is impressive .**
2. du er og flink (.8)  
**you are also good .**
- 3.Renata: nei jeg føler meg ikke sånn  
**no I do not feel like that**
- 4.A: jo . men du er som alle andre som er jo du er  
**jo . but you are like all other who are jo you are**
5. litt lat så du vil heller snakke tysk med meg  
**a bit lazy so you'd rather speak German to me**
- 6.R: ja  
**yes**
- 7.A: .ja
- 8.R: for det det er . utfordring å: å snakke also  
**because it is . a challenge to: to speak well**
9. mye: større utfordring å snakke tysk enn  
**much bigger challenge to speak German than**
10. å snakke norsk (.3) og det vet du (.2)  
**to speak Norwegian . and you know that .**
- 11.A:→ nja: ikke for deg nå . det kommer an på  
**nja: not for you now . it depends on**
12. situasjon da  
**the situation then**
- 13.R: ja ne also (1s) jeg investerte i tysken min  
**ja no well . I invested in my German .**
14. e fem år .  
**five years**
- 15.A: ja=  
**yes**
- 16.R: =det vil jeg ikke (1s) glemme nå (1s)  
**I do not want to . forget it now .**
- 17.A: ja=  
**yes**
- 18.R: =forstår du?  
**do you understand?**
- 19.A: ja men det er kanskje ikke dumt  
**yes but it is maybe not a stupid idea**
20. å studere fonetikk (1s)  
**to study phonetics .**

Extract (150) begins with a compliment on the NNS's Norwegian skills which is subsequently rejected (line 3) and reinforced (lines

4-5)<sup>114</sup>. Renata's turn in lines 8-10 is a definite and rather negative opinion about Norwegian, claiming it to be a non-demanding language, followed by an explicit statement suggesting the interlocutor's uniformity in that matter *og det vet du* 'and you know that' (line 10). In lines 11-12, Andreas initiates the turn with a *nja* (prolonging the vowel) before delivering his opinion on that matter first as a personal reference *ikke for deg nå* 'not for you now' and then reframing it as a general statement *det kommer an på situasjon da* 'it depends on the situation then'. Contrary to extracts (148) and (149), the turn initiated with a *nja* does not lead to agreement, but is rejected by a statement reinforcing the speaker's opinion expressed previously (lines 13 and 16). Andreas offers only minimal answers to Renata's utterance, which leads to her explicit request for recognition of her arguments *forstår du?* 'do you understand?' (line 18), upon which Andreas seemingly receives the turn by a *ja* and immediately changes the focus of the discussion on means of improving one's language command by studying phonetics (line 19-20). Consequently, one can say that the disagreement is avoided rather than solved interactionally.

### 8.1.2 Weak agreement as disagreement

Interestingly enough, other means of projecting disagreement identified in the data give the impression of being agreements. What they have in common is that they are expressed by means of weak acceptance tokens, such as hedged agreement (extract 151) or minimal feedback signals (extracts 152 and 153).

(151/6M)

1. Teresa: *og din venn hvor bor han? (.5)*  
**and your friend where does he live? .**
2. Anders: *han bor i: . skal vi [se da*  
**he lives i:n . let me see**
3. T: *[det var nær*  
**it was near**
4. *var det ikke nær San Francisco? .*  
**wasn't it near San Francisco? .**

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<sup>114</sup> cf. the analysis of extract (15) in chapter 5.1.

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- 5.A: hh jo a phh hva heter det da (1s)  
**hh jo a phh what is it called .**
6. Baro Alto eller noe sånt . nå ja (1.4)  
**Baro Alto or something like that . now yes .**
- 7.T: men det v- det var i nærheten av San Francisco (.6)  
**but it w- it was nearby San Francisco .**
- 8.A: ja  
**yes**
- 9.T: kanskje vi kunne ha vært ei uke hos ham da (.5)  
**maybe we could stay one week in his place .**
- 10.A: → he he he . kanskje det er greit (2.6)  
**he he he . maybe it is ok .**
- 11.T: → nei . det kan vi ikke .  
**no . we cannot .**
- 12.A: ja nå kom jeg på temperatur vettu  
**yes now I realised that temperature you know**
13. midt på sommeren da er det hm førti e: .  
**in the middle of summer then it is hm forty**
14. grader eller sånn  
**centigrades or so**

In this extract, the participants are discussing their holiday plans. In line 1, Teresa introduces the topic of Anders' friend living in the USA, clearly in order to suggest spending some time in his place, as she states explicitly in line 9. Anders' reaction to the suggestion is a laughter sequence and a hedged agreement *kanskje det er greit* 'maybe it's ok' (line 10). Notably, his turn is followed by a long silence of 2,6 seconds, after which Teresa rejects her own suggestion *nei det kan vi ikke* 'no we can't do that' (line 11). Subsequently the topic is abandoned in favour of a previously discussed matter, namely temperatures in USA. Anders' change of topics in lines 12-14 seems to support Teresa's inference that he indeed did not consider it a good idea to stay in his friend's place, even though literally he agreed to it (notably not enthusiastically).

The two following extracts provide examples of response tokens that are generally said to express agreement used as discord signals.

(152/14F)

- 1.Eirik: ja ja (.6) ja vart det noe interessant  
**yes yes . yes was there something interesting**

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2. på kurset da (1.6)  
**on the course then .**
- 3.Tomasz: ja: . det var veldig bra  
**ye:s . it was very good**  
 (lines omitted)
- 4.E: masse (-- ) o:g full og fest på kveldene  
**a lot of (-- ) a:nd drunk and party in the evenings**
5. ville jeg tro  
**I would guess**
- 6.T: → ja:h . det var ikke så mye ikke første dagen  
**ye:s . it wasn't so much at least**
7. i alle fall  
**not the first day**
- 8.E: nei ja da  
**no yes then**
- 9.T: den andre dagen nå da . tatt av litt .  
**the second then now then . there was some .**
- 10.E: uhm
- 11.T: ganske artig  
**quite fun**
- 12.E: ja  
**yes**

In lines 1-2, Eirik introduces the topic of a course Tomasz recently has attended. His suggestion in lines 4-5 about evening activities on the course, probably based in his own experience, is received with an ostensible agreement token, yet pronounced with a prolonged vowel, strong final aspiration and a falling intonation. As one can see from the following talk, Tomasz's *ja:h* in line 6 signals an upcoming disagreement *ikke så mye* 'not so much'. Subsequently, a partial agreement is offered: *ikke første dagen i alle fall | den andre dagen nå da tatt av litt* 'not so much the first day in any case | but indeed the other day there was some' (lines 7 and 9). Thus, the initial *ja:h* can be perceived as a signal of an upcoming agreement negotiation sequence<sup>115</sup>. A similar situation is observed in the following extract:

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<sup>115</sup> As such, the phonetic (prolonged vowel and final aspiration) and prosodic features (falling intonation) of this *ja* variant seem to contribute to the functional shift of the response token in the direction of the curled *ja*'s interactional meaning.

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(153/12M)

- 1.Stig: så (.8) to skjerm fikk du av meg var det ikke? (1.4)  
**so . you got two screens from me didn't you? .**
- 2.Helena: → mm (.5) [en i hvert fall .  
**mm . one at least**
- 3.S: [jo to  
**jo two**
- 4.H: → ja tror du det?  
**yes do you think so?**
- 5.S: ja . jeg tror det men jeg er ikke sikker (.8)  
**yes . I think so but I am not sure .**
- 6.H: for en hadde du fra . Ove ja?  
**because you had one from . Ove yes?**
- 7.S: ja en hadde jeg fra (1.3) ja (.8)  
**yes one I had from . yes .**
8. [og jeg kjøpte en til (.6)  
**and I bought one more .**
- 9.H: [så de- mhm  
**so it-**
- 10.S: til jul til seg (4.5)  
**myself for Christmas .**
- 11.H: nå ja (5s)  
**now yes .**

This extract exhibits a disagreement concerning an event that both participants have first-hand knowledge of. Hence, neither of the interlocutors is dominating the other when it comes to the epistemic rights to the topic. Stig's request for confirmation of the fact stated in line 1 is responded to only after a lengthy pause of 1,4 second, which in itself signals a possible dispreferred turn. Helena's answer in line 2 commences with *mm*, a weak acceptance token, followed by a partial agreement *en i hvert fall* 'one in any case'. As inferred from his reaction in line 3, Stig treats the ostensible agreement token *mm* as a negation, and hence delivers a reinforcement of his position *jo* 'yes' before repeating the item that is in his opinion correct, namely *to* 'two' (referring to the number of computer screens). In line 4, Helena questions his position, notably preceding the questioning by a reception token *ja tror du det?* 'yes do you think so?'. Until now, Stig has maintained a strong unmitigated position, but in line 5 he relaxes his standpoint by suggesting that he might be mistaken *jeg tror det men jeg er ikke*



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- 5.M: → uhm det er jeg ikke sikker [på eh he he  
**uhm I am not sure about that eh he he**
- 6.R: [nei nei  
**no no**
- (lines omitted - about Cecylia's father spoiling her)
- 7.R: ja fordi de er for små til å forstå  
**yes because they are too young<sup>PL</sup> to understand**
8. [. sånne ja ja  
**. such yes yes**
- 9.M: [ja hun er for små til å forstå (.3)  
**yes she's too young<sup>PL</sup> to understand .**
10. veldig vanskelig (.7) men  
**very difficult . but**
- 11.R: ja  
**yes**
- 12.M: det er bare for kort tid  
**it is just for a short time**
- 13.R: ja det er for kort tid og så . ja om noen år  
**yes it is for a short time and so . yes in a few years**
14. så blir det nok  
**it will be probably**
- 15.M: mhm
- 16.R: det er liksom verst når de er så  
**it is kind of worst when they are so**
17. små [. ja ja .ja  
**young . yes yes .ja**
- 18.M: [ja men hun .  
**yes but she .**
19. forstår veldig veldig mye som . som barn  
**understands very very much as . as a child**
- 20.R: ja  
**yes**

In this extract, the participants are discussing the time that Magda's daughter spends in her father's place. In line 1, Magda provides the information that is subsequently positively interpreted by Randi (in lines 3-4). In line 5, Magda does not accept the interpretation yet hedges it by expressing her uncertainty *det er jeg ikke sikker på* 'I'm not sure about that'. In the following line (6), Randi aligns with Magda's point of view by delivering feedback signals in a negative form, which in the same time "give way" for providing further information. Indeed, what follows is Magda's justification of her opinion, explaining that Cecylia's father spoils

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her by buying her everything she wishes for. The explanatory sequence is concluded by Randi's display of understanding through reformulating Magda's particular account as a general rule (lines 7-8), immediately accepted and repeated by Magda in lines 9-10. The following turns (12-18) exhibit an agreement achieved by Randi echoing and paraphrasing her interlocutor's turns. Yet again, the initial disagreement is relaxed so as to allow for a display of alignment between the interlocutors.

In the following extract, the interlocutor whose opinion on a given subject is requested, refuses to take a stance:

- (155/9F)
- 1.Regina:borgerlig plattform er det fint ord? som  
**citizens' platform is it a nice word? as a**
2. parti? jeg synes nei abso[lutt nei he he >>  
**party? I think no absolutely no he he**
- 3.Vidar: → [veit ikke . (--)>>  
**don't know . (--)**
- 4.R: >> hvis jeg er leder i: em parti  
**if I was a leader i:n em party**
- 5.V: >> jeg som er så dårlig i polsk  
**me who is so bad in Polish**
- 6.R: at jeg ville ikke dette ordet nei [. nei  
**that I would not this word no . no**
- 7.V: → [nei .  
**no .**
8. nei nei (.8) jeg vet ikke i Norge har vi et  
**no no . I do not know in Norway we have a**
9. parti som heter rødt jeg vet ikke om det er  
**party called Red I do not know if that is**
10. no mye bedre (.3)  
**so much better .**
- 11.R: rød allianse tenker du?=[ah rødt  
**Red Alliance you think oh Red**
- 12.V: =nei [rødt . dem har  
**no Red . they have**
13. skifta navn nå  
**changed the name now**
- 14.R: oKEI  
**ok**
- 15.V: dem heter rødt (.6) ikke [mere . rødt .ja .  
**they are called Red . not more . Red .ja .**
- 16.R: [ah uhm

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- 17.V: så de:t (.3) e k- hvor lenge har du vært  
so tha:t . e h- how long have you been  
18. her i Norge?  
here in Norway?

The topic discussed in this stretch of talk has been introduced by Regina and concerns the political party ruling at that time in Poland. Regina claims that the party's name is unsuitable and inquires about Vidar's opinion on that matter (lines 1-2, 4 and 6). In lines 3-5, Vidar refuses to provide his opinion, using his lack of competence in Polish as a reason. In lines 7-10, at first he aligns with his interlocutor by reduplicating the negative response token *nei nei*, and continues to deliver a comparison of the facts mentioned by Regina to a party's name in Norway. By doing this, he takes a moderate point of view on the matter of names of political parties in general. In the same time, he escapes both the risk of confirming Regina's opinion and simultaneously criticising Polish politics and the risk of rejecting her point of view. In line 11, Regina questions his suggestion, thus claiming her epistemic rights to discuss the topic. However, this time Vidar directly opposes her suggestion, acting as the knowledgeable speaker on the matter (see discussion in chapter 5.1.2). His turn in lines 12-13 is received with a token marking surprise *o-kei*. As a result, Vidar reinforces his statement by repeating it in turn 15, thus highlighting his certainty.

