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Editors

Monica Heller
Richard J. Watts

Mouton de Gruyter
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Style and Social Identities

Alternative Approaches to
Linguistic Heterogeneity

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Peter Auer

Mouton de Gruyter
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Chapter 4

Being a 'colono' and being 'daitsch' in Rio Grande do Sul: Language choice and linguistic heterogeneity as a resource for social categorisation*

Peter Auer, Jacinta Arnhold, and Cintia Bueno-Aniola

1. Style and identities in interaction

Choosing a certain way of speaking has social meaning. In recent years, this basic insight of sociolinguistics has been reformulated by many researchers using the concepts of (communicative, social) style and (social) identities (see the introduction to this volume for further details and bibliographical references). A 'certain way of speaking' can be called a (verbal) *style*, if its features are perceived and interpreted in a holistic way by the members of a given group or community. It has social meaning and therefore becomes a *social* style if this interpretation links it to social categories (such as ethnic, gender, age, or a certain milieu) such that speaking in a certain way is seen as an index to this category. Ascribing category membership of this type to a person, or displaying one's own membership in this category, is what we mean by social identity work.

In this paper, we will investigate social styles and identity work in the German/Portuguese bilingual 'colonial zone' in Southern Brazil. We will refer to language choice and code alternation as well as the varieties of German and Portuguese used in order to characterise these styles, but also to communicative (rhetorical) strategies employed to formulate an argument, a complaint, a problem, etc., in an institutional context. One of the points we wish to make is that bilingualism is more than a mental disposition or a set of cognitive abilities. It is a resource for constructing meaning, in two ways. On the one hand, bilingualism can appear in interaction as code-switching, by which we mean the juxtaposition of two semiotic (in our case, linguistic) systems in order to create local meaning in conversation. For instance, code-switching may contrast different participant constellations, different verbal activities, different modalities (keys) such as ironic and serious talk, etc. But on the other hand, the use of two languages

(or in some cases, the lack of using two languages where this is expected) can also display a speaker's belonging to a certain social group, i.e. it may index category membership. Bilingualism is therefore both a resource for creating conversational structure and for doing identity work in interaction.

The identity-relevant categories we will be concerned with are on the one hand an ethnic category ('German'/'daitsch')¹, and on the other hand the economic/cultural category 'colono'. Although these category labels are never used explicitly in our data, we claim that they are relevant as indexes to the participants' identities in the data we want to look at.

Before analysing the data in more detail, it may be useful to recall the basic principles upon which the identities-in-interaction approach rests; they have been formulated by Antaki and Widdicombe (1998: 3) as follows:

- (i) Having an identity means "being cast into a *category with associated characteristics* or features"; incumbency in this category may both be claimed by a participant to an interaction and ascribed to him/her by co-participants
- (ii) Identity-relevant activities in interaction are "indexical and *occasioned*", i.e., they cannot be understood unless their embedding into the conversational and larger context at hand is taken into account
- (iii) Identity as an occasioned and achieved category incumbency needs to be *made relevant* in an interaction in order to become consequential in/for it; this holds for brought along and brought about identities. In accordance with ethnomethodological principles, the analyst's task is to reconstruct this making relevant of a category. It need not imply the overt naming of an identity-relevant category though but can be achieved through symbolic means.
- (iv) 'Having an identity' is *consequential for interaction*, since the respective category is linked to category bound expectations of action; this consequentiality may become visible in a shift of footing of the interaction; however, it may also lead to the somewhat trivial consequence that 'nothing special' happens precisely because co-membership is established.
- (v) This consequentiality opens up the possibility for the analyst to reconstruct from those category bound activities ("people's exploitation of the structures of conversation") the identity-relevant category in question.

Our primary aim is to discover how certain linguistic 'variables' (or rather, their constellations) can index social categories and do the identity work described by Antaki and Widdicombe. For the sociolinguist, this implies that the variation space is defined, not so much within a language, but within a (group of) speaker's linguistic repertoire. However, this variability is not of interest in itself but only to the degree that its symbolic potencies are actually exploited by social actors (consciously or unconsciously) in order to present their own social persona in a given social context.

After a short introduction to the field of inquiry (section 2) we will discuss three speakers' different social styles and their interactional embedding (recipient feedback) in a bilingual, rural context in Rio Grande do Sul (section 3). We will show how these social styles can come to index the categories of a Portuguese of German descent and of a *colono*.

2. The Germano-Brazilians in RS as a field of sociolinguistic inquiry

A large area in the southernmost state of Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul (RS), is socially, economically and culturally shaped (and looks upon itself as being shaped) by settlements of European labour immigrants, mainly from Germany and Italy. We will focus here on the German immigrants who arrived first in the 1820s and today form the largest German-speaking community outside Europe, with several hundred thousand active speakers.

As in most immigrant communities, membership is not categorical but rather graded in subtle ways. Among the explicit grading devices observed among our informants and reflected in their system of social categorisations is a difference between "Germans" (*Daitsche*) and people "of German descent" (*descendência alemã: mai vatter wòr Daitscher...*), which reflects a way of positioning oneself closer to or more distant from the 'core' of the community. This gradedness of membership is also reflected in and achieved by the use of symbolic means which express Germanness; apart from a number of resources which could be called folkloristic (such as house-building and house-keeping, folk dances, folk music, cooking, certain sports such as bowling or shooting rifles, fairs such as *Oktoberfest* imitations), an important resource here is the language varieties used, including the specific way in which Brazilian Portuguese and German are spoken and in which they are intertwined. The (graded) social (membership) category *Daitsch* is complemented in the area by the category *Italie-*

ner (Italians) (the two being the core of the secondary category *imigrante*); both *Daitsche* and *Italiener* are opposed to the category 'Brazilian' (*Brazilianer*, *brazileiros*) which is used by the 'Germans' as a residual (non-ethnic) category, i.e. for all Brazilians of non-(recent) immigrant background (cf. Bueno-Aniola 2007).

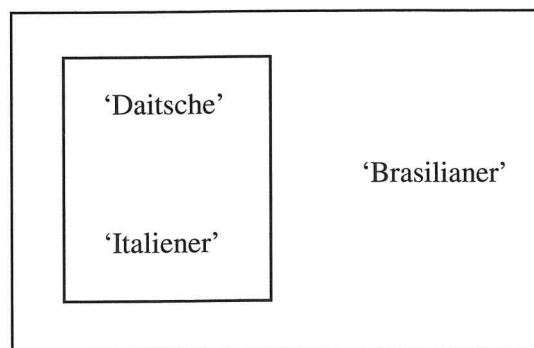


Figure 1.

To understand the following discussion of linguistic choices and their interpretation, it is necessary to introduce some background information. The social and economic success of the Germano-Brazilians in Brazilian society has been characterised by a tension between what could be called an assimilationist and an autarkistic/segregationist path to economic welfare. The autarkistic way (which should not be confused with a separatist movement, which it never was) counts on autonomy and solidarity within the ethnic group which is more or less sharply delimited against the other groups (in particular against the *Brasilianer*). It was the traditional way of reaching (some moderate) prosperity in the peasant colonies in the 19th century which could not survive without a system of mutual assistance; it reached its climax early in the 20th century. What made it possible was a relatively uniform population of German colonists with a similar social and cultural background (i.e. small farmers, craftsmen and industrial workers from various parts of Germany) and with similar political and economic interests. Of course, the German settlements have always depended on trade with Brazilian society, particularly within the state of Rio Grande do Sul, and although the 'Germans' were basically autarkistic in orientation, they were never autarkous in an economic sense of the word. However, they organised their own infra-structure, originally centred around the Protestant and to a lesser

degree Catholic parishes and their priests, who often also set up a community-run, German language school. Until about the time of the first world war, the owners of the so-called private (in contrast to state-owned) colonies also played a role in this creation of a 'German' infrastructure. In the early 20th century, a cooperativist movement was established, leading to the foundation of 'German' agricultural cooperatives and cooperative banks.