The two analysed extracts provide examples of the disagreement being signalled through mitigated practices, such as uncertainty markers and avoiding delivering the requested turn. However, mitigation is also achieved through such means as litotes and questioning the statements. The former practice is not specifically studied in a separate section, due to its high frequency; instead, instances of litotes are discussed when they appear in the analysed extracts. The latter practice, however, is studied closer and compared with other types of questions in the following section.

### 8.3 Questioning as a signal of disagreement

In this section, the focus is on questioning as a means of expressing disagreement with the interlocutor's prior statements. The three following extracts exhibit the use of yes/no-questions in this function.

(156/6M)

- 1.Anders:når er det permisjonen . utløper da .  
**when is it that your leave . finishes then .**
- 2.Teresa:1.mai . hvis jeg husker . riktig (2s)  
**1.May . if I remember . correctly .**
- 3.A: → da må vi ta det fra 1.- (1.8) er det 1.mai  
**then we have to take it from 1. . is it 1.May**
4.  
ikke 1.juni?  
**not 1.June?**
- 5.T: jeg tror det var mai (4.2)  
**I think it was May .**
- 6.A: [a:
- 7.T: [det står på de papirene som vi fikk fra  
**it is in the documents we got from**
8.  
nav (1s) jeg tror det var 1.mai (2s)  
**nav . I think it was 1.May .**
- 9.A:  
javel  
**ok then**
- 10.T: fordi det var hundre pro[sent-  
**because it was hundred percent**
- 11.A:  
[ja for du gikk ut  
**yes because you went**
12.  
i permisjon 1.juli?=  
**for a leave 1.July?**
- 13.T:  
=ja (1s) og det er ikke ett  
**yes . and it is not one**
14.  
år det er mindre enn ett år .  
**year it is less than a year .**
- 15.A:  
det er ti måneder fra da du gikk ut  
**it is ten months from when you went**
16.  
i permisjon altså  
**for a leave**
- 17.T: det kan hende (2.2)  
**it may be .**
- 18.A:  
javel . da blir det 1.mai da  
**ok then . then it will be 1.May then**
- 19.T: mhm (2s)

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In this extract, the participants are discussing the possible dates of commencing their trip to the USA, which is dependent on Teresa's maternity leave. In line 1, Anders poses a question which is immediately answered by Teresa in line 2. After providing the date, Teresa expresses some degree of uncertainty *hvis jeg husker riktig* 'if I remember well'. In lines 3-4, her statement is repeated as a question, and a suggestion of another date appears. In line 5, Teresa gives account of her suggestion, and repeats it in line 8, after a statement referring to a document where her intuition could be checked. In line 9, Anders delivers a weak accept *javel*, a token described as "acceptance" (*aksept*, Faarlund *et al.* 1997: 970) signalling that the speaker is not fully convinced. Teresa's turn in lines 10 displays her understanding of Anders' response as a request for a justification, which is consequently co-constructed by both participants in lines 11-17. This time, their opinions are based on objective facts rather than premonitions, as was initially the case for Teresa's utterances. The agreement is then reached in lines 18-19.

(157/6M)

- 1.Anders: → er det passe tid å reise på da (.8)  
**it is a good time to travel then .**
- 2.Teresa: ja (.6)  
**yes .**
- 3.A: → ikke mye snø og sånt da hh .  
**not much snow and so then hh .**
- 4.T: nei i San Francisco? [. det er California  
**no in San Franscisco? . it is California**
- 5.A: [hh
- 6.T: mišku /pl/ (1s)  
**teddy bear .**
- 7.A: ja (.4)  
**yes .**
- 8.T: da er det sommer der hele året tror jeg (.4)  
**then it is summer there the whole year I think**
9. kanskje litt snø men .  
**maybe a bit of snow but .**

Extract (157) comes from the same conversation as the previous one and exhibits instances of questions expressing mitigated disagreement. Prior to the rendered talk, the participants have agreed

on an approximate date of commencing their holidays. In line 1, Anders indirectly questions the decision, inquiring if the time is suitable for travels. His question is responded to by Teresa with a single confirmation token *ja* (line 2). However, as one can see in Anders' following turn, his question was meant as a request for justification rather than a simple question. The understanding of the turns in lines 1 and 3 as elaboration requests is additionally supported by the use of *da* 'then', which is commonly found in requests for substantiation (Lind, 1994, after Svennevig, 2001a). Anders' turn in line 3 is a suggestion of the possible reasons for the date not being suitable. The suggestion is directly rejected by Teresa in line 4, with a negative response token followed by a justification of her opinion, appealing to her interlocutor's world knowledge and common sense. Notably, the turn is followed by a Polish endearment term *miśku* 'teddy bear'<sup>117</sup>, which downgrades the threat to the interlocutor's face. Teresa's next turn (lines 8-9) is even more mitigated and includes expressions of uncertainty *tror jeg* 'I think' and *kanskje* 'maybe', and litotes *litt snø* 'a little snow'. It seems therefore that after initial straightforward disagreement, Teresa downgrades the opposition so as to allow for an alignment to be reached.

The following extract also exhibits yes/no-questions signalling disalignment, yet in this case the questions are delivered repeatedly, which makes the challenge to the previous statement stronger.

(158/14F)

1. Eirik: har du vært i kontakt med sånn som e: .  
**have you been in touch with such which e: .**
2. F3 og sånne firmaer .  
**F3 and such companies .**
3. Tomasz: → F3?
4. E: F3 det må du prø[ve]  
**F3 you have to try it**
5. T: → [og de driver med? (.3)]  
**and they work with? .**

<sup>117</sup> The term is a common form of address, used by women to their life partners. The corresponding form referring to women is *zabciu* 'little frog' or *kotku* 'kitten'.

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- 6.E: de driver med alt mulig ståldragere o:g  
**they work with everything steelcranes a:nd**
- 7.T: → gjør de det?=  
**do they?** samme som [F1?  
**same as F1?**
- 8.E: =ja ja (.5) [(-)  
**yes yes .** (-)
9. vettu (2s)  
**you know .**
- 10.T: F3 ja dem jeg forbinder dem med betong (.6)  
**F3 yes I associate them with concrete .**
- 11.E: a: men de driver med stål og  
**a: but they work with steel and**
- 12.T: → de driver med stål og?=  
**they work with steel too?** [nest-  
**almo-**
- 13.E: =a: jada (2s) [fresing  
**a: oh yes . milling**
14. og sveising o:g kran o:g betong .  
**and welding a:nd cranes a:nd concrete .**
- 15.T: ja fordi de (-) att med F2  
**yes because they (-) again with F2**
- 16.E: ja  
**yes**

In this extract, Tomasz and Eirik are discussing work-related issues. In lines 1-2, Eirik suggests that Tomasz should contact the company labelled as F3. In the following line, Tomasz repeats the name of the company, as if checking understanding and thus expressing surprise with the suggestion. Eirik interprets his question as a request for repetition rather than substantiation, as observable in his turn in line 4. Tomasz's subsequent turn in line 5 is another request for information, which is provided in line 6. The disagreement is gradually becoming more and more visible, when Tomasz delivers inquiries in line 7, thus displaying his disbelief. However, contrary to the two previously analysed extracts, the speaker whose views are being challenged fails to provide an objective substantiation of his words, merely framing his knowledge as facts. Thus, Tomasz's opinion in line 10 *jeg forbinder dem med betong* 'I connect them with concrete' is responded to with an adversative statement *a: men dem driver med stål og* 'yeah but they also deal with steel' (line 11). Upon further inquiries (line 12), Eirik

confirms with the compounded response token *jada* 'oh yes'<sup>118</sup> and after a pause of 2 seconds enumerates the different works that the company in his view is dealing with (lines 13-14). The final outcome of the confrontation is somewhat vague, as neither of the interlocutors seems to admit full acceptance of their interlocutor's opinion. Yet in the same time, neither Tomasz nor Eirik made an attempt to dominate the other party by markers of the type *jeg er sikker på* 'I'm sure' or *hør her* 'listen'; similarly, neither has expressed their disagreement in a non-hedged version, such as *jeg er ikke enig* 'I don't agree' or such.

Another group of questions analysed in this section share the feature of being delivered solely by the Polish participant with extract (158). Another fact they have in common is that they are formed as *wh*-questions and as a result function as confrontational substantiation requests. Such requests signal that agreement can be achieved only when the prior speaker delivers additional information that validates his/her claims, and thus convinces the interlocutor to his/her point of view. Hence, it can be treated as a projection of a possible disagreement.

(159/6M)

1. Teresa: Petter foreslo Egypt for eksempel .  
**Petter suggested Egypt for instance .**
2. Anders: Egypt?  
**Egypt?**
3. T: ja (1s) [det  
**yes . that**
4. A: [er ikke det litt skummelt da (1.4)  
**is it not a bit scary then .**
5. T: → hva er skummelt (1s) sånn-y: . elefanter med  
**what is scary . those: . elephants with such**
6. sånne garber elle:r [he he he  
**humps o:r he he he**
7. A: [he he he

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<sup>118</sup> Norwegian comprehensive grammar (Faarlund *et al.*, 1997: 970) claims that the compound response particle *jada* has "approximately the same function as the single response particle". It seems however that the compound form is used more frequently to signal increased conviction. Thus *jada* can be said to perform persuasive functions.

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In this extract, the participants have started wondering about other possible travel goals. In line 1, Teresa refers to a suggestion of travelling to Egypt, offered by their common acquaintance Petter. Anders seems surprised by the idea, and questions the information in order to elicit confirmation (line 2, cf. also extract 148 with a similar echo in line 3), which is delivered by Teresa in line 3. In line 4, Anders signals the reasons for his doubts, suggesting that travelling to Egypt might be dangerous. In reaction to his opinion, Teresa delivers a *wh*-question *hva er skummelt* 'what is dangerous', challenging the view presented by Anders and requesting substantiation (line 5). Upon his lack of response throughout the pause of 1 second, she delivers a joking reply to her own question, suggesting that camels are dangerous (lines 5-6). Thus, the threat posed by Teresa's direct challenge is escaped and turned into a joke sequence (not rendered here).

(160/8M)

- 1.Andreas:.hh (.2) og da er det en betingelse at der  
**.hh . and then the condition is that we must**
2. skal vi kunne servere egen alkohol forstår du (.3)  
**be able to serve our own alcohol do you understand .**
- 3.Renata: → hvorfor det .  
**why [that] .**
- 4.A: ehhh . (vet du hvor mye) vi skal betale .  
**ehhh . (do you know how much) we will pay .**
5. hvis da hvis det er hu- det er femti stykker da .  
**if then if there are hu- there are fifty guests then .**
- 6.R: mm
- 7.A: og noen vil ha fem øl nå . da blir to hundre  
**and some will drink five beers . then it will**
8. og femti da (1s) og hvis vi skal vanlig  
**be 250 then . and if we will have a normal**
9. kneipepris tre euro forstår du (.2)  
**pub price three euro do you understand .**
10. [hvis den (--) koster-  
**if it (--) costs**
- 11.R: [ja men ka- men kanskje går det ikke?  
**yes but ma- but maybe it cannot be done**
- 12.A: → jo:a det går (*lines omitted*) men vi kan jo  
**jo:a it can but we can jo**
13. spørre litt da og så en mulighet er det bare  
**ask around a bit and so a possibility is it**

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14. høre hvis ikke okei greit nok da går vi et  
**just to hear if not ok fine we'll go some**
15. annet sted ja? (.8) og jeg [og vi må s-  
**other place yes? . and I and we have to s-**
- 16.R: [ja men vi har  
**yes but we do**
17. ikke tid for det=  
**not have time for that**
- 18.A: → =jo: hør på meg (1.4)  
**jo: listen to me .**
19. vi må finne ut litt av hvert Reni  
**we have to check a bit of everything Reni**

While discussing the wedding venue, Andreas suggests that they should serve their own alcohol (lines 1-2). In line 2, Renata delivers a request for substantiation (notably an idiomatic Norwegian one), upon which Andreas provides a lengthy explanation (lines 4-10) of his reasoning. While not explicitly rejecting the justification, Renata cautiously suggests that it might not be possible (line 11). Her suggestion is contradicted by Andreas by means of *joda* 'oh yes', who continues to propose a certain course of events (lines 12-15). In Renata's subsequent turn, his statements are again challenged by the claim that there is little time (lines 16-17). The discussion continues, with Andreas using persuasive practices such as direct requests of attention *hør på meg* 'listen to me' and hypocoristic address forms *Reni*. As in many other examples originating from 8M, agreement is not overtly visible in the course of conversation. However, one can assume that the speakers have not changed their points of view, contrary to the following extract. In this stretch of talk, Renata resigns from her challenge and admits that her interlocutor's is right:

- (161/8M)
- 1.Renata: ja nettopp skal skal vi sitte der også  
**yes exactly shall shall we sit there also**
2. om kvelden eller skal vi gå i en annen  
**in the evening or shall we go**
3. annet [sted  
**somewhere else**
- 4.Andreas: [nei må ha samme stedet .  
**no we have to stay in the same place .**

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5. du er= ja ja ja  
**you are yes yes yes**
- 6.R: → =det samme? hvorfor det?  
**the same? why [that]?**
- 7.A: [jo:  
**jo:**
- 8.R: [. det finnes også mange . fine e: .  
**. there are many . nice e: .**
- 9.A: jo Reni men vi-  
**jo Reni but we-**
- 10.R: [kneiper?  
**pubs?**
- 11.A: jo men det her dette her i slutten av Måned1 .  
**jo but this this is in the end of Month1 .**
12. og da er det dårlig vær i S1 og .  
**and then it is bad weather in S1 and .**
- 13.R: ja men [man har bil e ja  
**yes but one has a car e yes**
- 14.A: [S1 er ikke- man kjører ikke bil  
**S1 is not one does not drive**
15. når man er på bryllup  
**on a wedding**
- 16.R: → ah . stemmer  
**ah . right**
- 17.A: da skal man drikke ja nettopp . feste (.9)  
**then you are supposed to drink yes exactly . party .**
- 18.R: → ja: .  
**ye:s .**
- 19.A: så derfor så synes jeg at det ville vært best  
**so that is why I think it would be best**
20. å vært der og (1.3)  
**to be there and .**

In extract (161), Renata poses a question regarding an idea of changing the wedding venue throughout the evening (lines 1-3). Upon Andreas's firm statement *må ha samme stedet* 'must have the same place', Renata initially challenges his view by requesting substantiation (line 6) and indeed providing arguments from her view of the matter before the requested substantiation is provided (lines 8 and 10). Throughout her utterance, Andreas attempts to deliver his clarification, commencing it with *jo:* (which is an idiomatic reaction according to Svennevig, 2001a) and using hypocoristic address forms. In lines 11-12, he succeeds in

validating his position, yet his view is again contradicted by Renata in line 13 *men man har bil* 'but one has (a) car'. Renata's statement is immediately discarded by an argument that *man kjører ikke bil når man er på bryllup* 'one doesn't drive at a wedding' (line 14-15). This argument is explicitly accepted by Renata (line 16), upon which Andreas provides a reinforcement, stating a logical clarification of the fact from lines 14-15. In extract (161) the agreement is reached, notably not by both speaker's relaxing their standpoints (as in the previously analysed extract 148), but by one speaker "winning over" the other in the confrontational sequence.

To sum up, the extracts analysed in this section stretch from highly mitigated and cautious signals disagreement to almost outright instances of challenging the other speaker's prior utterances. It has been found that yes/no-question function as less direct expressions of disagreement, whereas wh-questions functioning as requests for substantiation constitute a more direct threat to the conversational harmony. However, repeated yes/no-questions (as found in extract 158) also serve the function of displaying a greater degree of disalignment. Notably, the wh-questioning has been identified only in NNSs' speech. Moreover, the expected answer to yes/no question is providing information in support of the challenged statement rather than simple confirming or rejecting. These two findings substantiate the claim put forward in chapter 7 that in Norwegian discourse, yes/no-questions stand in preference to wh-questions and that the presuppose an underlying request for specific information.

#### 8.4 Constructing disagreement between strangers

This section is an analysis of a single but lengthy stretch of talk, exhibiting the construction of disagreement that stretches across several turns and is conversationally managed by means of a number of different practices so as not to allow for the difference in opinions to be displayed openly.

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(162/1U)

- 1.Eli: så det betyr [du ikke er helt fornøyd  
**so that means you are not completely satisfied**
- 2.Grażyna: [ja ja  
**yes yes**
- 3.E: med den videregående skolen  
**with the secondary school**
- 4.G: nei nei nei  
**no no no**
- 5.E: .nei
- 6.G: det var lite å utvikle den åndelig heh .  
**there was little to develop the spiritual heh**
7. he he [personlighet  
**he he personality**
- 8.E: [åndelig siden .ja ja men jeg er  
**spiritual side .ja yes but I probably**
9. nok ikke uenig (1s)  
**do not disagree .**
- 10.G: mhm
- 11.E: for . det det-[  
**because . it it**
- 12.G: [nei men SÅ så jeg mener at jeg  
**no but SO so I mean that I**
13. har fått flott utdanning i Polen  
**got great education in Poland**
- 14.E: ja: . det tror jeg nok . m- . me:n . var det  
**ye:s . I probably think so . b- . bu:t .**
15. ikke mer en eliteutdanning i Polen [. altså .  
**wasn't it more of an elite education in Poland . well .**
- 16.G: [(-)
- 17.E: skiller man ikke tidligere mellom de som kan  
**don't you distinguish before between those who**
18. ta gymnas og de som ikke kan (.5) [alle ta-  
**can take gymnasium and those who cannot . everyone ta-**
- 19.G: [nei-  
**no**
- 20.E: går studerer går vel ikke på: .gymnasium  
**goes studies probably does not go to gymnasium**
- 21.G: ja: ja absolutt  
**ye:s yes absolutely**
- 22.E: alle?=  
**everyone?**
- 23.G: =alle  
**everyone**

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- 24.E:    åh=  
          oh
- 25.G:    =hvorfør ikke?  
          **why not?**
- 26.E:    jo jo men jeg [sier- (--)] man har lagt nivået såpass  
**jo jo but I say (--)] ona has put the level so**
- 27.G:    [aha ja ja ja fordi nei det for å  
          **aha yes yes yes because no it in**
28.       få plass i gymnas det var eksamen  
**order to get a place in gymnasium there was an exam**
- 29.E:    ja  
**yes**
- 30.G:    eksamen opptakseksamen  
**exam entry exam**
- 31.E:    ja . det betyr at ikke alle går der  
**yes . that means that not everyone goes there**
- 32.G:    nei . de som som består eksamen  
**no . those who pass the exam**
- 33.E:    sånn var det jo her også [før (1s)  
**it was also like that here before .**
- 34.G:    [ja ja  
          **yes yes**
- 35.E:    men så har vi: har vi tenkt at alle egentlig  
**but we: we have thought that actually everyone**
36.       bør ha (.8) mange års[utdanning (1s)  
**should have . many years' education .**
- 37.G:    [tilgang ja  
          **access yes**
- 38.E:    o:g og så skal . man helst ikke: (2s) sette  
**a:nd and one should rather not . put the youth**
39.       ungdommen i bås for tidlig og slike ting altså  
**in a pigeonhole too early and such things so**
40.       derfor så har vi da fått . en utdanning som  
**that is why we have got . an education that**
41.       kanskje ikke gagnar de aller flinkeste [. en  
**maybe does not suit the best . one**
- 42.G:    [ja  
          **yes**
- 43.E:    alle vet litt om alt heh . kanskje (.8) jeg  
**everyone knows a bit about everything heh . maybe . I**
44.       vet ikke jeg vet ikke [hvilke-  
**do not know I do not know which**
- 45.G:    [vanskelig å si  
          **difficult to say**

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- 46.E: ja . jeg tror kanskje-[  
**yes . I think maybe**
- 47.G: [men-e men-e ((kl)) . ja  
**but-e but-e (cl) . yes**
48. det er litt sånn naturlig seleksjon selvfølgelig  
**it is a bit such natural selection of course**
49. [noen klarer det noen [klarer det ikke  
**some make it some do not**
- 50.E: [ja [mm  
**yes mm**
- 51.G: men det . å synke ned nivå det er ikke god ide  
**but to . lower the level it is not a good idea**
- 52.E: ja men det er nok det som [. det som gjør det  
**yes but that is probably it that . it that makes it**
- 53.G: [he he he ikke sant  
**he he he not true**
- 54.E: egentlig (*lines omitted*) men jeg er ikke .  
**actually but I am not .**
55. skjønner hva du mener alt[så  
**understand what you mean**
- 56.G: [ja  
**yes**
- 57.E: fordi det de:t . de aller . færreste .  
**because the the: . the very . fewest .**
58. er vel godt nok forberedt til til  
**are good enough prepared for for**
59. universitetsstudium=  
**university studies**
- 60.G: =ja ja det (--)  
**yes yes it (--)**
61. abso[lutt  
**absolutely**
- 62.E: [nei det blir nivå såpass senker-[  
**no it is level is so low**
- 63.G: [hvis  
**if**
64. noen . har ikke stor interesse i grunnskole  
**someone . has no interest in primary school**
65. for for . for . for skole og . ikke har  
**for for . for . for school and . is not**
66. interesse av forSKJElle grunner det kan være  
**interested for SEveral reasons it can be**
- 67.E: mm (.5)
- 68.G: foreldre hjemssituasjon . det vanskelig  
**parents situation at home . it difficult**

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69. å tvinge den person ha ha at dem skal  
**to force this person ha ha that they should**
70. ha-  
**ha-**
- 71.E: [det er det vi prøver på her [antakelig  
**this is what we are attempting here probably**
- 72.G: [sier du det?  
**you don't say?**
73. [ehe he  
**ehe he**
- 74.E: [ja: så man har jo hatt den ide da . tror jeg  
**ye:s so one has jo has this idea . I think**
75. da . uten at jeg skal . underskrive på det  
**so . but I couldn't . sign under it**
76. (.5) om at også de som ikke har vokst opp  
**about that also those who have not grown up**
77. med (.4) bøker i bokhyllen  
**with . books in bookshelves**
- 78.G: mhm
- 79.E: skal ha en mulighet (2s)  
**shall have an possibility .**
- 80.G: .hh
- 81.E: så jeg tror det er en fin tanke  
**so I think it is a nice thought**
82. [men jeg vet ikke om det er-  
**but I do not know if it is**
- 83.G: [hvis- [ja absolutt  
**if yes absolutely**
84. absolutt me:n . man burde starte med  
**absolutely bu:t . one should start in the**
85. grunnskole eller med . sånn . f- den skolen  
**primary school or in such . b- the school**
86. før gymnas  
**before gymnasium**
- 87.E: mhm
- 88.G: fordi .  
**because .**
- 89.E: kanskje allerede barnehage  
**maybe already kindergarten**
- 90.G: [nei det det jeg var  
**no it it I was**
91. overrasket et min datter i Norge . hadde så  
**surprised that my daughter in Norway . had so**
92. masse fritid på skolen  
**much free time in school**

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Prior to the rendered extract, Grażyna has been talking about her experience with Norwegian schools, which is reformulated by Eli as *så det betyr du ikke er helt fornøyd | med den videregående skolen* 'so this means you're not fully satisfied | with the secondary school' in lines 1 and 3. This view is subsequently confirmed (line 4) and specified (6-7) by Grażyna. The specification is collaboratively filled in by Eli in lines 8-9, who uses the completion to mark alignment, and expresses an extremely hedged agreement *men jeg er nok ikke uenig* 'but I probably don't disagree'. This statement is a projection of an upcoming adversary turn, yet before Eli manages to deliver a continuation, Grażyna interrupts her by changing the topic to her Polish education (lines 12-13), discussed prior to the talk about Norwegian schools. Her move can be interpreted as a move preventing the production of an adversary statement from Eli, signalled by the hedged agreement. In line 14, Eli receives the statement and commences a sequence comparing Polish and Norwegian school system that stretches across several turns (lines 14-43). This sequence is meant as a justification of the low level of education found in Norwegian schools, thus framing Grażyna's opinion as valid (by admitting that the level actually is low) and in the same time providing the reasons for this state of facts (by explaining the rationale behind the Norwegian educational system). Lines 14-32 is a sequence of confirming the rules of the system in Poland: since Eli is not a knowledgeable speaker on that matter, she frequently inquires and reformulates Grażyna's answers to arrive at mutual understanding. Only then does she provide a contrastive statement *sånn var det jo her også før | men så har vi tenkt at alle egentlig bør ha...* 'it was the same here also | but then we have thought that everybody should have...', thus presenting the lower level of Norwegian schools as a conscious choice rather than an uncontrolled development. In the same time, she expresses uncertainty about the reasoning she has provided (uncertainty markers in lines 43-44 and 46), which is used by Grażyna to gain the floor and overtly express her opinion *men det å synke ned nivå er ikke god ide* 'but to lower the level is not a good idea' (line 51). Her opinion is seemingly accepted by Eli, who in the following talk aligns with her interlocutor by saying *men jeg*

*skjønner hva du mener altså* 'but I understand what you mean' (lines 54-55). By doing this, Eli displays empathy and understanding, yet at the same time does not fully agree with her interlocutor's stance. In the following turns, Eli focuses on the practical effects of the state of being (lines 57-59), upon which Grażyna delivers a full-fledged agreement *ja ja absolutt* 'yes yes exactly' (lines 60-61) and gives an account of her rationale (lines 63-70). Consequently, Eli again embarks on a justification of this state of being (lines 74-82), concluding with its positive, albeit weak, evaluation. The conclusion is weakened by an upcoming contrastive statement, which is interrupted by Grażyna delivering an agreement with this line of thought and then a criticism of it (lines 83-86). At first, Eli receives the comment with a minimal backchannel signal *mm* (line 87), but then displays alignment by delivering a collaborative completion of Grażyna's thought (line 89). In the following talk, Grażyna shifts the topic to concern her private experience rather than discussing general educational issues.