The viability of the autarkistic path to economic welfare was reduced if not blocked by the fascist-socialist *estado novo* of Getulio Vargas in the 1930s, which had the effect of extending the reach of the state administration into those parts of the Brazilian society which up to then had been organised and structured in a largely self-administered way; this included the so-called immigration zone in the south. The formation of the Brazilian nation-state under Vargas therefore led to the forced disruption of 'German' autarky in the South of Brazil, inter alia to the closing down of all German-language, private schools, and a ban on languages other than Portuguese. Part of the programme of the state penetration of society was the foundation of unions (*sindicatos*) which have survived up to the present day. One of them, the union of the peasant workers, which also subsumes small land-owners, is the institution from which the data presented and discussed in the following section were drawn.

Despite the disruption of the German autarkistic infrastructure in Southern Brazil, the segregationist stance has not disappeared completely; up to the present day, some of the German-origin families live in remote areas of the hinterland in relatively homogeneous, monoethnic groups with restricted contacts with main-stream Portuguese-speaking Brazilian society. They form the core of the popular stereotype of the 'German colono' (cf. Bueno-Aniola 2007). These settlers/peasants mainly survive and rely on ethnically founded community bonds. However, their numbers have been greatly reduced over the last approximately 70 years.

The autarkistic position never was the only one though. From the very beginning of the immigration another, much smaller, more assimilationist group of Germans settled mainly in the developing urban centres such as Porto Alegre, the state capital. They contributed in important ways to the establishment of commerce and industry in the area, but quickly gave up their German language and culture (despite some German cultural centres in Porto Alegre which survived until the 30s), such that Porto Alegre is today a monolingual Portuguese-speaking city. What is characteristic for the last decades is a shift from the autarkistic to the assimilationist position by many Brazilians of German descent also in the hinterland (*interior*) of

RS. The shift is due in the last instance to the fact that the German peasant settlements in Southern Brazil have not been a 100% success story after all. It was not only due to the *estado novo* that the German settlements were in danger of decaying economically, but also to the over-exploitation of the soil, an unskilled and untrained labour force lacking in agricultural competences in a climate and under conditions which diverged considerably from those in Middle Europe, and unsuitable marketing conditions for the agricultural goods produced. One of the consequences of these economic difficulties which set in as early as in the late 19th century, was a continuous process of colonial migration by settlers of German descent within Brazil, first (and starting in the same period) to the north of the old (primary) colonies within the state of Rio Grande do Sul, later into the adjoining Brazilian states in the north. Another consequence was a shift away from pure agriculture; many Germano-Brazilians today work in and/or own small factories, and, particularly in some of the primary colonies (to which we will turn below) in the tourism industry. These economic developments have made the previous forms of autarkistic life obsolete. A third possible consequence was the abandonment of the colonies and migration into the larger cities, a pan-Brazilian process which is perhaps less dramatic in the South than in other parts of the country (since the economic situation in the countryside on the whole is not bad) but nonetheless severely affects some of the areas in which we did our field-work (particularly in the secondary/daughter colonies, e.g. in São Paulo das Missões).

As these very superficial remarks already make it clear, the distinction between autarkistic and assimilationist stances maps onto a second distinction which is of central importance to an understanding of Brazilian society in general, and to that of the 'German' settlements in particular: the distinction between *urbanity* and *rurality*, or between city and hinterland (*interior*). The more one advances into the interior of RS, the less prosperous the population becomes. This is also an ideological issue. As already mentioned, the stereotypes which the non-immigrant Brazilians in Rio Grande do Sul (as well as most Italian-origin immigrants) share about 'the Germans' mainly target the *colonos* (peasants) of German origin in the 'innermost interior' of the country (cf. Bueno-Aniola 2007). These stereotypes are not very positive, ranging from character traits such as being stubborn (*teimoso*), impolite and unsophisticated (*grosso*), to outer characteristics such as being badly dressed and groomed, and lacking in hygiene standards. Of course, these stereotypes are also known by the Germano-Brazilians; for instance, a regular radio comedy programme in Nova

Petrópolis, the town from which the following data originate, recurrently plays with the stereotype of the German *colono* who hates to take showers in a jokular manner. (The programme is produced for the German-speaking population.) It is not surprising then that there is a certain social pressure on the previous autarkistic population of German descent to turn to a more assimilationist stance.

In this paper, we will look at linguistic acts of identity in a specific institutional context in the town of Nova Petrópolis, a town in which we did extensive field work in the year 2000. The institution is the local office of the union of rural workers.

Nova Petrópolis is a town of roughly 17,000 inhabitants the large majority (90%) of which is of German descent. It is located some 100 km to the north of Porto Alegre in the *Serra Gaúcha*, a hilly area in one of the earliest German settlement areas and today an area which is attractive for tourists because of its mixture of immigrant culture and scenic beauty. In many ways, Nova Petrópolis is one of those places in which the conflicts between the segregationist/autarkistic and the assimilationist positions become most acute. On the one hand, Nova Petrópolis is the first stronghold of 'German' language, culture and economic strength one encounters when one moves from the capital into the interior. In Nova Petrópolis, the dominating social groups are almost exclusively 'German'; and the town is generally perceived by its inhabitants (of German descent or not) and by the outsiders as 'German'. The 'Brazilians' are seen as a threat by most 'Germans', and there is a clear tendency to keep them out of power positions. On the other hand, and counteracting these segregationist tendencies, the economy of the region no longer rests on agriculture alone. Although the countryside around Nova Petrópolis (its immediate *interior*) is still very much agricultural, there is also a considerable number of small industries (mainly leather and knitwear) which depend on outside labour, basically of non-German ethnic background. A somewhat half-hearted commitment to tourism also reflects a certain ambiguity towards letting the town become 'spoiled' by large scale ('Brazilian') tourism. The town is thus ideologically speaking conservative, but it also presents the image of a 'modern', up-to-date place which is integrated into the Brazilian (or at least Riograndese) economy. Although Nova Petrópolis is linked to the ethnic category '*daitsch* [German]', the town has its own hinterland, i.e. the differences between *colonos* and town-people cross-cuts the ethnic distinction between "Germans" and "Brazilians".

Within this context, the *sindicato dos trabalhadores rurais* plays an important role by catering for the social and economic needs of the small farmers in the area. One of the main reasons for which the *colonos* come to town is in fact the *sindicato*. In a way, it mediates between the autarkistic and the assimilationist position, or between the Brazilian state/economy and the peasants of the interior. To the European eye, the *sindicato* presents an mixture of state welfare, political organ and remnants of the cooperativist movement unusual for a union. The colonists become members of the *sindicato* (and pay membership fees). For those fees, they can claim social and economic benefits. The economic benefits are basically related to buying agricultural materials such as seeds from the *sindicato* and selling one's products through the *sindicato* on the market. This is partly done within a pre-monetary exchange system (*troca-troca*: 'barter'). The social benefits are perhaps even more important; they extend to all sorts of social welfare, starting from the *posto de saúde* (a general practitioner's office) to advice-giving about the state administered social security system. In general, the economic, legal and administrative system of the Brazilian state is translated by the *sindicato* for the colonists who in turn to the *sindicato* in order to find solutions for their various problems.

Although the *sindicatos* historically speaking have not originated from the traditional Germano-Brazilian infrastructure (and are not related to the cooperative movement of the early 20th century), the local office is today considered by the Germans in the *município* of Nova Petrópolis as one of *their* institutions. While supported by the state, the *sindicato* is not looked upon as a state institution. This is also reflected in its language policy: while state institutions are always monolingual Portuguese, the *sindicato* is thoroughly bilingual. All the employees we were able to observe and tape-record were perfectly fluent in both languages. They preferred to speak Portuguese with some German code-switching when among themselves, but they adapted easily and freely to the German language choices of their customers, many of whom were clearly dominant in German. These employees of the *sindicato* were thus ideal brokers; not only in a linguistic sense, but also in a cultural sense. Since most of them had grown up in the interior themselves, they knew the colonists' life from their own experience. On the other hand, they had become acquainted with the state administration through their training and studies.

3. Displays and ascriptions of identities in the *sindicato*

In this section, we will present three farmer-clients at the *sindicato* office in somewhat more detail, each of whom uses a specific social-communicative style, and each whom is responded to differently by the employees. The three customers can be ordered linguistically by the way in which they combine German and Portuguese – from a next-to-monolingual German mode to a next-to-monolingual Portuguese mode over a bilingual style which combines the two languages by switching and mixing. However, the issue of language choice is just one of a co-occurring set of linguistic and non-linguistic communicative features which includes the selection of linguistic resources from the German and the Portuguese domain of the linguistic repertoire of the community, but also prosody, posture and gesture. The deployment and interactional relevance of the resulting verbal-communicative styles will be analysed sequentially, i.e. by looking at how the interaction unfolds in terms of the subject matters dealt with. In order to analyse identities-in-interaction, the sequential method is particularly suited since it allows (and requires) taking into account the way in which the representatives of the institutions (the employees at the *sindicato*) respond to the client.

In the institutional context of the *sindicato*, another set of identity-relevant categories must be added to ethnic ('German') and economic-cultural ones ('colono'). These are the situated categories of 'employee' and 'client'. As we shall see below, linguistic choices – particularly the choice of Portuguese vs. German dialect – are sensitive to the selection of this category pair which contrasts with the non-institutional category-pair 'German'/'Brazilian' but can also combine with it.

(Socio-)linguistic (and in general, stylistic) choices become meaningful by being opposed paradigmatically to other, alternative choices. It is therefore necessary to know the linguistic repertoire of the community in order to be able to understand the meaning of the choices. In the research area, the base dialects brought along from Germany have largely disappeared in favour of a dialect koiné which is often called *Hunsrückisch* (from a mountain area in Germany from where many of the first settlers originated), sometimes simply *Daitsch* (cf. Auer 2005). This koiné has next to completely absorbed the dialects of the Rhineland, of Silesia, of Pomerania, of Swabia, etc., which also used to be spoken in the area. However, it varies internally on a basilect-acrolect continuum, the latter being closer to standard German. The acrolectal form clearly carries more prestige than the

basilectal one. The leading classes, to the extent that they speak German in public (and also the employees in the *sindicato*) use this acrolectal form.

Brazilian Portuguese is spoken by all Brazilians of German descent today; however, their Portuguese varies between a speech style which is indistinguishable from the one used in Porto Alegre over one in which local *gaúcho* elements of rural (non-immigrant) Rio Grande do Sul speech are present, to one which clearly betrays their German language background. It is a small set of phonological and phonetic features which is responsible for this German accent.² Given the negative attitudes of the monolingual Brazilians towards these features, it is justified to call them basilectal as well. But note that the terms acrolectal and basilectal refer to the overt prestige of the variants on the 'official market'; their covert prestige may be quite different.

A customer who comes to the *sindicato* can exploit this whole variation space provided of course that s/he has it as her or his disposal. The employees will understand all variants. The social semantics of these variants differ widely, however.

3.1. Client 1: The seeds

In our first example, a man, presumably in his fifties (k1), has come to the *sindicato* office. He wants to exchange maize seeds of the type 'Agromer' 303 which he was given by mistake, for those of type 'Agromer' 122 which he had originally ordered. There are three employees in the office; one of them (a2) serves the client while the others enter and leave the space behind the counter, sometimes taking part in the interaction between A2 and the client as well.

(Sindicato 1)

(the recording starts when interaction between the client and the employee of the *sindicato* who serves him has just passed beyond the initial greeting sequence, the identification of the client by name, and a first problem exposure. Portuguese underlined.)

01 k1: *die wollt ich um*
'those I wanted to ex-'

02 *die harre ich jo verkehrd äh*
'I had them (i.e., the seeds) by mistake uhm'

03 *han die geSCHIGGT;*
'they sent them'

04 a2: *sim*
'yes'

05 k1: *jetzt (.) muss ich de dreihunderddrei (.) nomme*
brInge,
'now I have to bring the 303 again (=back)'

06 *GREcht ich nomme hunnertzwoienzwAnzich;*
'(and) I would get the 122 again'

07 a2: *hast dreihunnertdrei GUT;*
'then you have a credit on the 303'

08 k1: *agrME glob (1.0)*
'Agromer' I think'

09 *de agroMER; (.)*
'the 'Agromer''

10 *die dun ich dann Omdrogge; (.)*
'so I exchange them'

11 a2: ((3.0, looks down on his desk and starts working
in his files; in the meantime, A1 approaches the
front desk and sits down next to a2))

12 k1: *do hon ich jetzt zwoi naije-*
'I have two new ones (=seeds) now'

13 *die sore wärre gut fer SIlo (gewe).*
'they say they are good for (making) silo' ((i.e., for growing crop to
be stored for feeding the cattle))

14 a2: <<p>hmhm,>

15 k1: *(wollt ich mal prove uf mal)*
'(I wanted to try them')
((during this turn, K1 and A1 establish eye con-
tact))

16 a1: *pa SORde?*
'some sorts?'

17 k1: *die harre mer n SORT geb,> (.)*
'they had given me a sort'

18 *zwoi päck,*
'two small sacks'

19 *ich weeß net was fer SENN das do. (0.5)*
'(I don't know) what kind they are'

- 20 a1: agr[oMER?
 21 a2: [agroMER?
 'Agromer?'
 22 k1: Ijo; (.)
 'yes'
 23 die (woll'd ich) agroMER; (.)
 '(I wanted) them, agromer'
 24 ich han noch ni: gePLANZT;=
 'I have never planted (them)'
 25 a2: =cê=e=associado?
 'are you a member?'
 26 k1: Ijo.
 'yes'
 27 awwer die so:re die wärre gUet fer sillo.
 'but they say they were good for the silo'
 28 a2: ich da(ch)t du wollst misst verzich kilo dann
 hon.
 'I thought you wanted had to have 40 kilo then'
 29 k1: ha? (-)
 'sorry?'
 30 <<f>Ijo.>
 'yes'
 31 a2: verzich;=
 'forty'
 32 k1: =Ijo.
 'yes'
 33 [de ande midedot Omdrogge.
 'the others exchange with those'
 34 a? [()
 35 a3: ((a3 enters the room and passes by)) (mor[gen)
 'morning'
 36 a?: [()
 37 a2: hunnertzwaiezwanz[ich.
 'one hundred and twenty two'
 38 k1: [Ijo. (3.0)
 'yes'
 39 ich hatt ai (.)
 'I had'
 40 pur nekst von denne i han'=
 'very similar to those I have'
 41 sen awwa net so vill KOMM;=
 'but not so many came'

- 42 hon ich net so vill gri:d;
 'I didn't get so much'
 43 a3: das DOO jahr woor des (.)
 'this year it was'
 44 k1: AH
 45 a3: das DOO joor woor das schE:jn gewes (.) med de
 (pflanzmilje). (-)
 'this year it was fine with the seed maize'
 46 sen (schu) zu we:nich [(komm von)
 'too few came of ()'
 47 k1: [wesst (.)ich hatt (.)
 fenef päck (.) von denne bestellt gehat. (.) ()
 'you know I had ordered five packs of those'
 48 a3: vleicht grie me ja nEchsch
 [jahr meh <<p>()>
 'maybe we will get more next year ()'
 49 k1: [ijo
 'yes'
 50 a3: awwer das do: jahr sen se schon NÄCHST nommo AAL. (.)
 'but this year they are next to gone already'
 51 un me sen erscht im okTO:ber;
 'and it is only october'
 52 ((2.0; K1 signs a form for a2))
 53 k1: NE: das dO: joor wimmo GLAICH. (.)
 'no this year I will right now'
 54 vo:rjes jahr sen ich hingang= (.)
 'last year I went there'
 55 ba die la:d dennere abgemach;=
 'to the people (and) took off' ((=peeled)) (some of their maize)
 56 das woor puur POTT.
 'this was pure crap'
 57 hon ich re geplanst wo ich kO:f hat=
 'I planted some which I had bought'
 58 sollst mo sin wi das schEjne milje wor(d)=
 'you should see like they became good maize'
 59 anre ere PUUR ((makes a disdainful hand ges-
 ture)); (.)
 'those of the others just'
 60 [so STECKcha [geb;
 [((makes hand gesture indicating the height of
 the maize))
 'became little sticks'
 61 a2: [hast de hast de pack (.) wo hAs de pack?
 'have you have you your sacks where do you have your sacks'

- 62 k1: im KARre
'in the car'
- 63 a2: kommst ai: (.) unne (durchrinn dann).
'come through downstairs to the back then'
- 64 k1: Ijo.
'yes'
- 65 a2: driwwe in de FUNd[os].
'over there into the back entrance'
- 66 k1: [tá bom.
'o.k.'
- ((Customer leaves the room.))