Throughout this passage, there is a noticeable difference between both participants: while Grażyna takes a clear standpoint and repeatedly expresses her view on the discussed matter, Eli provides arguments for both viewpoints, thus appearing objective and not revealing her true opinion. It might reflect her being in two minds about it, but it also seems that another reason for the objectivity is her reluctance to take an ill-considered stance in the discussion, which results in presenting arguments for both sides of the discussion. Such need for appearing rational and balanced has been suggested typical for Norwegian discourse (discussed in chapter 2.3.5, cf. also Eriksen, 1993).

## 8.5 Open expression of opposition – the use of *nei*

In the extracts analysed in this section, the participant openly display their disagreement, by using direct strategies of negating the interlocutor's previous statements. In some cases, the disagreement is somewhat hedged by the use of the expression *jeg*

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*tror* 'I think' (extracts 163 and 164), whereas other instances exhibit direct opposition (extracts 165 and 166).

(163/10M)

1. Dorota: spesielt om det var (8s) åh det blir helt ny  
**especially if it was . oh there will be a new**
2. toppmodel (.5) jeg tenkte nesten at  
**topmodel . I thought almost that**
3. jeg kikket på en som (2s)  
**I watched one that .**
4. Morten: det er sikkert den som er ferdig  
**it is surely the one that has finished**
5. D: → nei jeg [tror de har startet på et nye  
**no I think they have started a new one**
6. M: [(-) ja  
**(-) yes**
7. D: for det er så nye ansikter for de var ikke  
**because there are so new faces because they**
8. ferdig med den siste delen at det . de  
**weren't done with the last part that it . they**
9. fortsatt holdet på å velge den ene og så da  
**still were choosing one and so then**
10. har jeg ikke fulgt episoder etterpå så nå ser  
**I have not followed the episodes later on so now I see**
11. jeg at de starter på nytt (1s)  
**that they have started a new one .**
12. det går ganske fort  
**it goes quite quickly**
13. M: mhm (4.5)

Extract (163) presents a side sequence referring to a TV-program constituting an immediate context of the conversation. The topic is introduced and commented on by Dorota (lines 1-3). Morten offers a contradicting opinion (line 4), but his contradiction is immediately rejected by Dorota *nei jeg tror de har startet på et nye* 'no I think they have started a new one' (line 5), followed by the substantiation of her claim (lines 7-12). Morten's reaction is only minimal (*mhm* in line 13), upon which the side sequence is closed.

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(164/12M)

1. Stig: det først var vi på . nei det var . 2005 ja  
**it first we were in . no it was . 2005 yes .**
2. (.3) så det var da jeg var ferdig på (--)  
**so then I was done with (--)**
3. da (1.8) det var på høsten det også (.5)  
**then . it was in the autumn it too .**
4. Helena: ja på høsten da vi var [i . i Zakopane?  
**yes in the autumn we were in . in Zakopane?**
5. S: [ja  
**yes**
6. mhm (1.4) det var i: (1.2) oktober det også (1s)  
**mhm . it was i:n . October it too .**
7. H: → ikke om sommeren det var (.5)  
**not in the summer it was .**
8. det måtte bli sommer  
**it must have been summer**
9. S: nei (1.6) det var på høsten for jeg var ferdig  
**no . it was in the autumn because I was done**
10. på maxstudiene (1.1)  
**with max-studies .**
11. H: → nei (2s) nja jeg husker [at i 2005 var jeg i Norge (1.3)  
**no . nja I remember that in 2005 I was in Norway .**
12. S: [det var (-- ) også  
**it was (-- ) also**
13. H: [det må ha blitt sommer  
**it must have been summer**
14. S: [det var på det var på nei (.4) du var og  
**it was in it was in no . you were celebrating**
15. → feira jul her i 2005 (1.6) jo faktisk det var  
**Christmas here in 2005 . jo actually it was**
16. på: rett etter at jeg kjøpte leiligheta da .8  
**i:n right after that I bought the flat then .**
17. H: ja for jeg husker fordi jeg jobba på [på >>  
**yes because I remember because I worked in a**
18. S: [og >>  
**and**
19. H: >> bank og det var i august  
**bank and it was in August**
20. S: >> det var i august ja . ja . august var du  
**it was in August yes . yes . August you**
21. her [1s stemmer det .  
**were here . that is right .**
22. H: [mhm jada  
**mhm yes**

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- 23.S: og så var du her i ei uke [var det ikke  
**and so you were here one week weren't you**
- 24.H: [uhm (.5) jeg hadde  
**uhm . I had**
25. en uke ferie for det . ja  
**one week off for it . yes**
- 26.S: og så jeg kom ned på høsten og  
**and so I came down in the autumn and**

Extract (164) exhibits a disagreement concerning the history of Stig's and Helena's relationship. The topic of their meetings in 2005 is introduced by both participants in lines 1-6. Stig's final statement (line 6) is contradicted by Helena, suggesting a different date (line 7). Her suggestion is immediately challenged by Stig who offers additional facts supporting his view (lines 9-10). Helena's turn in lines 11 and 13 is at first a direct rejection, which is relaxed after a pause of 2 seconds by delivering a partial accept token *nja* (see section 8.1) and offering another fact in support of her opinion. Her repeated claim *det må ha blitt sommer* 'it must have been summer' in line 13 is overlapped by Stig who attempts to gain floor, who at first negates her statement (lines 14-15). Yet, after a break of 1,6 seconds Stig admits that his interlocutor is right *jo: faktisk* 'well yes, in fact' (line 15). In the following turns (lines 17-25) the participants collaborative reconstruct the events; hence, an agreement is reached.

The following extract also exhibits immediate and open rejection, yet in this case the contradiction is developed into a lengthy persuasive sequence, with several tokens of disagreement. Contrary to the previously analysed extract (164), agreement is not achieved.

(165/3F)

- 1.Hanna: det var lørdagskveld (.5) sen på lørdagen (.3)  
**it was Saturday evening . late on Saturday .**
2. og så det var ikke noe knust vinduet da (.9)  
**and so there wasn't any broken window then .**
3. så det mått- [det må-  
**so it mus- it mu-**
- 4.Per: [det må ha skjedd på  
**it must have happened on**

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5. søndagsmorgen da  
**Sunday morning then**
- 6.H: ja (1s) så jeg tror at [det-  
**yes . so I think that it**
- 7.P: [men du må huske på at  
**but you have to remember**
8. folk dem går forbi her kan når dem kommer  
**that people they go past here can when they go home**
9. fra byen (.6)  
**from the city .**
- 10.H: → nei . det tror jeg ik[ke [sam-  
**no . I do not think so sam-**
- 11.P: → [når dem vent [litt bare  
**when they wait a bit**
12. vent litt=  
**just wait a bit**
- 13.H: =ja  
**yes**
- 14.P: når dem kommer i fra byen så (.6) så har dem  
**when they go home from the city so . they have**
15. vært ute på fest (.5) og det jeg sier ikke  
**been on a party . and it I do not say**
16. det kan like greit ha vært folk fra: firmaet  
**it could have just as well been someone from**
17. [. ja (1s) kan hende for dem bor i  
**the company . yes . might be because they live**
- 18.H: [ja  
**yes**
- 19.P: den her retninga dem må gå i den retninga for  
**in the surrounding they have to go in this**
20. å komme hjem [. ja (.2) .hh så det kan jo  
**direction to get home . yes . .hh so it can be**
- 21.H: [ja  
**yes**
- 22.P: være (.4) og alle vet som jobber her  
**and everyone knows who work here**
23. på den F1 [. .ja  
**in this F1 . .ja**
- 24.H:→ [ja men du (.8) se se her (.4)  
**yes but you . look look here .**
- 25.H: jeg (.5) jeg tror det var noen fra firma  
**I . I think it was someone from the company**
26. fordi . for det første det er sjelden at e: .  
**because . firstly it is rare that e: .**

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27. ungdommer norske ungdommer går (.7) fra: byen .  
**youth Norwegian youth goes . from the city .**
28. der-e [at- de bruker på vanligvis  
**there-e that normally they**
- 29.P: [nei  
**no**
- 30.H: å ta: drosje eller  
**take a taxi or**
- 31.P: nei nei nei du tar feil skjønner du det som er  
**no no no you are wrong do you understand what**
32. sjelden e: . eller det er ikke noe sjelden at  
**is rare e: . or it is not rare that**
33. dem-e: dem knuser busskur [glasskur dem knuser  
**they-e: they smash bus stops windows they smash**
- 34.H: [nei det vet jeg  
**no I know that**
- 35.P: overalt gjør det (.7)og så det [det  
**everywhere do that . and so that that**
- 36.H: [(brukte)  
**(used)**
37. akkurat de: (1.3) våres dørene [ikke  
**just those: . our door not**
- 38.P: [jo  
**jo**
39. selvfølgelig det kan jo alle si hva det hadde  
**of course everyone can jo say that what [if]**
40. vært ei anna om å få [døra . knust  
**it was some other who had their door . smashed**
- 41.H: [se hvor mye vinduer  
**look how many windows**
42. er på vei her .  
**are on the way here .**
- 43.P: mhm
- 44.H: ok (.3) det er kjempesvære vinduer også .  
**ok . and huge windows too .**

In this extract, Per and Hanna are discussing the possible scenarios of an evening some days prior to the conversation, during which a window in their office door was broken. In lines 1-2, Hanna refers the facts known to her, and concludes by commencing an inference as to the time of the event (line 3), completed by Per in line 4-5. In line 6, Hanna accepts the suggestion and attempts once more to deliver a conclusive statement, yet is again interrupted by Per offering his understanding of the matter (lines 7-9). After a pause

of 0,6 second, Hanna takes the floor and delivers an outright disagreement *nei det tror jeg ikke* 'no I don't think so' (line 10). Her turn is stopped by Per, who frames her action as inappropriate by manifesting that she has interrupted him *bare vent litt* 'just wait a bit' (lines 11-12). Subsequently, in lines 14-23 Per delivers his opinion on the matter, making small pauses in which Hanna's minimal answers signal listenership. Only then is she allowed to express her opinion, this time more successful, possibly as a result of applying several markers of the upcoming disagreement *men du* 'but you'<sup>119</sup> and *se her* 'look here'. Her following turn (in lines 25-30) is formed as a cautious suggestion *jeg tror at* 'I think that' and accompanied by a substantiation of her opinion. Nonetheless, even though Hanna hedges her opinion, her view is immediately rejected by Per who explicitly states that she is wrong *du tar feil* 'you're wrong' (line 31). The discussion continues for a number of rounds, and does not end with an agreement, but is instead abandoned in favour of a different matter.

Per's verbal behaviour in the analysed extract is aimed at gaining domination over his interlocutor, and thus seems rather untypical for Norwegian conversations. The domination attempts on the side of Per may arise from his having the advantage of years (he is some 20 years older than Hanna) and being a man. Nonetheless, it seems that his strong reaction in lines 11-12 might have been triggered by the inappropriateness of an immediate rejection, before Per had the opportunity to present his view in full. His second contradiction in line 29 is a reaction to Hanna's making claims to epistemic rights on the topic of what is typical for Norwegian youth (to take a taxi or go by foot). As Per is the native speaker in the conversation, he might perceive himself as more knowledgeable on the topic of Norwegian habits. Nonetheless, one can observe his attempts to dominate Hanna several times throughout the conversation, which leads to a conclusion that Per's style of conversing with Hanna is less harmony oriented than in case of other conversations collected for the study, with the

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<sup>119</sup> The 2.SG-pronoun is in Norwegian commonly used as address form, contrary to Polish, where the given name would rather be applied.

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exception of 8M, which has already been identified as highly argumentative. Notably, the following extract comes from 8M and exhibits very dominating behaviour on the side of the native speaker:

- (166/8M)
1. Renata: ja og hva gjør vi med overnatting  
**yes and what do we do with accommodation**
2. for dem [skal vi betale også for det=  
**for them shall we also pay for that**
3. Andr.: → [.hh =nei det  
.hh no it
4. er ikke vanlig Reni (1s) det er IKKE vanlig  
**is not normal Reni . it is NOT normal**
5. det var de:t heller ikke når vi dro til  
**it was i:t was not either when we went to**
6. Hamar nå . hvis vi hadde dratt til Sivert  
**Hamar now . if he had gone to Sivert's**
7. sitt bryllup  
**wedding**
8. R: mm
9. A: → så måtte vi selvfølgelig ordne det sjølv (.2)  
**of course so we had to organise it ourselves .**
10. det er helt normalt (1.8) er du gal .  
**it is completely normal . are you crazy .**
11. kan ikke drive og nei nei nei (.4)  
**cannot go on and no no no .**
12. R: naja da kommer mange fra Polen ikke (1s)  
**na-yes then many from Poland won't come .**
13. A: nei men da: kanskje du kan ordne noe  
**no but the:n maybe you can organise some**
14. overnatting for dem da men det er jo ikke  
**accommodation for them then but it is jo not**
15. normalt da nå (.6) det er jo ungdomherberge og  
**normal then now . there is jo a hostel also**
16. i S1 da (1s) det går an å bestille  
**in S1 then . it is possible to book**
17. rom der det koster ikke mye nå (1.2)  
**rooms there it doesn't cost much .**
18. R: a vet ikke (.8)  
**a don't know .**
19. A: ne: /de/ . men selvfølgelig ikke Reni  
**no: . but of course not Reni**

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20. vi skal ikke drive og betale det er  
**we will not go on and pay it is**
21. i hvert fall ikke normalt her (.8)  
**in any case not normal here .**

In the beginning of this stretch of talk, Renata makes a suggestion that they cover the hotel expenses for their wedding guests (lines 1-2). The suggestion is immediately rejected in lines 3-11 by repeated arguments referring to the norms *det er ikke vanlig* 'it is not normal (procedure)' and *det er helt normalt* 'it's completely normal'. Additionally, Andreas uses an example from their common experience to support his opinion (a wedding of their friend) and applies a hypocoristic address form *Reni* as a persuasive strategy. Throughout his multi-turn speech, Renata does not take floor and offers only a mitigating statement suggesting the results of the course of action suggested by Andreas (line 12). In lines 13-15, Andreas relaxes his suggestion, yet still claims that such behaviour is a breach of norms *men det er jo ikke normalt da nå* 'but it's not normal then now'. In line 18, Renata displays that she has not been fully convinced, upon which Andreas reinforces his point of view, using decisiveness markers such as *selvfølgelig ikke* 'of course not' and *vi skal ikke drive og betale* 'we will not go on and pay', and finally stating his knowledge as a native speaker about what is standard in Norway (lines 19-21). Subsequently to the rendered talk, the topic of wedding is abandoned, and hence, the problematic issue is not resolved.

Extract (166) stands in an interesting contrast to extract (150), analysed in section 8.1.1. In extract (150), Andreas signals the upcoming disagreement and generally acts so as to mitigate the possible threat of escalating the conflict, whereas Renata behaves dominantly. Extract (166) displays reversed roles, with Andreas delivering open disagreement tokens and Renata not contributing in any significant way to the course of conversation. The comparison of those two extracts might lead to the conclusion that weak disagreement signals are not interpreted by Renata as decisive enough, which leads to her aiming at eliciting a more overt standpoint from Andreas. Such practice can be explained as an attempt to resolve the issue as soon as possible, and in order to do

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that, the participants have to display clear opinions on the discussed matters. The following section (8.6) provides an analysis of another stretch of talk from 8M, which returns to the topic of this conversation's domination attempts.

In this section, the analysed extracts provided both instances of mitigated expressions of disagreement (163 and 165), as well as direct contradictions (164 and 166). Interestingly enough, it seems that both practices may, but do not necessarily have to lead to an open conflict. In extracts (163) and (165), the disagreement is accompanied by a token of uncertainty *jeg tror* 'I think'. However, in case of the latter extract, the interlocutor who delivers the disagreement signal is "scolded" for interrupting her interlocutor; it seems therefore that the expected reaction to a statement is to receive it by means of a backchannel signal (including *ja*, an ostensible appreciation token) and to deliver the disagreement when necessary only afterwards. Hence, extract (165) validates the claim put forward about the fixed turn-taking structure in Norwegian conversation (cf. chapter 7).

### 8.6 Honeymoon – a troublesome topic

This section provides an analysis of a single stretch of talk from 8M, concerning the location of the participants' honeymoon. As the interlocutors have very different wishes, the extract provides an excellent opportunity to analyse disagreement management and persuasive practices. As previously stated, 8M is a somewhat exceptional conversation among the collected data, containing several domination attempts on the side of both speakers, and characterised by strong emotional involvement. As such, the conversation breaks several rules assumed underlying Norwegian conversation pattern, such as focus on harmony and weak emotional expression. However, as can be observed in the following extract, the majority of the outright disagreement examples have been initiated by Renata, the NNS in the conversation.

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(167/8M)

- 1.Andreas: nei da kunne jeg eventuelt tenkt meg og  
**no I could alternatively imagine travelling**  
 2. dratt til Mexico (.4)  
**to Mexico .**
- 3.Renata: hva Mexico er det ikke (.4) for uh (.2)  
**what Mexico is it not . for uh .**
- 4.A: [farlig?  
**dangerous?**
- 5.R: [er det åpent nei ikke farlig er det overhodet  
**it is open no not dangerous is it at all**
6. mulig å . for oss å (1s) å dra til Mexico  
**possible to . for us to . to travel to Mexico**
- 7.A: Mexico ja ja ja (.7) det er jo=  
**Mexico yes yes yes . it is jo**
- 8.R: =men hvorfor  
**but why**
9. Mexico? jeg jeg vil e: helst reise til e: .  
**Mexico? I I would like to travel to e: .**
10. [Asia?  
**Asia?**
- 11.A: [jeg vil gjerne nei jeg vil ikke være med  
**I would like to no I do not want to go**
12. til Asia jeg synes det er jeg-[  
**to Asia I think it is I**
- 13.R: [men-e JEG vil  
**but I want to**
- 14.A: jeg vil til heller Latin Amerika er veldig  
**I would rather go to Latin America is very**
15. spennende jeg studerer jo spansk som hobby  
**exciting I am studying Spanish as a hobby**
16. vettu nå . [. så (.8) og der vet du  
**you know now . so . and there you know**
- 17.R: [ÅH (.8)  
**[oh .**
- 18.A: er det mange tidligere gamle nazier ja .  
**there are many former old nazis yes .**
- 19.R: uhm=
- 20.A: =så kan du @ snakke tysk og@ heh  
**so you can @speak German also@ heh**
- 21.R: @men . er de fortsatt i livet?@  
**@but . are they still alive?@**
- 22.A: ja . noen i hvert fall . familie  
**yes . some at least . family**
- 23.R: aha

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- 24.A: neida  
**nah**
- 25.R: og de står på gata o:g og forteller vi er .  
**and they stand on the streets and say we are .**
26. fa- familie til eks-nazi oder /de/?=  
**family to a former-nazi or?**
- 27.A: =nei det  
**no they**
28. gjør de neppe men . det er i alle fall i  
**probably do not but . it is in any way in**
29. Mexico er jo (.4) stort og fint et stort land  
**Mexico is jo . big and nice a big country**
30. og mye spennende det er pyramider der (.6) fra  
**and lots of exciting there are pyramids . from**
31. azteker i: (.3)  
**Aztecs i:n .**
- 32.R: men-e . mener du det . virkelig?  
**but-e . do you really mean that?**
- 33.A: jeg tenker på det og så er det mange variert  
**I am thinking about it and there are many varied**
34. landskap . det er jo badestrender det er jo .7  
**landscape there are jo beaches there are jo .**  
(lines omitted)
- 35.R: ja derfor vil jeg helst snakke om e: bryllupsreise  
**yes that is why I would rather talk about e: honeymoon**
36. [also Mexico høres . ikke bra ut for meg .  
**well Mexico does not sound good to me**
- 37.A: [uhm
38. høres ikke bra ut?  
**does not sound good?**
- 39.T: nei .  
**no .**
- 40.A: men det er jo: (1.2) det er jo fredelig der  
**but it is jo: . it is jo peaceful**
41. Reni det er ikke akkurat alle steder man kan  
**Reni it is not exactly all places you can**
42. dra til (1s)  
**go to .**
- 43.R: jeg . vil dra til India  
**I . I want to go to India**
- 44.A: nei jeg vil ikke dra til India 2.4 der er det  
**no I do not want to go to India . that is it**
- 45.R: da får alle vite alle i Polen vite at-e: .  
**then everyone will know that in Poland . that**

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46. polske damer er i: No- Norge (.4)  
**Polish ladies are i:n No- Norway .**
47. undertryckt /de/? (.3)  
**oppressed? .**
- 48.A: undertrykt?=  
**oppressed**
- 49.R: =untertrykt  
**oppressed**
- 50.A: nei men det er ikke noe vits i å dra til India  
**no but there's not point in going to India it is**
51. det er bare tull (.3) [det nei jo det er  
**just rubbish . it no jo there is**
- 52.R: [det er ikke tull  
**it is not rubbish**
- 53.A: så mye fattigdom og det det er så slitsomt  
**so much poverty and it it is so tiring**
54. (.8) det er sånn forferdelig klima og  
**. it is such a terrible climate and**
- 55.R: ja men=  
**yes but**
- 56.A: =hallo hvem er det som klager i S2  
**hallo who is the one complaining**
57. når det blir tretti trettifem grader  
**in S2 when it is 30 35 centigrades**
- 58.R: ja: men de:t det er eksotisk å dra til India  
**ye:s but i:t it is exotic to go to India and**
59. og ikke til Mexico Mexico blir Mexico i mange år  
**not to Mexico Mexico will be Mexico in many years**
- 60.A: ne [India India er ikke eksotisk nei  
**nah India India is not exotic no**
- 61.R: [og India-  
**and India-**
- 62.A: das vill ich [(--) NICHT tun /de/  
**I don't want to (--) do that**
- 63.R: [og for deg- for deg ikke  
**and for you for you not**
64. eksotisk lenger fordi du: du var der to ganger  
**exotic any more because you: you were there two times**
65. eller tre ganger  
**or three times**
- 66.A: ne men jeg har ikke jeg har ikke noe lyst Reni  
**nah but I don't feel I don't feel like going there Reni**
67. jeg har ikke det . det er ikke spennende (1.5)  
**I don't . it is not exciting .**

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68. det hadde vært mye mer spennende å dra  
**it would be much more exciting to go**
69. til Italia .  
**to Italy**
- 70.R: ÅH! (.7) for å se på fotball  
**oh . and watch football**
- 71.A: nei vi kunne dratt til Ukraina (.2)  
**no we could go to Ukraine .**
- 72.R: nei der var jeg (2.3)  
**no I was there .**
- 73.A: du har vært der i Ukraina?  
**you have been there to Ukraine?**
- 74.T: @ja@ . ja ja du må ikke korrigere meg  
**@yes@ . yes yes you must not correct me**

Extract (167) commences with Andreas suggesting Mexico as a honeymoon location. His suggestion is met with surprise *hva? Mexico* 'what Mexico' (line 3), and an inquiry about the formal possibility of going there (lines 5-6). Upon Andreas' reassurance (line 7), Renata challenges the idea by requesting her interlocutor's reasons for going there and providing her own idea about the trip (lines 8-10). In his subsequent turn, Andreas immediately discards the idea by saying *jeg vil ikke* 'I don't want to' and begins delivering the reasons for it (lines 11-12), yet is interrupted by Renata who explicitly states her wishes, stressing the pronoun so as to emphasise that her wishes need also to be taken into considerations (line 13). In the following lines, Andreas provides several reasons arguing for the trip to Latin America (lines 14-34), including a joking suggestion about the descendants of German post-war emigration. The topic is abandoned for several seconds in favour of discussing the wedding details, but is re-introduced by Renata explicitly stating her non-inclination to the Mexico-trip (lines 35-36). In line 38, Andreas confirms his understanding by echoing Renata's statement and commences a persuasive sequence (lines 40-42), interrupted by Renata overtly expressing her wish to travel to India (line 43). Upon Andreas' contrastive opinion, delivered as an almost complete repetition of Renata's turn yet with a negation, Renata develops a short humorous side-sequence (lines 45-49); in line 50, however, Andreas discards the sequence by marking a return to the previous topic (using *nah*, see chapter 7.2)

and delivers an strong negative evaluation of the idea *det er bare tull* 'it's just rubbish'. Simultaneously to Renata's rejection of the evaluation *det er ikke tull* 'it's not rubbish' (line 52), Andreas continues to suggest several arguments against the trip to India (lines 53-54), including a personal reference to his interlocutor's dispreference for high temperatures (lines 56-57). In lines 58-59, Renata delivers her argument supporting the idea, which is immediately discarded by Andreas in lines 60 and 62<sup>120</sup>. Yet, Andreas' claim is rejected as invalid and grounded in the fact that he has already been to India (lines 63-65). Consequently, Andreas offers a slightly mitigating argument, stressing his reluctance and suggesting Italy as a honeymoon location (lines 66-69). In the subsequent talk, the domination struggle continues without the issue being solved.