In the first 11 lines of the extract, the customer (k1) and one of the employees of the *sindicato* (a2) are involved in a business transaction. K1 has stated that he wants to exchange (maize) seeds. The deontic formulation in 05/06 suggests that he has talked to somebody else before who instructed him to bring along the wrong seeds (type 303, line 05: 'I have to bring them') and that he would then get the right ones (note the conjunctive *grecht* = std.Germ. *kriegte* 'would I become' in line 06). The employee confirms that he will get a credit for the returned seeds (line 07), and the customer adds the brand name about which he is not entirely sure (cf. the hedged phrase in line 08). He concludes by formulating once more his intention to exchange the seeds, and the employee starts to fill in the forms, averting gaze and looking down at his paperwork. Two things are noteworthy up to this point. First, the client selects German (dialect) for the interaction. He insists on this language choice although the employee's *sim* in line 04 can be heard to invite either a change to Portuguese or a mixed language use. Second, the communicative style which K1 employs is highly 'elliptical', i.e. it depends on background knowledge and inferencing on the part of the employee. For instance, his lines 02 *die harre ich jo verkehrd* ... 'I had ... them by mistake' and 03 *hunnerdzwöienZWANzich harrich* '122 I had' both leave the predicate (inferrable: 'been given' and 'ordered') implicit, since the main verb is lacking. In 08/09, it is unclear whether the brand-name *Agromer* refers to the seeds received or those ordered, or both. But note that neither the fact that the customer insists on German dialect, nor his implicitness lead to major problems for the interaction: it proceeds smoothly, and the customer gets what he wants.

In the following section of the interaction, K1 introduces a different topic which is unrelated to the business at hand but linked to the topic of the seeds. K1 in fact attempts to start a chat while he has to wait until A2 has completed the paper work, and since A2 is not available as a recipient (he is still looking down at the papers), he after some initial problems manages to establish eye contact with another employee of the *sindicato* (from line 15 onwards), who has just entered the room and sat down behind the counter, next to A2. The customer talks about two different types of (maize) seeds (12) which he apparently has tried out (15) because they are said to be particularly well suited for the production of cattle feed (13). However, the chat is not successful, presumably because of referential difficulties linked to K1's once more highly elliptical and implicit way of speaking. After a rather non-committed continuer in line 14, A1 requests a clarification (16) which the customer is unable to give; neither does it become clear who gave him the seeds (17: 'they gave me...' with unpersonal 'they') nor which seeds exactly he got (19). Intermingled with questions the first employee asks about the seeds the customer wants to exchange (20–23) and about the customer's membership in the *sindicato*, the customer tries to continue the topic of the chat (lines 24, 27), but there are no further contributions from A1 (or A2). The chat has failed, K1 has not received uptake from either of the employees. From the point of view of language choice, note that the employee switches into Portuguese for the question about K1's membership in line 25. This is a typical code-switching which contextualises the employee's incumbency in the institutional category of the *sindicato*'s employee, and thereby invites the co-participant's categorisation as a member of the opposite category, that of the client. K1 does not accept this use of code-switching in order to re-contextualise the situation, however, but once again answers in German dialect (25–26).

The following sequence (28–38) once more deals with technical details of the exchange of seeds, this time concerning the quantity of seeds the customer wants to take with him (40 kg). At this point, the third employee (A3) enters the room and greets the customer in passing (35). A1 now makes a second attempt to initiate small talk, this time with A3. He starts with what may be heard as a very weak complaint (39–42) that he didn't get as much seed as he wanted. A3 responds with a general remark about how good this year's harvest was (45: 'it was a good year for seed maize'), but that the *sindicato* got too little seed to satisfy the demand. K1 repeats that he had ordered five sacks (47) (and presumably didn't get them), and A3 suggests that the next year the *sindicato* may have a better supply, but

that this year the stocks were already sold out almost entirely although it was only October (spring in Brazil) (50–51). While A2 hands over a form to be signed by the customer (which presumably marks the end of the official business transaction), K1 starts a third attempt to embark on small talk. He tells a story about how it pays to buy proper seed maize from the *sindicato* instead of growing it oneself. Once more, his style is elliptical and can only be understood on the basis of a good deal of contextual inferencing. Line 53 pre-announces the point of the story, but is broken off ('this year I will ...', to be continued: 'buy seed maize from the very start'). He switches into the story mode by introducing a time in the past ('last year', 54) and reports that he went some place to 'the people' and 'took off' something (by inference: he went to the other peasants' places and peeled off their maize), and it turned out to be of poor quality (56). He himself (so he continues) had bought seed maize instead (and thereby invites the retrospective inference that the other peasants had not done so, i.e. they had grown their own seed maize) (57) and it came off very well (58). He again refers to the bad quality of the self-grown maize by saying that the others had only got little 'sticks' in their fields (60) (instead of proper maize plants). But this story-telling has the same fate as the first attempt to initiate a chat with A1: there is a complete lack of uptake both from A3 and A2. Instead, A2 overlaps the customer's last evaluation with a technical question which clearly invites closing of the interactional episode: he asks where the customer has stored the seed sacks he wants to exchange (61). The customer answers that they are in his car (62); the employee tells him to drive it into the backyard, which leads the episode to closure. It finishes with the customer's only Portuguese contribution (*tá bom*); neither the customer nor the employees A1 and A3 exchange final salutations with him.

The sequential development of this interactional episode as described so far gives a number of clues to its interpretation. We are dealing with a typical example of an institutional transaction which takes place between one of the employees (A2) and the client-customer (K1). The representatives of the institution usually dispose of organizational and procedural knowledge not equally accessible to the client. Note that K1 is not well acquainted with the maize types available; neither is he sure about the brand name *Agromer* (cf. line 08), nor does he know the names of the other maize types he talks about in the following sequence with A1 (cf. lines 08, 12, 17–21). This visible lack of professional knowledge establishes a clear asymmetry of competences – the employees and the customer are not of equal standing – and even impedes understanding between A1 and K1 (cf. 16–21).

The asymmetric relationship between A1–3 and K1 as incumbents of the institutional categories of 'employee of the *sindicato*' and 'customer/client at the *sindicato*' is further enhanced by another important problem in this sequence. As in many institutional contexts, talk between the participants in their institutional roles can be complemented (or replaced on occasion) by talk outside these roles ('small talk'). Such talk would establish a different, symmetric relationship between the participants, often implying some kind of co-categorization. In the context of the *sindicato*, such co-categorization could be done (and often is done) using the membership category 'German'. K1 makes three attempts to change the frame of the interaction in such a way, none of which is successful. In the first case (12–27), he starts small talk about a new sort of maize which he is about to try out; K1 gets some initial attention from A1 but fails to establish the topic. A second attempt is made in lines 39–55, when K1 starts to talk about his seed purchases. In this case, A3 joins into the interaction, but instead of taking up K1's slight complaint in 39–42 directly, he answers with a general statement about the shortage of maize seeds (45–46). The third attempt to establish small talk starts with K1's story-telling in lines 53ff; in this case, none of the employees takes up the (point of the) story (although its up-shot is clearly supportive of the *sindicato*: seeds should be purchased there). Instead, particularly A2 insists on terminating the interaction in a business-like, impersonal way.

In sum, we argue that the appearance of K1 at the *sindicato* office evokes the stereotypes of the *colono*: a somewhat unsophisticated man who is not very familiar with the administrative and professional aspects of agriculture. There is some evidence in the employees' behaviour which shows that they actually perceive the man's performance in these terms. In particular, the employees refuse to take up K1's initiatives to change the footing of the interaction from business to small talk, and the interaction fails to display any features of personal co-membership and co-involvement. We propose that the social categorization of the customer as a *colono* is based on the style in which he presents himself. Part of this style is the exclusive use of German dialect, as we shall now show by considering alternative stylistic choices in the following sections. The client fails to pick up on the employee's various invitations to switch (momentarily, at least, i.e. for bureaucratic issues tied to the institution) to Portuguese. It is this *lack* of bilingual language use which is interpreted in an identity-related way.

3.2. Client II: The unsuccessful buyer of sorgo

Our second case is in many ways almost the opposite. Another man roughly of the same age enters the *sindicato* office and approaches the counter; the two employees, who have been talking to each other in Portuguese in the back of the room so far, establish eye contact with him immediately.

(Sindicato 2)

((employees are talking to each other in Portuguese when customer km10 enters))

- 01 km10: (alguma vez)
(‘sometimes’)
- 02 bom DIA ()
‘good morning’
- 03 a? <<p> bom DIA>
‘good morning’
- 04 a2: bom DIA;
‘good morning’
- 05 k10: aqui não se trabalha mais com a semente e essas coisas lá,
‘here you don’t work with seeds and like those things’
- 06 (.) <<p> (puta) [ma:s eh]
‘damn it but...’
- 07 a2: [de milho nós temo ainda (.)
alGU:ma coisa
‘maize we’ve still got a bit’
- 08 k10: [e::hh de
‘no’
milho não
‘maize I don’t want’
- 09 eu queria:: (.) SORgo;=
‘I wanted (.) millet’
- 10 a2: = [não.
‘no’
- 11 k10: [não existe MAIS;
‘doesn’t exist’
- 12 a2: mir han BLOSS milje.
‘we only have maize’
- 13 k10: bloß milje. (-)
‘only maize’

- 14 <<più piano> puta como é difícil;
‘my God how it is difficult:’
- 15 não sei pra que que eles fazem isso ah!>
‘I don’t know why why they do it!’
- 16 a2: na (piA isso) também não tem?
‘at (the XXX³) they haven’t got it either?’
- 17 k10: NÃO
‘no’
- 18 eu SEI (.)
‘I know’
- 19 mas (.) só de deiz quilo (.)
‘but only (in) ten kilo (sacks)’
- 20 mas com dez quilo(.) não vai (.)
‘but with ten kilos (.) it doesn’t work (.)’
- 21 não (--)
‘no (--)’
- 22 a2 sim; (-)
‘yes’
- 23 a1: é; (.)
‘well;’
- 24 infelizmente.
‘unfortunately.’
- 25 a1: isso é lei (ele)
‘it’s a law’
- 26 se não (não) [(te trouxe)
‘if it wasn’t (we’d have it)’
- 27 k10: [mas essas leis são (.)
‘but those laws are’
- 28 PUta mas que SA: [co;
‘shit, what a drag!’
- 29 a1: [É::H
‘right’
- 30 k10: (se vê) quem tem uma coisinha pequena (eh)
‘(if somebody comes) who has a small piece’ ((of land)) (‘yes’)
- 31 a1: ([)
- 32 k10: [zehn kilo du:sd=de (.)
‘(with) ten kilos you can do’
- 33 a2: <eu sei eh <affirmative>>
‘I know yes’
- 34 k10: wieviel INsie né (.)
‘how much sowing right?’
- 35 a2: Ijo;=
‘sure’

- 36 km10: =um monte de coisa né
'a load of things right'
- 37 a2: (tá isso é [claro])
'(that's it that's clear)'
- 38 a1: [ÉH: que]
'right also'
- 39 eu acho ruim (.) que nem pro pessoal vem aqui
'I think ((it is also)) bad (.) also for the people who come here
pra pegar milho né
to take ((=buy)) maize right'
- 40 k10: não eu [SEI]
'no, I know'
- 41 a1: [quero tantos quilos tantos quilos
ja aber]
'"I want so many kilos so many kilos' well but'
- 42 k10: ja das GEHT ja [net]
'this doesn't work of course'
- 43 a1: [(a gente faz escondi:do assim) eh]
'(they do it under the counter like that) right'
- 44 k10: (-) ()
- 45 a2: <<laughing> o que dava né
'what can you do, right'
- 46 k10: (Éh:: ma mais éh éh) é uma uma merda (-)
'(right but it's it's) it's shit'
- 47 tá OK dann obrigado
'it's o.k. then thanks'

The customer, as it turns out, has a small piece of land on which he wants to sow *sorgo* ('millet'); his problem is that millet seeds are only on the market in large sacks, not in the small quantities he needs.

The episode starts with an exchange of greetings (*bom dia*). The customer then formulates his reason-for-coming by asking a somewhat under-specified question, too vague to be dealt with adequately immediately, but which, since it is negated, already implies a declination of the request it implies, i.e. a dispreferred second: 'you don't deal with those seeds here, shit'. Taken literally, this statement is obviously wrong – no doubt the *sindicato* sells seeds. Employee A2 lets pass the first possible turn completion point at the end of line 5, presumably expecting some kind of specification about 'those seeds'; when this does not follow (and the client goes into an evaluation of the presumed fact instead, line 6), A2 interrupts to state the obvious, i.e. that there are some maize seeds (7). At this point, and once

more in interruption of the previous, not-yet-completed utterance/turn, the customer becomes more specific: he doesn't want maize, but rather millet seeds (9). Employee A2 confirms that millet seeds are not available (10) and once more states that there is only maize (12); this statement is repeated as an affirmation by the customer (13). At this point, the exchange could be over since the subject matter is sufficiently dealt with, and the customer's wish responded to – albeit negatively.

The following part of the interaction is a metapragmatic sequel for the purpose of mutual face work. The main strategy is to blame a third party – 'them', i.e. the state authorities and their unreasonable laws. Transition into this metapragmatic sequel is contextualised by the client's slight curse *puta como é difícil* in line 14, uttered in a low voice, as if the customer was speaking to himself. It is the customer who also introduces the vaguely designated third party culprits, *eles* ('them'), in the same line (15). Following the employee's question whether the agricultural cooperative of the town could not be of help (16), the client explains what has not been clear up to that point: that *sorgo* is principally available but only in larger packs than what he needs (i.e., 10kg sacks; 19–21). The second employee also joins in now (24), expressing his regrets for not being able to serve the customer. Once more, a possible termination point for the interactional episode is reached. This time it is employee A2 who expands the interaction, taking up the notion of the third party culprit. He brings up another aspect of the problem: millet is not only unavailable, but the *sindicato* would not be allowed to sell it anyway in small quantities by law (25–26). (Since this is presumably known to the customer, the negative way in which he formulated his initial request becomes more understandable now in retrospect.) In line 27 an exchange starts in which the customer and employee A2 agree that 'the law' doesn't make sense since small farmers do not need large sacks of seed (30–36): 'for those who own only a small piece of land – how much could they sow with 10 kg! A heap of things!'. Employee A1 adds that the same problem also applies to farmers who want to buy maize seed in small quantities (38, 39). 'They want some kilograms of maize, but ...', and the customer completes, duetting: '... this doesn't work of course' (42). One tries to do it surreptitiously, the employee adds, and the other employee concludes 'what can you do' (45) – another invitation to close the interaction. The customer has the final word; with another slight curse (*merda*, 46) for the authorities, a pre-closing *ta o.k.* and a final 'thanks' he leaves the office.

It is not difficult to see that this interaction evolves completely differently from the one discussed before. Maybe most striking is the difference in the way in which the employees respond to the two clients. As the customer in the first example, the man in the second example seems to be unknown to the employees in the office. However, both employees immediately focus their attention on him as soon as he enters the room, and they continue to be focussed on him until he leaves. The client, in turn, sets the pace, and keeps the initiative most of the time. The equal standing of the client, on the hand, and the representatives of the institution, on the other, is both reflected in and achieved through the complaint about the counter-productive state regulations which keep both the client (as a farmer) and the *sindicato* (as the provider of goods for the farmers) from functioning effectively, and lifts the responsibility for the failed deal from both of them. This sequence at the same time enables all three participants to enact a categorization device which allows them to co-categorize themselves, i.e. the device 'us/the state'. Compared to the first example, the communicative style used by the customer is very much an "involvement style" (Tannen 1984): there are numerous overlaps, simultaneous starts and interruptions which, however, do not seem to inhibit or disturb the flow of interaction, but rather support it.