Extract (167) stands in direct contrast with extract (162), where the native participant appeared objective and defended both standpoints, and the non-native speaker expressed firm opinions. In extract (167), on the other hand, both participants exchange arguments for one side of the conflict only, arguing for their standpoint. The conflict is heated, as can be deduced from the fast pace, frequent interruption and the use of German in case of Andreas. Both interlocutors use personal arguments and different persuasive strategies. The appearance of such a strong verbal conflict in a conversation between life partners is not unexpected; notably, it would unlikely have happened in different participant settings. The heat of the argument can be attributed to the emotional involvement due to the importance of the personal topic.

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<sup>120</sup> Note the use of German in line 59, applied to emphasize Andreas' position. Although this is not the scope of this study, one could draw interesting conclusions about code switching and its function in 8M conversation.

## 8.7 Discussion and conclusions

This chapter deals with the Norwegian repertoire of practices for projecting and expressing disagreement. Upcoming disalignment is signalled either by means of a specific response token *nja*, or by weak appreciation tokens. The former practice is functionally, and to some extent formally (e.g. prolonged vowel quality) related to the curled *ja* studied by Lindström (1999) on Swedish language data. Although the curled *ja* is also found in Norwegian, in the study data it has been identified in the function of projecting disagreements only once. Weak appreciation tokens, such as minimal backchannel signals (e.g. *mm* in extract 153) or mitigated agreements (extract 151) also signal an upcoming discord sequence. The very presence of conventional means of projecting disagreement signifies the need for predictability and the dispreference for disagreement expressions in Norwegian conversations. Signalling that the coming turn does not comply with the interlocutor's expectations displays a strong orientation towards the interlocutor's rights and to maintaining a harmonious interaction. The practice of indicating an upcoming discord allows the interlocutor to prepare a proper reaction to the socially demanding situation of confrontation. Thus, it seems a practice vital for non-native users of Norwegian to master; otherwise, they may be perceived as unsympathetic and not complying with the rule of maintaining predictability of talk.

A wide range of disagreement expressions has been identified in the studied conversations, ranging from highly mitigated (by use of litotes, uncertainty markers and negated questions), through relatively open (disagreeing with *jeg tror*) to direct and challenging the speaker's previous utterance to a great extent. The latter instances are most commonly found in conversations between life partners. Moreover, the majority of direct opposition manifestations, as for instance questioning by means of *wh*-questions, were delivered by the NNSs. However, while the NSs prefer questioning by means of *yes/no*-questions, as a reaction to this practice they still expect to provide specific information, rather

than simple confirming or rejecting the information from the question. This fact is in line with the claim put forward in chapter 7 concerning the preference for using yes/no-questions in place of wh-questions. Furthermore, it seems that the presupposition inherent in yes/no-questions is assumed to be inferred and reacted to. As extract (157) shows, this is not always the case in interethnic conversations. Moreover, speakers whose native language allows an open and outright expression of challenge to their interlocutors' statements, may be perceived as exceedingly authoritative or even rude if they transfer the linguistic practices from their native tongue to the target language while delivering confrontation sequences. It seems that in the Polish language community, overt expression of disagreement is considered less dispreferred than in Norwegian. In the same time, it does not imply that speakers of Polish are more inclined towards confrontation in general, but are rather less restricted in their expression of discord. The open display of disagreement is closely interrelated with rules concerning preference for voicing strong or mitigated opinions on the discussed subject. The analysis of a disalignment incorporated in a conversation between strangers (1U) suggests a strong obligation to remain objective and refrain from delivering firm opinions on the side of the Norwegian speaker. In the analysed extract, the native participant argues for both sides of the conflict matter, whereas the Polish interlocutor maintains her standpoint throughout the discussion, thus explicitly displaying her opinion on the matter. Voicing one's opinions seems natural in a discussion, which prime goal is to exchange views on a given matter. It seems therefore that in Norwegian conversations there is a dispreference for delivering subjective judgements in favour of impartial and balanced opinions. In case of 1U, it can be claimed that the relation between participants does not incline the Norwegian interlocutor towards a free display of her viewpoints. Yet generally, in the analysed extracts, the native speakers rarely deliver non-hedged opinions and try to validate their claims in verifiable facts. Yet there are deviations from this pattern, as exhibited for instance in extract (167). At the same time, 8M constitutes a special case among the collected dialogues (cf. the comment in 5.1.1), as the interaction is

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characterised by a significant degree of domination struggle, whereas the general tendency in the other conversations is to stress harmony and negotiate mutual understanding.

In the studied data there have been no striking examples of the Polish participants causing the disagreement to escalate by their verbal behaviour. However, instances of expressing definite opinions and “questioning” the interlocutor about his rationale suggest that the Polish interactants favour offering less mitigated judgements and exhibit a more confrontational style, accompanied by expressing personal beliefs, while the Norwegian conversational style could be labelled as negotiation oriented and balanced<sup>121</sup>.

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<sup>121</sup> This observation does not lead to a conclusion that Norwegians are born with more developed diplomatic skills, as one could infer from the conclusions. The notion of ethnic communicative pattern suggests that certain practices are preferred in favour of others in verbal interaction, a fact that the native speakers of a given language are not necessarily aware of.

## **Chapter 9.**

### **Conclusions and implementation**

#### **9.1 Results of the study**

The main aim of the study was to analyse the Norwegian ethnic communication pattern (ECP) and its realisation in interethnic conversations between native and non-native language users of Polish origins. The idea behind the model is that ethnic-specific ways of expressing social relations and handling the act of one to one communication exist, which are manifested on the linguistic level and are identifiable through conversation analysis. As such, ECP complements the universal theories of conversation (such as the Cooperative Principle suggested by Grice, 1975) and provides it with a tool that “makes allowances” for ethnic differences observed in the discourse. The interethnic setting of the collected conversations provides examples of a different application of linguistic practices linked to the Norwegian ECP by native and non-native speakers. The differences are exemplified on practices performing the function of accompanying the interlocutor (chapter 6), maintaining predictability (chapter 7) and expressing disagreement (chapter 8).

There was also a second goal that the study aimed at achieving, namely describing the features of interethnic conversations as semi-elicited data, by means of identifying structural features (chapter 4) and asymmetric practices (chapter 5) that characterise this interactional activity.

### **9.1.1 Interethnic conversations as semi-elicited data**

It has been found that the collected conversations are characterised by TRANSITION PASSAGES which appear predominantly while commencing and terminating the activity. Their function is to delimitate the conversation itself from the meta-activity of discussing the premises of the interaction. Among the factors that the participants orient towards are the rules of interaction (e.g. the topics that could be discussed) and the required time span. Transition passages also appear in the middle of the dialogues as side-sequences, referring mainly to the presence of the recording devices as the key feature of the immediate interactional context. Metaconversational comments suggest that the activity is perceived by its participants as being regulated by rules at least partially different than the ones which apply to everyday conversations. Nonetheless, the mentioned passages are handled by means of standard conversational procedures, and treated as independent topics, often constituting a side-sequence. Thus, the collected conversational corpus can be said to consist of semi-elicited data, regulated by a partially artificial set of rules, but at the same time exhibiting standard conversational procedures.

### **9.1.2 Asymmetries in interethnic conversations**

As regards asymmetries on the level of practices' application, the data has been found to exhibit several practices interrelated with the role of a native or a non-native speaker. The NSs compliment on the language command of their interlocutors, deliver utterances defining the "world" and perform other-correction. The NNSs, on the other hand, engage in self-corrections and word-searches, and openly comment on their deficient language use. However, the practices applied by the NSs are by no means as recurrent as the ones employed by NNSs, a fact that confirms Kurhila's (2003) and Plejert's (2004) findings that NNSs orient more frequently to their own perceived incompetence than NSs, who focus predominantly on maintaining mutual comprehension rather than on linguistic correctness. Moreover, some of the collected conversations exhibit none or very few instances of such practices, while other show

several examples of them. This fact can be attributed to the varied level of language command of the Polish participants, some of whom can be perceived as possessing a native-like competence in Norwegian<sup>122</sup>. Asymmetry was also observed when it comes to application of the practices studied in chapters 6-8, with paraphrases being the most striking example of discrepancies (chapter 6). This feature is analysed in section 9.1.3.

The practice of defining the world by the native speaker is attributable to interethnic conversations in general. At the same time, it realises the maxim of “being Norwegian” found in the Norwegian ECP. By explaining geographical, social and linguistic knowledge without their interlocutors’ request for such explanation, the native speakers break the rule of treating their conversational partners as equals in terms of both epistemic and interactional competence. Although defining what exactly belongs to the Norwegian cultural lexicon is not feasible in this dissertation, certain items assumed have been suggested in chapter 5, including names of cities (Røros, Elverum, Hamar or Skien), political parties (Rødt), norms regulating social processes (traditions regarding weddings), as well as certain linguistic expressions, such as idioms and sayings (*nordmenn er født med ski på bena* ‘Norwegians are born with skis on their feet’, *det finnes ikke dårlig vær, det finnes bare dårlige klær* ‘there is no bad weather, there is only bad clothing’ etc.). The latter group is especially vital for N2-teachers, as developing familiarity with the Norwegian “key words” seems a feasible task in a S/FL-classroom. The topic will be further addressed in section 2 of the present chapter.

Another feature associated with the setting of the collected data is the “hypodermic” discourse of ethnic differences, inherent to a varying extent in all conversations. Talk focused on comparing Poland and Norway is most visible in conversations between

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<sup>122</sup> It can be claimed that this is the case in conversations labelled as 14F, 4F, 6M and 7U, where the Polish participants show a near-native like command of Norwegian, both when it comes to the phonetic, morphological, syntactic as well as to a great extent discursive level. Moreover, the Polish participant of 14F is the only one that consequently uses a dialectal variety of Norwegian, applying in his speech both phonetic and morphological features of the local dialect.

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strangers (labelled as U), but other conversation types also exhibit instances of the Polish participant referring to his/her experiences and life events connected to Poland. Naturally, in those stretches of talk the Polish participants act as knowledgeable speakers. Hence, it can be claimed that the topic of Poland is introduced to the talk as means of balancing the conversation, with the native participants choosing topics which the Polish participants are able to show expertise in and which are of relevance to them. Focusing on interethnic subjects may therefore be seen as a conscious choice of the native speakers, obliged to appear empathetic towards their interlocutors (see 9.1.3.2), rather than an external factor imposed on the activity.

### 9.1.3 Norwegian ethnic conversation pattern

A model of the Norwegian ECP is suggested in chapter 3, and includes the maxims of equality, harmony, predictability, distance and "being Norwegian". Chapters 6-8 provide a study of the application of practices realising the maxims in conversations. Although the studied practices can often perform multiple functions, the following conclusions are an attempt to link particular practices to specific maxims, and thus show both the various roles and the complexity of the studied phenomena.

#### 9.1.3.1 Equality

The maxim of equality is observable in conversations through maintaining common ground by means of explicit understanding checks, such as question and statement paraphrases, which have been found frequent in the native speaker's talk. This finding is not in line with Foppa's (1995) claim that such understanding checks are not common in everyday conversations. Thus, it can be stated that Norwegian conversation favours open negotiations of comprehension, which are possibly linked to the maxim of maintaining harmony (cf. 9.1.3.2). The topical coherence or lack of it is often marked by specific particles (yes/no-particles) or explicit causal connections between the utterances, such as repetition of statements delivered by the other speaker previously in the talk

(the so called theme-rheme structure). Preserving the coherence of talk displays respect for the other speaker's expectations. Another strategy that can be linked to the maxim of equality is the practice of signalling the possibility of changing the topic of conversation by means of connectives, such as *nei men* 'no but' and *så det* 'so that', followed by a pause. Depending on the interactants' preference, these connectives can either mark an upcoming continuation of the topic, or provide an opportunity to abandon the subject by means of delivering concluding remarks, yet only with the other party's consent. Connectives applied in that function can be said to "open" the discourse (Lindström&Londen, 2008), a function that echo-turns and pro-repeats have also been identified to realise.

#### 9.1.3.2 Harmony

The superior practice linked to this maxim concerns mitigation of one's statements by various hedging devices, the most prominent of which is litotes. The obligation to weaken one's commitment to the statements is especially visible in case of expressing discord, which is often accompanied by several markers of uncertainty (both lexical e.g. *kanskje* 'maybe', as well as interactional, such as pauses and hesitations). Disagreement is seldom delivered openly, and the predominant method of performing this act is to deliver a weak or partial agreement to begin with, and produce a contrastive statement only afterwards. Moreover, in a discussion it is vital to present balanced and objective arguments, instead of delivering subjective emotional opinions, openly aiming at convincing the other party. If the interlocutor's opinion differs from the one held by the speaker, it is accepted by means of permissive statements (e.g. *det kan du si* 'you can say that') and expressions of empathy (*det forstår jeg godt* 'I understand that very well'), which contribute to the impression of a shared stance. Among the expressions of (ostensible) alignment with one's interlocutor one can also list echo-turns and pro-repeats. This fact leads to a conclusion that in the Norwegian ECP there exists an "obligation of displaying empathy", which at the same time does not equate to being empathetic in reality.