The stylistic choices the customer makes on the linguistic level also show a different pattern from the one we observed in the first example: the interaction is almost completely in Portuguese. The Portuguese spoken by the client does not have a German accent; rather it conforms to the variety used by most speakers in that area of RS, regardless of their ethnic background. Note, however, that the interaction is not entirely monolingual, which betrays the German background of the speaker. It is employee A2 who first turns it into a bilingual one (line 12: *mir han BLOSS milje*), and it is only through the client's German repetition in 13 that we get to know for the first time that he is a bilingual and therefore of German descent. The second excursion into Hunsrück dialect is initiated by the client in 30, 32, 34 where he starts a turn (and, presumably, complex sentence) in Portuguese (*se vê quem tem uma coisinha pequena...*), continues in German (*zehn kilo du:sd=de wieviel INseie né?*) and finishes in Portuguese again with an answer to his own rhetorical question (*um monte de coisa*). The employee responds partly in Portuguese (33, 37), partly in German (35), thus acknowledging the bilingual nature of the on-going turn. The third excursion into German occurs in the duetting sequence 41–42 in which the employee switches in mid-sentence from Portuguese to German (*ja aber*), a

sentence which is completed by the client (*das GEHT ja net*). Finally, there is small bit of admixture of German in the final turn by the client (*dann obrigado*).

The German utterance parts are only minor components in a basically Portuguese interaction.⁴ However, they do not happen without producing social meaning. Particularly the first exchange of German utterances (lines 12/13) is relevant here. On the one hand, the employee's *mir han BLOSS milje* is closure-implicative: it could terminate the failed business interaction. On the other hand, the switch into German opens up the possibility to switch from that business interaction into another, less institutional type of interaction since it implies a 'metaphorical' move away from institutional talk. As such, it is followed by the first German utterance of the client in this interaction which establishes his German-descent background. This co-categorisation may be instrumental in the transition to the metapragmatic sequel of the interaction.

In sum, this speaker avoids activating the social category of the German *colono* in the interior, which is associated with a monolingual style in which dialectal German plays the most important role. Both the client and the employees activate their German ethnic background en passant, but they see to it that for the bulk of the interaction, the symbolic resources employed do not differ from those which would be used by monolingual Brazilians as well. He comes across as a professional – even though the land he owns may be small and not larger than the one owned by K1. The social category indexed first and foremost is that of a male rural Southern Brazilian, the category 'German' remains in the background and the category *colono* is avoided.

3.3. The story of the selos

Our third example documents yet a third, typical way of managing one's social identity by using a bilingual communicative style on the stage of the *sindicato office*. The client is once more male, and of approximately the same age as in the previous examples. One of the brought-along and brought-about differences is that the client and at least two of the employees (A2 and A1) seem to be known to each other.

(Sindicato 3)

((as K11 enters the room, the two employees who are present, A2 and A1, are located in the back of the room, A1 sitting, A2 standing. The both turn to K11 as he enters.))

01 a2: ((nods as a greeting to k11 as he sees him entering))

02 k11: *guten MORgen*;
'good morning'

03 a2: *MORgen*;
'morning'

04 k11: *alles GUT?*
'everything o.k.?'

05 a1: [*Ijo* (.)]

06 a2: [*alles gut*]
'everything o.k.'

05a a1: *wenn=s mo sche:n wedda gebt [nOch besser*
,sure if the weather becomes better even more (so)'

07 k11: [*gut*, (.)]
'o.k.?'

08 *is das do kEEn WEDda*;
'is this no weather;' ((=isn't that a (fine) weather!))

09 a1: [*Ijo s=IS?* (.)]
'sure it is!'

10 [*sche:n AUSgehn-* (.)]
'go out'

11 ((A2 gets up and slowly starts to approach the counter; at the same time, A5 enters the room, takes a chair from the table behind the counter and moves it to a table on the window to the right where he sits down to work))

12 *spaZIEre gehen-*
'go for a walk'

13 k11: *duut=s aich on*
'you take it'

14 *duut=s onnehme wie=s kOmmt?=-*
'you take it as it comes'

15 a1: [*Ijo*];
'sure'

16 h h h h h

17 k11: [*ma*]
'we'

18 a1: [*MISS ma MISS ma* [()]
'we have to we have to'

19 k11: [*<<lachend> MACH ma was*
'you (SG) do something about it!'
((=there is nothing to do about it))

20 *=machd=a da was dron>*
'you (PL) do something about it!'

21 a1: *MACH=mo was [droon*;
'you (SG) do something about it!'

22 [(A2 is sat down next to K11 now
behind the counter)]

23 [*Ijo*].
'sure'
(1.5)

24 a2: *<<più piano> ja awer* (.) *que que mAnda.>*
'yes but what what can I do for you'
(4.0)

25 k11: *eu não sEi*;
'I don't know'

26 a2: *net zu VIEL reden h h h*
'don't talk too much'

((general laughter, appr. 6 sec.; A1, still standing in the background, looks at K11 while he starts to describe his problem, until line 54, when he disengages from the on-going interaction between K11 and A2))

(1.0)
27 k11: ((from now on mostly in a subdued voice until 54))
eu tEnho um cadastro aí (.) *de sElo não SEI*;
'I have a registration (.) of a stamp, I don't know'

28 a2: *para aproVAR.* (1.0)
'to approve'

29 k1: *eu tenho o* (.) *(os quitado);* (-)
'I have (paid ones)'

30 a2: hm (-)

31 k11: *simples e* (.) *e wie=s* (.) *wie=s wor* (-)
'simple ones like like it used to be'

32 *das ENde=*
'the end'

33 *ich han=s uf=m noome um ma bru* (.) *bruuder das*
administriere.
'it's under my name, and my bro brother, (does) the administration'

- (1.0)
 34 aí ele
 'now he'
 35 da hat der dat so mir abgeschn
 'now he he cut me tha'
 36 abgschnidd hat de das=
 'he cut off it'
 37 e agora o homem sumiu; (-)
 'and now the man has disappeared;
 38 faz mais (-) de dois meses o homem sumiu. (2.0)
 'it is more than two months ago (that) this man disappeared'
 39 e tem lenha lá prá vender; (2.0)
 'and there is wood to be sold'
 40 eu posso renovar uma coisa pra (-)
 'can I renew something in order to'
 41 consegui (.) selo (.) ou consegui-
 'get the stamp or get...'
 42 a2: como o homem sumiu; (.)
 'how do you mean the man disappeared;
 43 [deí BRU:der?=
 'your brother?'
 44 k11: [su
 'dis'
 45 ja. (1.0)
 'yes'
 46 a2: (un) SElos; (.)
 '(and) stamps;
 47 hat der selos geHAT oda was=
 'he had stamps or what'
 48 k11: =NAo:; (-) es wa: nur uff m NOOme;
 'no it was only under the ((=my)) name'
 49 a2: ta.
 'right.'
 50 k11: e praticamente isso caiu no meu caD[Astro;
 'and practically it fell under my registration'
 51 a2: [sim. (--)
 'yeah'
 52 k11: (e eu) (.) pra vende(r)
 '(and I) in order to sell
[também lá pra vende(r) (.) e tem
 as well there in order to sell I need to'

- 53 a2: [((gets up and moves towards the filing cabinets to the left))
 k11: <<p>que usar os sElo.>
 'use the stamps.'
 54 <<f> und wolltd ich das mo NACHschaue(n). ()
 'and I wanted to look it up.' ()
 55 então eu precisava ess (.)
 'well I needed those'
 56 [agora uns pra cem metros mais ou menos e pro ano que vEm cem metros.> (.)
 'now ones for 100 meters more or less and for next year 100 meters'
 57 [((while talking, K11 moves to the left, following a2))
<<p>cento e vinte;>
 'one hundred and twenty'
 58 a2: (convêm) da situa[ção;
 '(it fits) the situation'
 59 k11: [<<f>ja guck mo was dot LO::S=is
 'yes have a look what is up there'
 60 (se dá [pra renovAR ou)
 '(if it can be renewed or...)'
 61 a2: [não eu sei
 'I don't know'
 62 k11: (.) como=é que fica (-) a situaÇÃO
 'what it is that the situation is like'
 63 a2: <<p> () sim che)
 '() 'yes that'
 64 ((ca. 12 sec silence while the employee looks up in the books))
 65 a2: renovou no ano passa:do né
 'he/you renewed it last year right?'
 66 k11: hen?
 'what?'
 67 a2: renovou no ano passado=eh
 'he/you renewed it last year'
 68 k11: não sei (.)
 'I don't know'
 69 (ooch) so e bissche habe; (.)
 '(also) have a little bit;
 70 de STALL glauw=ich eh honma da (.) (misst) n poor stick SElo MEHR hon;=
 'the shed I think eh we did... (.) (should) have some more stamps'

- 71 aí ach=que ele (.) fez (.) um: (6.0)
'there I think that he (.) did (.) a: ...'
- 72 ((intervening sequence in Portuguese between employees A2 and a5 about the records during which a5 gets up and also moves to the filing cabinets where they are both looking for/at something))
- 73 a5: sie HAN des stick land gell?
'you (FORMAL) own this piece of land don't you'
- 74 k11: hen?
'what?'
- 75 a5: sie HAN das stick land;
'you (FORMAL) own this piece of land;'
- 76 k11: m; (1.0)
'yes'
- 77 a2: wieviel hektar HAST du.
'how many hectares have you (INFORMAL) got.'
- 78 a5: <<p> vinte e UM>
'twenty one'
- 79 a2: <<p> vinte [e UM>
'twenty one'
- 80 k11: [vinte e um (.) o outro é::[:
'twenty one and the other one is'
- 81 a2: [(modelo?)
'type?'
- 82 k11: do:ze vírgula se::TENTa.
'twelve point seventy'
- 83 a5: tinha que faze sobre a Outra área daí. (2.0)
'it would seem to be necessary to do the stamp on the other piece of land there.'
- 84 a2: musst=uns was SCHIGge;
'you have to send us something'
- 85 k11: <<pp>hm.> (1.5)
'yes'
- 86 a5: pois é (.)
'that's it'
- 87 e nessa área aQUI né;
'and in this land here, you see'
- 88 lá já entregaram pouca (gasse) né ([)
'there they have already given out ()'
- 88a (fazê de novo).
'(do it again).'
- 89 k11: [sim
'yeah'

- 90 sim
'yeah'
- 91 a2: tem que trazê [éh ah
'it's necessary that you bring along ehm ahm'
- 92 a5: [misst=a die landpapiere?
'you (SEMI-FORMAL) have to (bring) the land registration'
- 93 ((a5 moves away and sits down at the window, disengaging from the conversation))
- 94 a2: tem que trazer a outra escritura e fazer o: o:=
'it's necessary that you bring along the other land registration⁵ and do the: the:'
- 95 a5: INCra.
'INCRA.'⁶
- 96 fazer tudo de novo éh
'do everything from the start again right'
- 97 tudo.
'everything'
- 98 (.) e trazer as duas daí né
'and bring along the two (documents) from there right'
- 99 a2: é
'right'
- 100 k11: aha,
- 101 a2: traz tua escritura tá
'bring along your(Tu-FORM) document that's it'
- 102 <<p>talão tá>
'receipt book you have'
- 103 k11: certo,
'sure'
- 104 a5: <<to am2, p> a sua () >
'his ()'
(1.0)
- 105 k11: das mache [ich
'I'll do it'
- 106 a2: [<<to a5, at the same time moving towards the counter/towards k11, f>>
dá pra fazê; sim; >
'that can to be done; yes;'
- 107 k11: das mache ich [dann mo dann
'I'll do it then when'
- 108 a2: [Ijo
'sure'

- 109 k11: *wenn ich zeit hon*
'when I have the time'
- 110 a2: *ijo*
'sure'
- 111 ((A2 starts to write down a list of things to be brought along in order to get the "stamps"))
- 112 k11: *wenns mo nommo re:n gibt*
'when it rains again'
- 113 a2: *escritura- (.) Incra- (.) das DUAS Áreas.*
'registration, INCRA-Papers of the two pieces of land.'
- 114 ((9.0 without talking during which am2 continues writing))
- 115 *cpf (.) tu traz o talão também. (.)*
'CPF you take along as well.'
- 116 k11 ((nods head, takes piece of paper and reads it))
- 117 a2: *certo*
'sure'
- 118 k11: *certo*
'sure'
- 119 a2: [*dann MACH ma=s so.*
'then let's do it like that'
[((turns away from the counter and seems to be terminating the interaction with k11))
- 120 k11: *hm.*
- 121 (3.0)
- 122 *ken proble:m (2.0)*
'no problem'

((conversation continues beyond this possible closing point))

The topic of this sequence is a somewhat complex administrative matter. Since it is forbidden today in RS to clear wood without state approval, the farmers, who are often also owners of a small area of forest, have to get a stamp (*selo*) for cutting down trees. The quantity of wood which can be cut down per year depends on the size of the land somebody owns, and it is registered on the land. This client wants to sell some of his wood. However, since the land which is nominally in his possession was 'administered' by his brother, he isn't sure whether his brother has already used up his share of wood-cutting this year. The problem has arisen since the brother has suddenly disappeared.

The sequence is structured in four parts. The first part (lines 1–23) consists of an initial exchange of greetings and small-talk about the weather between the employees A2 and A1 and the customer. During this sequence, one of the employees, who in the beginning of the interaction had been talking to the customer from the back of the room, slowly approaches the counter and sits down behind it. When the trajectory of this movement comes to an end, transition into the second part of the interaction is initiated by this employee who asks what the client came here for (24). The second part contains the exposition of the problem by the client, starting in 27, and coming to completion in 63. The transition into the third part of the interaction is once more marked, not only verbally but also by body movement: as soon as he understands that the customer wants him to look up in the books whether he can get a *selo* for this year, the employee gets up from his desk behind the counter, approaches the filing cabinets to the left and starts to search for the land registration file. This part of the interaction (until 82) mainly consists of the search process in the papers which is mainly done by A2 and his colleague and boss A5 whom he has asked for help; during this process, the two employees of the *sindicato* ask the customer a number of questions about the size of the land and the legal possessor. The fourth and final part starts with the superordinate employee's decision that the stamp needs to be issued on a different piece of land (which is also owned by the client) (83); while A5 retreats from the interaction, A2 explains the situation and the proposed solution to the client who agrees to bring along the documents necessary for the administrative process. The interaction comes to a possible closure by the customer's repeated affirmation that he will go along with the employees' suggestions as soon as the weather is bad (i.e. it is raining) and he is not needed in the fields, which will enable him to come to the *sindicato* again.

Without going into a detailed reconstruction of this interactional episode, let us point out some of its central features. First, it is clear that this interaction is invested with a lot more politeness routines and face work in general than the previous two. The episode is introduced by a longish sequence about the weather (which just previously to the time of the recordings had been notoriously bad; in fact, the region had been badly devastated by heavy rainfall and storms in the past days). The sequence is full of joking and laughter. In terms of language choice, it is purely German, i.e. in dialect. Note in particular the typical how-are-things-going-formula by the customer right in the beginning after the exchange of greetings, i.e. *alles GUT?* (line 04), a loan translation of Portuguese *todo bom?*, which is

heard everywhere in the German colonies and clearly indexes belonging to the German community. (The employees, incidentally, use a more acrolectal variety of German than the customer; note in particular the verb *ausgehen* 'go out' instead of the more basilectal *maie-gehen* in 10.)

The shift from small-talk into business is initiated by the employee who for that purpose switches into Portuguese, using a formula typical of service encounters (*que manda*, 24). The customer's long silence before answering, as well as his 'I don't know' preface, make a complicated exposition expectable (which is jokingly criticised by A2 in his German admonition 'not to talk too much', 26, an aside still outside the business transaction and therefore marked by code-switching). The customer accepts the new language-of-interaction for the new frame 'business talk' and starts to explain what his problem is in Portuguese. In addition to the new language choice, the new footing is also contextualised by reduced loudness (27ff). As in the previous two extracts, particularly in the first one, the initial exposition of the problem is not very clear and full of vagueness. The client starts to say that he is registered to receive stamps (*selos*, 27); the employee conjectures that he has come to renew (*renovar*) this registration (28), but K11 disregards this conjecture and continues to explain that the registration has been paid (*quitado*), and that it is a simple one, 'as it used to be' (31). The registration is under his name but his brother was in charge of the land (33). The next step in the exposition of the problem is also referentially vague; something has been cut off (35/36; we can infer from the later parts of the interaction that the client probably is talking about wood). Equally vague is the reference of *o homem* ('the man') who 'disappeared' (38); neither do we know who this man is nor how he connects to the previous story. Again judging from the later parts of the interaction, we assume that KM11 at this point failed to state that 'this man' refers to his brother who was previously mentioned as having been in charge of the administration of the land. He continues that there is wood to be sold there (39), and he concludes by asking (albeit in an affirmative clause) whether he can renew 'something' in order to 'get a stamp' (40/41). During this problem statement, the employee remains silent and does not verbally display his reciprocity. After the possible turn completion point in 41, however, he starts with a series of questions through which he attempts to reduce some of the vagueness in K1's problem statement (42/43: who disappeared? and 46/47: did the brother have stamps?). At that point, the business interaction which began in Portuguese has already turned into a bilingual one in which both the client and the employee use German in addition to Portuguese, in what

we call (opposing switching to mixing) a mixing style (cf. Auer 1999): without being motivated by changes in the contextualisation of the situation, or achieving such a change of footing, this style seems to be the unmarked way of talking between these two men.