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The rule of not imposing on one's interlocutor is realised by means of *or-inquiry*, which relaxes the preference for an affirmative answer to follow. Still, the *or-inquiry* does not induce a straightforward negative answer, but instead triggers an objective statement of facts conveying a meaning that rejects the question's presupposition. Retardations as described in 9.1.3.1. also contribute to the harmonious flow of the talk by means of signalling consent to a topic transition and inviting the interlocutor to perform the move *him-/herself*, if he/she should be willing to.

It has also been found that in Norwegian interethnic conversations characterised by distance between the participants there is a preference for *yes/no-questions*, often with extraposition or completed by the conjunction token '*or*', instead of open *wh-questions*. Due to the type of collected data, the question remains unanswered whether this practice is linked to the distance between the participants or triggered by the perception of one's interlocutor as a less competent language user. At the same time, it has been found that *yes/no-questions* are also more frequently adopted by the native speakers in stretches of talk expressing weak disagreement and requiring substantiation. This finding supports the claim that the dispreference for *wh-questions* is a rule valid for Norwegian conversations in general, not only for interethnic encounters.

Being harmonious in conversation can be linked to the high degree of femininity identified for the Norwegian society (Hofstede, 1994). This finding provides a preliminary support for the concept of deriving interactive constraints from Hofstede's dimensions of national cultures, suggested in chapter 2.3.4.

### 9.1.3.3 Predictability

The maxim of predictability is to some extent connected to the two previously analysed. Maintaining consistency in talk displays focus on the interlocutor and his/her expectations that should not be violated, as it could disrupt the harmonious interaction. In the same time, when the interlocutor's conversational rights are as important as the speaker's rights, he/she is treated as equal to the speaker.

In Norwegian conversations there exist conventional means of signalling the upcoming turn and its content. This function is predominantly performed by response particles, that is *ja*, *nei* and *jo*, but also by a combination of the affirmative and the negative response token, namely *nja*. The affirmative particle *ja* signals that a delayed or a multi-turn answer. *Nei* can signal a lack of ability to provide the expected turn (such as an answer containing specific information following a wh-question), or a breach of expectations which are assumed to “accompany” the other speaker’s turn. *Jo* strengthens the speaker’s commitment to the delivered utterance and in the same time projects an expected adjacent turn. *Nja*, on the other hand, signals that the following turn will provide a disalignment with what has been suggested by the other speaker. Both formally and functionally, *nja* bears resemblance to a variety of the affirmative response token, called the “curled” *ja* due to its specific intonation contour, that has also been found to project disagreement in Scandinavian conversations. The repertoire of conventional means applied to signalling the following talk verifies the claim that the pattern of Norwegian conversation is relatively fixed, and expected to be preserved, unless the speaker delivers a signal that his upcoming statement does not comply with the model. As a result, conventional means of relaxing the pattern have been developed, so as not to impose on the interlocutor. One of the practices performing this function is the or-inquiry (cf. 9.1.3.2). Retardation practices (cf. 9.1.3.1) also serve the function of relaxing the preference structure of the conversation and opening the discourse to several different courses of action.

#### 9.1.3.4 Distance

The maxim of distance and lack of emotional involvement has been observed in the collected data as practices serving the function of retardation. In the Norwegian ECP, several practices are applied in order to slow down the conversation pace before an upcoming topic transition sequence (cf. 9.1.3.1).

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The rule of not interrupting one's conversational partner has not been studied in depth. As the analysed instances of collaborative completion show, the practice is relatively frequently found in Norwegian conversations. However, in many cases, the collaborative completion does not serve to take over the conversational floor, but expresses understanding, alignment and involvement in the activity by suggesting the expected continuation of a given utterance.

### 9.1.3.5 Being Norwegian

The maxim of being Norwegian can be looked upon as two-fold. On one side, it refers to the lexical level of the discourse, embracing the items that belong to the Norwegian "communal lexicon" (see section 1 of the present chapter). Yet, it might also be perceived as superior to all the previously mentioned maxims, a HYPER-MAXIM, tantamount to the Norwegian ECP. The argument corroborating this understanding is that the cultural frames and the practices realising them belong to the perception of what "being Norwegian in talk" means for one's interactional behaviour.

### 9.1.3.6 Conclusions. The Norwegian ECP as a supportive communication climate

The Norwegian ECP matches almost perfectly the model of "supportive communication climate", as labelled by Gibbs (2000). The SUPPORTIVE model is contrasted with the DEFENSIVE communication climate. Among the features of both types one can find the following characteristics:

DEFENSIVE	SUPPORTIVE
<b>Characterised by:</b>	
evaluation	description
control	problem orientation
strategy	spontaneity
neutrality	empathy
superiority	equality
certainty	provisionalism <sup>123</sup>

Table 7. Features of „communication climates”.

As described above, the Norwegian ECP stresses equality and empathy. Problem orientation and description are visible in the mitigated expression of one’s opinion and preference for balanced and relatively objective viewpoints. The requirement of spontaneity is not fully met, as the Norwegian communication model does not favour spontaneous expression of emotions, and values predictability in the discourse. The feature of provisionalism in Norwegian ECP is ambiguous to some extent. On one hand, expressions displaying reduced expectations towards the interlocutor’s next move are relatively frequent (for instance in disagreement sequences). On the other hand, however, the very existence of conventional means of relaxing the preference pattern suggests that this pattern is indeed fixed, and that interlocutors are obliged to comply with it. With such a fixed pattern, Norwegian discourse is highly coherent, and can be as such recognised as consistent with the model of HC-communication (Hall, 1976), which implies that the actors engaging in the activity need to be “insiders”, familiar with the tacit meanings conveyed by the various practices. Notably, this opinion has already been voiced by Gullestad (1989, cf. chapter 2.3.5). Such a view contradicts the

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<sup>123</sup> The term ‘provisionalism’ used by Gibbs is somewhat misleading, giving the impression of temporarity rather than referring to the lack of predefined and steadfast opinions. In the Polish translation, the term is rendered as *otwartość* ‘being open to other viewpoints’ which seems to convey Gibbs’ meaning in a more adequate way. It seems however that the English language does not have a positive attribute to describe “being permissive” in communication.

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generally held opinion of the East-West dichotomy, with the former representing HC-, and the latter LC-cultures. A closer study proves that the distinction is by no means as clear-cut and obvious as sometimes suggested.

Nonetheless, the Norwegian ECP can be said to realise Gibbs' (ibid.) model for supportive communication to a significant extent. In Gibbs' eyes, the supportive model secures successful achievement of conversational goals without threatening the interactants' face, and as such, it is the ideal that should be strived towards. While this normative statement might be valid for instances of professional communication that require effective exchange of information, it does not seem equally applicable to everyday conversations, which are as much concerned with information exchange as with relational work, and are to a great extent influenced by affective factors. The stereotypical opinion of Norwegians as "cold" and uninvolved conversationalist supports the view that for the participants of a conversational activity, affective aspects connected to the level of expectations are more important than the effectiveness of the process.

### 9.1.4 Non-native speakers' realisation of Norwegian ECP

The practices realising the Norwegian ECP studied in this dissertation represent either strategic skills of handling the discourse, or the ability to express one's attitude to the content of one's own and the interlocutor's utterances (*i.e.* modality) in a socially accepted way. The strategic skills involve signalling upcoming turns, maintaining comprehensibility and eliciting further talk from the interlocutor. Expressions of modality include conveying disagreement and reacting to the presuppositions inherent in the interlocutor's talk. As the analysis has shown, talk delivered by the non-native speakers differs to a varied extent from the practices employed by the native speakers. Practices as paraphrases, pro-repeats and echo-turns, studied in chapter 6, are almost exclusively used by the native speaker. Thus, the NNSs are bereft of an idiomatic Norwegian method of negotiating shared understanding, expressing empathy and initiating a harmonious topic

transition. This may, but need not necessarily mean that they are perceived as less supportive and less harmony-oriented than native speakers of Norwegian, a perception that again may, but need not, be true.

The analysis of practices for projecting upcoming turns by means of response particles has shown that although they are employed by non-native speakers, the usage is in some cases less motivated and seems somewhat random rather than fully intentional. The same can be inferred from the use of *or-inquiry*, that in the NNSs' talk is to some extent deviant from the native Norwegian usage. This leads to the conclusion that the function of response particles as means of signalling forthcoming actions, as well as the role of *or-inquiry*, is not fully transparent for the NNSs, a deduction that is not unexpected, as the great majority of meta-communicative skills are subconscious for native speakers and applied in a conventional way based in prior communicative experience.

The disagreement sequences delivered by the NNSs proved to be expressed as less mitigated and thus stronger statements than in the case of the NSs. The NNSs employed *wh-questions* rather frequently (considering the fact that they delivered considerably fewer inquiries in general), both for questioning their interlocutor's stance and asking for opinion. At the same time, viewpoints they delivered were accompanied by fewer hedging devices than it was the case for the NSs' talk. This fact may be connected to the lack of competence in applying for instance modal particles (as studied by Uri, 1999). However, the lack of mitigating expressions may also be grounded in the cultural constraints of the Polish ECP that does not stress moderation to such an extent the Norwegian model does.

Generally speaking, several of the Polish participants of the conversations have proved to possess a near native-like Norwegian competence, both when it comes to grammatical and interactional skills. Others exhibited numerous problems expressing themselves and applying the practices belonging to the Norwegian ECP. Although in the analysed extracts there are no

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instances of communicative failures caused by an unacceptable linguistic behaviour, such a situation is not completely unthinkable. For instance, the correct use of ECP may have impact on the NNSS' performance in oral language tests. It has been found (Dregelid, 2002) that NNSS' who deliver frequent confirming and clarifying yes/no-questions receive better marks on *Bergenstesten* than NNSS' producing short and direct wh-inquiries. Tenfjord (2006) justifies this fact by interpreting the NNSS' verbal behaviour as a compensation strategy, the use of which is treated as a sign of insufficient language competence. However, the lower score awarded to the speakers who do not use yes/no-question in the idiomatic Norwegian way can also display sensors' expectations towards specific (ethnic-specific?) conversational practices on the side of NNSS. Notably, one must also mention that a successful application of the Norwegian ECP by N2-users does not guarantee success in obtaining one's communicative goals. Still, it is one of the factors that influence achieving intended results in conversation.

Needless to say, one's linguistic behaviour belong to the features influencing his/her perception by others. The project design was such that it excluded the possibility of investigating what impression the participants made on each other, other than asking for their general opinion of the conversation, which was almost invariably positive (cf. comments on the self-report data, appendix 4). The impact of the communicative style on the relationship between the participants could only be analysed in case of a longitudinal study, and would require a very precise methodology for distinguishing the numerous factors that influence human relationships. It is also vital to note here that ethnic-specific differences in using discursive practices influence the process of native-non-native interactions both ways. Firstly, non-idiomatic reactions of the NNSS will be observed and interpreted by their native interlocutors, who will attach certain (positive or negative) values to the behaviours. However, the same process will also be performed by the NNSS as regards the NSS' talk. Both processes of attribution may lead to negative stereotypicalisation of a given person or of a whole ethnic group (cf. Hinkel,

1996). Such negative attribution can be observed for instance in case of Kubitsky (1987), which is a very severe pamphlet on Swedish culture and society.

## 9.2 Didactic implementation

This dissertation was written with the hope of contributing to Norwegian as second/foreign language (N2) methodology. The purpose was to identify the features of the verbal interaction which are vital for the process of conversing in Norwegian, and which the NNSs have difficulties implementing. The findings of this dissertation are meant to shed light on which phenomena N2-teaching needs to focus on, if the goal is developing communicative competence in Norwegian. It could be argued that ECP represents an idealised conversation, and that as such it is seldom fully realised in real life interactions. However, since the idealised native speaker is often the model for correct language use in pedagogical contexts (Hagen, 2006), the ideal conversation exhibited in the ECP can also serve as a model for training and obtaining communicative skills that comply with the requirements of the ECP in a given language.

It is justified to claim that the spoken language in general has been neglected and referred to as ungrammatical and incorrect in the second/foreign language (S/FL) classroom in general (Gustavsson, 1990). Naturally belonging to the field of spoken language, conversational skills suffered the same fate: "language teaching has tended to regard casual conversation as unstructured and therefore unteachable in any explicit sense" (Eggins&Slade, 1997: 315). However, the authors claim that there are several aspects of the speech activity of conversing that could be taught in S/FL classroom, including both the generic features (genres, cross-cultural comparisons), and the micro level of a clause, move and speech function (opening and sustaining moves, responses and rejoinders *etc.*).

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Based on the findings of this study, N2-methodology would undoubtedly profit from devoting attention to the Norwegian ECP and its requirements. The practices realising the Norwegian ECP that could be explicitly trained include:

- maintaining coherence by means of paraphrases, pro-repeats, and explicit coherence markers;
- mitigating one's opinions by means of various hedging devices;
- adopting idiomatic topic management practices, such as retardations, repetitions, reintroductions;
- using permissive expressions;
- signalling the upcoming turns by means of yes/no-responses to wh-questions and the presuppositions inherent in them;
- delivering yes/no-questions instead of wh-questions;
- using items from the Norwegian "cultural lexicon", such as proverbs, saying, idioms.

Still, one of the most prominent tasks for N2-teachers connected to the studied conversational phenomena would be to raise the learner's awareness of the existence of these phenomena and the importance of their implementation for successful communication in Norwegian. Howell (1982, after Gudykunst&Kim, 2000) claims that the awareness in relation to competence can be described as a four-phase process:

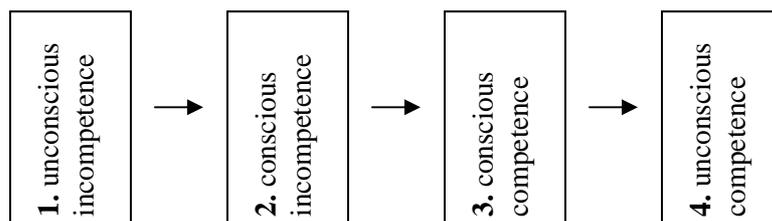


Figure 4. Relationship between awareness and competence, according to Howell (1982)

Even if achieving the fourth phase of the process, *i.e.* unconscious competence might seem somewhat unfeasible for S/FL-teaching, reaching the third or at least the second stage of the process is a goal obtainable for S/FL-learners. Yet, the task is plausible only if discursive practices receive sufficient attention in the teaching materials.

Among N2-teaching materials there is a serious lack of textbooks aimed at advanced learners in general, in particular focusing on developing communicative competence. Such textbooks exist for Swedish as a second language (Littman&Rosander, 2004); among numerous English language materials one can name for instance the MacMillan conversation series (Geddes&Sturtridge, 1992, 1993, 1994). It can hence be treated as a challenge for the Norwegian applied linguistics community to design a textbook that focuses predominantly on developing conversational skills. Such a textbook could be organised according to the principles of a discourse syllabus as suggested for instance by McCarthy&Carter (1994) or Riley (1985). Furthermore, it would undoubtedly profit from using authentic materials, such as audio- and video-recordings, which serve to raise the learners' awareness of the various discursive practices employed in the verbal interaction. The authenticity of language sources is especially vital for FL learners that do not have a daily contact with the real spoken language. However, in S/FL-textbooks there is a tendency not to include authentic linguistic data, a bias also observable in case of N2 teaching materials.

### 9.3 Further studies

There are several issues that could not be addressed in this study. The list of practices belonging to the Norwegian ECP that were not included in the analysis contains among others: the use of address forms<sup>124</sup>, ingressive sounds, the role of silence, interruptions, as well as prosodic features. These aspects of the verbal interaction can be perceived as prospective research topics, complementing the present study. In regard to the limitations that the project design imposed on the obtainable results, it would be advantageous to collect a control corpus of native-native interactions captured in a similar setting. At the same time, a comparison of the collected data with a corpus consisting of conversations between native speakers and users of Norwegian as a foreign language (e.g. Polish students of Norwegian) could also yield interesting results. In relation to Hall's concepts of HC- and LC-communication and the role of non-verbal signals in defining the concepts, it would be interesting to study the video recordings of the conversations, with regard to the role of gestures, eye-contact and facial expression. For practical reasons, the collected video recordings have not been used in the analysis for reasons other than analysing a few sequences that proved problematic to understand without including the non-verbal channel.

The study can be said to bear several implications, both of practical and theoretical nature. The practical applications of the study include the field of S/FL-teaching and learning, as well as cross-cultural management and professional communication, whereas the theoretical aspects of the study could be implemented in the field of intercultural communication.

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<sup>124</sup> Within this subject, studying the use of given names as address forms may prove interesting. In the collected conversation, given names appear very seldom, even in the case of conversations between life partners, where endearment terms could be expected. Moreover, one of the Polish participants (9F) uses her interlocutor's given name as an involvement token and persuasive strategy, which does not seem fully idiomatic Norwegian. However, a detailed study of the phenomenon is required to verify this intuition.

In relation to the postulated need of improving course materials for N2-teaching, it would undeniably be beneficial to reflect on the position of the ECP within the notion of communicative competence. Such a reflection would also bear implications for language planning, in which achieving communicative competence is a frequently stated, yet somewhat blurred goal. State-driven N2-teaching and testing (for instance the previously mentioned *Bergenstesten*) would undoubtedly profit from gaining more insight into the nature of conversational skills that the N2-learners need to acquire. Additional epistemic value of the study involves raising the awareness of the existence and features of the Norwegian ECP among the native speakers in general, and N2-teachers in particular. These tasks are seen upon by the author as a vital complement to the present study.

With respect to the growing number of Polish professionals constituting a workforce in Norway, the study can prove valuable for professional communication and cross-cultural management. Svennevig&Isaksson (2006) is an example of a study analysing the impact of cultural values and communication strategies on business contacts between Nordic and post-Soviet countries. This study shows that between the studied countries there are considerable differences in the importance of factors, such as establishing personal relationships and intimacy as the basis for trust. With the growing number of Polish immigrants in Norway, an emergent need for insight into the differences between Polish and Norwegian communication pattern can be assumed.

The theoretical implications of the study include contributing to the description of intercultural communication and equipping the field with a tool for depicting ethnic-specific practices. The suggested structure of the ECP is such that it requires prior cultural studies in order for the frames to be identified. The model would undoubtedly profit if it included certain cultural aspects (for instance cultural values as measured by Hofstede, 1994) and thus allowed linguists to avoid the intriguing, yet time-consuming research within the field of culture studies. In this respect, interactive constraints as suggested by Kim (1993) seem highly promising, if elaborated on and extended to

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embrace other parameters than individualistic/collectivistic. A preliminary suggestion for improving Kim's model by adding constraints connected to Hofstede's (1994) dimensions of national cultures have been presented in chapter 2.3.4, and confirmed in the analysis of Norwegian ECP, which makes the suggestion promising for further research. If the field of intercultural communication is to deal with the process of achieving understanding between cultures, it would undoubtedly benefit from gaining a firmer footing in the linguistic analyses of ethnic-specific features of oral communication, not only when it comes to the macrolevel of discourse, but also as regards the mesolevel of communication patterns connected at the same time to the microlevel of conversational practices.

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## Appendix 1

Transcription conventions (following the so called Jeffersonian Transcription system, for a description see Psathas&Anderson, 1990).

### Transcription symbols:

.	short pause
(.7)	the length of the pause (below one second)
(1s)	the length of the pause (one second)
(1.4)	the length of the pause (above one second)
:	colon indicates a lengthened vowel
(-)	indecipherable talk
[	overlap/utterances starting simulatenously
=	latching
>>	a turn continued in the next line
s-	item interrupted
°hochzeit°	degree signs indicate quiet talk
FRITID	capital letters indicate stress place on a single word or syllable
•har vi•	“•” signs indicate a sentence delivered in a loud voice
.ja	inbreath „yes”
.hhh	audible inbreath
heh(e)	laughter (the number of syllables stands for length)
?	a clear rising intonation
((telefon))	non-verbal sounds
(ser på tv)	activity during talking/extra comments
/p/	this sign indicates items from languages other than Norwegian /p/ Polish; /de/ German
S1	a name of a place mentioned in the conversation
F1	a name of a company mentioned in the conversation

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**Personal data** – all participants have been given random Norwegian names; all geographical names that might have been revealing for the participants' identity have been exchanged with S+number; all company names that might have been revealing for the participants' identity have been exchanged with F+number.

**Translation method:** it has been chosen not to translate word-for-word what is being said, in order to make the transcription easier to read. Hence, in the translations the general meaning of utterances is rendered. However, some lexical and grammatical errors that appear in the discourse have also been rendered, in a way that does not inhibit comprehension.

## Appendix 2

The questions on which the interviews with the Polish participants were based. The interview was conducted in Polish, the questions are translated to English for the purpose of the dissertation.

### About the conversation

1. How did you feel throughout the conversation? Was it a pleasant conversation?
2. Do you have an impression that it was a natural conversation? Did the presence of a microphone make any difference to you?
3. Do you remember any problems or misunderstanding? What do you think might have caused them?
4. Did you at any time have an impression that you're being misunderstood by your interlocutor?
5. Who of you was more active in the conversation?
6. Do you remember what you talked about? Why did you choose those topics?

About Norwegian oral communication

1. How do you judge your command of Norwegian?
2. Which problems do you most often encounter while talking to Norwegians? Are those mainly problems with understanding or with being understood?
3. Do you remember a situation when your behaviour did not comply with expectations (for example you said something considered unexpected/wrong)?
4. How would you judge the Norwegian conversation style compared with Polish? Why
5. How often do you talk to Norwegians? In which situations? What do you most often talk about?

About learning Norwegian

1. When did you come to Norway? For what purpose?
2. Did you know Norwegian before you came here? Where did you learn it? How do you judge the influence of the schooling you received in Poland on your Norwegian command?
3. Which language courses did you attend in Norway? How do you judge their influence on your Norwegian command?
4. Which textbooks did you use? Did you use any other learning materials?
5. What's your education? Do you work in Norway in your field of expertise?
6. Other additional information about your stay in Norway (where did you live, contact with dialect etc.)

### Appendix 3

The questionnaire for the Norwegian participants of the study.

1. Hvordan følte du deg i løpet av samtalen? Synes du det var en hyggelig samtale?  
**How did you feel throughout the conversation? Was it a pleasant conversation?**
2. Har du inntrykk av at det var en naturlig samtale? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?  
**Do you have an impression that it was a natural conversation? Why/why not?**
3. Synes du samtalen hadde god flyt? Kan du huske noen problemer eller misforståelser? Hva tror du forårsaket dem?  
**Would you consider the conversation fluent? Do you remember any problems or misunderstanding? What do you think might have caused them?**
4. Hvem av dere var mest aktiv i samtalen?  
**Who of you was more active in the conversation?**
5. Følte du at du måtte tilpasse språket ditt til din samtalepartners norskkunnskaper? Hva forandret du på?  
**Did you feel you had to adjust your language to your interlocutors Norwegian skills? What did you try to change?**
6. Hvordan bedømmer du din samtalepartners generelle kompetanse i norsk?  
**How do you judge your interlocutor's general command of Norwegian?**
7. Snakker du ofte med utlendinger på norsk? Hva tror du er mest problematisk for dem i samtaler med nordmenn?  
**Do you often speak Norwegian with foreigners? What do you think is the most problematic for them in conversations with Norwegians?**

## Appendix 4

### Preliminary notes on the self-report data.

The author is aware of the flaws in the questionnaires' design, which are due to insufficient experience in collecting sociolinguistic data. Some of the questions could have indicated a preference for obtaining positive answers (e.g. question 1 and 2 in the Norwegian questionnaire). Therefore, the self-report data collected after the recording has only been used as an additional source of information, and only in a few cases. Still, the author sees it as necessary to present at least some preliminary comments on the results.

#### NSS' questionnaires

Generally speaking, the NSSs participating in the conversations gave a positive feedback on the conversation. All of them said that they felt it was a pleasant dialogue (*hyggelig/koselig*). Yet when it comes to the setting, some of the NSSs mention that they felt obliged to talk, so the choice of topics can be somewhat artificial. This was especially the case in conversations between life partners. Others, however, claim that they chose topics they otherwise would have chosen in a conversation with their interlocutor and thus perceive the conversations as natural. Interestingly enough, this was also the case for participants who did not know one another before the recording, which means that they see the recorded conversations as typical examples of a "get-to-know-one-another"-talk. This view is shared by their non-native interlocutors. When it comes to experiencing problems and showing initiative, the answers vary. Although the majority of the NSSs claim that they did not adjust their Norwegian to a significant degree, they admit that they possibly spoke slower and clearer. The same participants mention the pace of spoken language and dialects as the most problematic features of Norwegian for NNSs to master.

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### NNSs' questionnaires

The NNSs are stricter when it comes to judging their N2-command than their native interlocutors. Apart from that, they generally share the NNSs' perception of the conversation as pleasant, although to some extent artificial.

When it comes to comments about differences between spoken interaction in Norwegian and Polish, the opinions vary. Some of the participants do not see any general features and attribute the differences to personality: "depends on whom you talk to" (5 participants). Others however point to the following features of Norwegian conversations as different from the Polish pattern:

1. limited non-verbal communication (e.g. gestures);
2. slow pace of the conversation, longer pauses, which is associated with lack of emotional involvement;
3. topics - in Norway one talks about the weather, holidays, dialects and cabins (*hytte*), whereas in Poland people talk about politics and problems. Moreover, one talks only when there is a need to do so, not for the sake of talking;
4. even though Norwegians seem more open to begin with, it is difficult to get past the barrier of a superficial acquaintance ("maybe they smile, but they are very closed", as one participant states).

At the same time, only one of the participants seemed to attach clearly negative values to the Norwegian behaviour as she describes it. A great majority of the NNSs who said there is a difference in communication patterns in Poland and Norway mitigated their opinions by suggesting that such behaviour is normal and could also be observed in other countries, or offered positive statements immediately after the critical ones, as is counterbalancing them.