In the third part of the interaction, the two employees speak Portuguese between themselves, but the information they request from the client is once more asked for and given in both languages. For instance, A2 asks the client in Portuguese whether it is true that the *selos* were renewed the year before, and K11 first answers in the same language (65–68), but then elaborates in German and Portuguese (that in order to build the shed they presumably had to have the stamp; 69–71). On the other hand, the German question by A5 in line 73/75 whether K11 owns that piece of land, and A2's follow-up question of how many hectares he owns (77), are responded to by the customer in Portuguese.

When the superordinate employee decides on the matter and states that the *selos* can be issued, but only on another piece of land (83ff), he does so in Portuguese, thereby underlining his superior position; it is A2, the client's acquaintance, who explains the decision to the client, sometimes in German, sometimes in Portuguese (91ff). The final routines (K11: *das mache ich wenn ich zeit hon*, 105–109; A2: *dann mach ma=s so*, 119, K11: *ken proble:m*, 122) are mainly in German, leading back to the language choice in the beginning of the episode.

What kind of identity does this customer display through his linguistic choices? First of all, he acts in a polystylistic way – he is able to switch from the German-only mode in the initial small-talk exchange to a code-mixing style between Hunsrück dialect and a variety of Portuguese marked by a German accent. Monolingual German is not considered adequate by him for dealing with business matters in an institution such as the *sindicato*. It is, however, employed to establish solidarity and co-categorisation with (at least) one of the employees (A2). The symbolic value of switching and mixing as a communicative style implies that the speaker can be neither subsumed under the category of the backwardish *colono* of the hinterland, who is naive in dealing with business and administrative matters and does not speak Portuguese well; nor does he actively distance himself from the category of the 'Germans' (as does the man in the second example, who has an equal standing vis-à-vis the institution but does not establish co-categorisation as a *Daitscher*). This customer symbolises through his language choice that he has some kind of understanding of how the state administration works and how it can be made to work for his own benefit. By

mixing *Hunsrückisch* and Portuguese he at the same time displays this kind of understanding, and indexes the employee's and his own common ethnic background, i.e., he establishes co-membership.

4. Conclusions

In this paper, we have presented three typical Brazilians of German descent who come to the sindicato's office in a small town in the colonial zone (Rio Grande do Sul) in southern Brazil. Each of them uses the linguistic resources available in the community differently to index (or not) economic-cultural (*colono*) and ethnic (*daitsch*) categories. None of these categories is ever made explicit by the speakers in the data. This lack of explicit categorisation reflects a stable social and sociolinguistic situation in which the structure of the life world is by and large beyond dispute and shared by everybody. There is no need to categorise other participants (whether co-present or not) by using category names, since categorisation is hardly ever the focus or topic of the interaction. This, however, does not mean that social categorisation is irrelevant; rather, it is done all along the way while participants deal with their everyday affairs such as buying seeds, doing bureaucratic work, exchanging small talk about the weather, etc. While attending to the business at hand, they index their own social belonging (their position in a social space, and hence their social identities), they ratify other participants' self-displays of their identities, and they categorise others implicitly. The means by which this is done can include all semiotic systems, but language plays a prominent role among them. In the case under consideration, linguistic indexes to social categories can be found on all levels, from phonology to ellipsis, from language choice to rhetorical strategies. It has been argued that a more promising way of theorising such indexing than looking at individual 'variables' is to resort to the notion of social style.

The three customers at the sindicato's office all share a German ethnic background with the employees. This ethnic background comes in play to very different degrees though, and it combines with a self-positioning along the dimension of rurality/urbanity. To be sure, there are overlapping stylistic features; for instance, the way in which the costumers present their concern is similarly vague. There are commonalities of conversational style relating to discourse structure, sequentiality, the organization of complex (extended) turns, and so on which do not distinguish sharply between the

three customers. However, there are also important differences. One of them which we have been particularly interested in this paper is their different ways of displaying bilingualism, and to speak German and/or Portuguese. It has been argued that these displays have important consequences for the way in which they are treated by the representatives of the institution: both the 'Portuguese' style and the 'mixing/switching style' occur in episodes in which the employees of the sindicato are easily engaged in cooperation with the customer, while the first, German-speaking customer fails to establish co-involvement from the employees beyond the minimum necessary to carry out the business transaction. In this sense, the styles in which the three speakers act become the interpretive resources for the ascription of identity-related categories which are indeed, as Antaki and Widdicombe claim, consequential for interaction.

Notes

- * This paper emerged from a research project on the „Sprachliche Symbolisierung ethnischer Identität“ (Linguistic symbols of ethnic identity) co-directed by the first author and Christian Mair at the University of Freiburg within the framework of the research unit „Identitäten und Alteritäten“ (SFB 471) funded by the German Research Council (DFG). We wish to thank Gilvan Mueller de Oliveira for his comments on the conference version.
- 1. The term will be used here in the sense in which it is used both by Brazilians of German descents and those of non-German descent, i.e. excluding Germans from Germany.
- 2. Among them, the distribution of the /R/-variants (with a merger of the Portuguese phonemic contrast between <rr> and <r>, /h/ vs. /r/), loss of nasalisation in the vowels (particularly in the ending -ão, in its extreme form pronounced as /oŋ/), lacking palatalisation of /t/ before /i/ and lack of voicing in the voiced stop system (cf. Bueno-Aniola 2007 for details; also cf. Zilles and King 2005).
- 3. Name of an agricultural cooperative in the town.
- 4. Where he *does* speak German, the client uses a very broad, basilectal variant of *Hunsrückisch*, though. Note in particular the monophthong and the high onglide in the diphthong in *inseie* (std. German *einsäen*).
- 5. What is meant is a deed of sale.
- 6. INCRA (*Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária*) is the state run institution (national institute) for agricultural reforms.

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Chapter 5

Names and identities, or: How to be a hip young Italian migrant in Germany

Christine Bierbach and Gabriele Birken-Silverman

- Carmelo: *isch hab beide ausweise ok isch kann misch/ wenn isch mal bock hab Italiener zu sein nehm italienischen ... wenn isch bock hab deutsch.*
'I've got both passports, okay, I can/when I'm in the mood to be an Italian, I take the Italian one, when I'm in the mood, the German.'

1. Introduction: Identity as a sociolinguistic concept

Social identity, with regards to linguistic minorities or migrants, has in the past been viewed above all in terms of ethnic background and national membership. Since nationality, in terms of passport and citizenship, is decisive for a person's legal status and thus for his or her prospects of social participation, it certainly plays a crucial part in the construction of a young migrant's self-image, as is suggested by the above cited utterance of an Italian youngster with a migration background. Being defined as a 'foreigner' – or, in the case of second generation immigrants, as a descendant of people with discrepant social and cultural roots – means being placed on the edge of the receiving society, 'in between' cultural systems. It thus modifies how one's actions are perceived, categorized and evaluated. As these frames of perception and categorization are passed down to the members of the minority group, they react by creating a 'public image' of immigrants in a given society – young Italians in Germany, in our case.

However, social identity is not only much more complex and manifold, including different types of membership, it is also highly context-bound, and its construction is embedded in recipient designed communicative activities. Ethnicity is just one dimension of identity that can be foregrounded; it cannot be isolated from other identity-relevant social features such as gender, age group, social positioning with regard to relevant others,