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Culture in Communication
Analyses of intercultural situations

CULTURE IN COMMUNICATION

ANALYSES OF
INTERCULTURAL SITUATIONS

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Three Ways of Analysing Communication between East and West Germans as Intercultural Communication

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1. Introduction

This paper investigates the possibilities of applying the concepts of interculturality and intercultural communication to the situation in Germany after unification. In particular, we will consider three different notions of interculturality and investigate their usability in/for the analysis of one particular communicative genre, namely the job interview, focusing on those interviews in which East German applicants and West German interviewers are involved.

Our discussion is set against the following theoretical background. During the past decade, we have witnessed "intercultural communication analysis" flourish in social psychology, communication studies, and linguistics. The way intercultural communication is viewed in many of its dominant theoretical conceptualizations and practical applications is based on the following assumptions (some explicit, others implicit): (a) intercultural communication occurs whenever two or more persons 'belonging to at least two different cultures' interact; (b) 'culture' means a list of prescriptions of what is or is not to be done in a given society, prescriptions which hold and which may be identified in a decontextualized way; (c) members of different cultures, when interacting, expect each other to behave in the same way as they do themselves; at the same time, they are unable to adjust their own behaviour to that of the other-culture co-participant; as a consequence of (b) and (c), intercultural communication is bound to fail; (d) however, successful intercul-

tural communication may be trained by teaching what is part of the other culture, and will be successful as soon as this knowledge is put into practice.

These assumptions have been criticised by several anthropologists and linguists (cf., e.g., Gumperz 1990; Gumperz and Roberts 1991; Hinnenkamp 1987, 1989; Roberts and Sarangi 1993; Günthner 1993; Streeck 1985; Blommaert 1991; Sarangi 1994; Sharrock and Anderson 1980) who argue (a) that the notion of intercultural communication outlined above builds on a monolithic instead of a "multi-voiced" conception of 'their' and 'our' culture in which commonalities are understressed and differences are overstressed; (b) that it conceptualises culture independent of the action and interaction taking place within intercultural *and* intracultural communication, locating culture outside practice; (c) that it wrongly presupposes that mutual understanding is indeed the primary aim of communication (and not, for instance, the wish to maintain group identity); (d) that it is based upon a lay usage of the term culture as an ideological concept employed to account for interactional *failure*, rather than as a resource made use of in the interaction itself, in which such a failure may occur; (e) that, contrary to this notion of intercultural communication, interactants of different backgrounds do not expect each other to adjust perfectly to their own culturally based norms or expectations, and that adjusting in such a way would not make the encounter unproblematic (but, on the contrary, even create misunderstandings of its own); (f) that it is in itself culturally prejudiced and eurocentric, since it takes for granted that training may prepare the western, but not the non-western, participant to adjust and thereby perform successfully in intercultural communication, presupposing the superiority of this culture in terms of flexibility and dynamics (while the other, e.g. Asian, is taken to be passive and non-adaptive).

With this critique of a 'naive' approach to intercultural communication (which we share) in mind, we now turn to East/West German job interviews.

2.   Cultural categorisation in discourse

Our first way of approaching our materials as intercultural follows a constructivist approach to context (cf., for example, Auer and Di Luzio eds. 1992). As implied by the critique of intercultural communication outlined in the preceding section, an external definition of a situation as intercultural needs to be replaced by an analytic reconstruction of the ways in which participants

construe a situation as intercultural: intercultural communication is not what happens when two people of different cultural-biographical backgrounds meet, but rather, it is a brought-about (Hinnenkamp 1987: 144, following Giddens) feature of an encounter. While a similar argument has been made with reference to participants from widely diverging biographical backgrounds by Meeuwis (1994), we want to approach it here by focusing on encounters in which participants rely on a comparatively similar background of knowledge and experiences, accumulated through life histories in East Germany (interviewees) and West Germany (personnel managers). Nevertheless, participants may choose to categorise one another as members of two different cultures, thus "talking each other into" cultural differences (cf. Zimmermann and Boden 1991).

Accordingly, we will first explore the relevance of 'East' and 'West' as cultural concepts in job interviews by investigating some of the speakers' activities through which they establish the relevance of these social categories.[1] The study is based on authentic job interviews with West German interviewers and East- and West German applicants (cf. for details Kern 2000, Birkner 2001).

2.1   *East/West translations*

In our materials, we observed on the part of both interviewer and applicant conversational strategies which seem to aim at compensating for anticipated deficits of culturally bound knowledge of the Eastern and Western life-worlds before the *Wende*. However, a closer inspection reveals that their primary pragmatic function is not so much related to referential ambiguities or misunderstandings as to an underlining of the (former) existence of two separate social and cultural worlds. One of the most explicit activities by which participants display their orientation towards the categories East and West are therefore translations of East German into West German terms, as in extracts (1)–(3).

Example 1[2] [I = Interviewer, B = Applicant]

```
I:    okEE. SCHULbildung; aber sie HAM (-) abitur.=ne?
B:    ja
I:    =eh oh ES.            [ne?  ]
B:                          [mhm; ]
I:    mhm,
B:    ja=GUT. DAmals eh nannte sich [das erWEIterte oberschule;
I:                                  [ oder
```

B: und=und hier eh (-) [mittler   ] weile heisst das gymNAsium.
I: [<acc>e=oh=ES; ne?]

I: okay. education; but you got your abitur, didnt you
B: yes
I: e: o: es, wasnt it?
B: mh
I: mh
B: well=right. then it was called erweiterte oberschule ((extended secondary
      school)) and and here eh (-) in the meantime it is called gymnasium.

The interviewer mentions the GDR-specific term *EOS* in connection with
the candidate's educational career. By using the term, he displays some
knowledge of the East German school system. (The *EOS* was a type of
secondary school; like the West German *Gymnasium,* it led to the *Abitur.*)
Nevertheless, the applicant translates the term *EOS* into its West German
equivalent *Gymnasium* in his next turn. Since the interviewer has already shown
his understanding of the EOS, the reason for the candidate's translation cannot
be to compensate for knowledge deficits on the part of the interviewer. Rather,
through their respective activities, both participants display their orientation
towards the categories 'East' and 'West'. Notice also how the candidate creates
two distinct social reference systems (East and West Germany) using the
temporal and local adverbs *damals* ('then') — referring to the former GDR —
and *hier* ('here'). As the interview took place in East Germany, *here* cannot
relate to the situation at hand. Rather, the speaker metaphorically locates the
current interview within the new — Western — reference system. We found this
to be a common strategy: speakers use spatio-temporal deictics to actively
construe two distinct life-worlds (cf. Liebscher 1997 for similar results).

   In extract (2), an East German applicant again translates a GDR-specific
term into its Western equivalent:

Example 2

B: e:h (.) mei=MANN is dann zur arMEE jegang, also (-) hier heißt (das
      [ja wohl]) BUND?
I3:   [mhm]

B: eh (.) my husband then joined the army, well i think it is called the services here?

Once more, the speaker's intent is not so much to clarify the GDR-specific
term *Armee* ('army') by translating it into its Western counterpart; after all,
Armee is understood perfectly by West Germans as well. Rather, by using the

colloquial expression *Bund*, she proves her knowledge of the West but equally
signals her distance from the West German speech community by hedging her
translation (cf. the use of the particle *wohl*).

   Finally, in extract (3), the interviewee is telling an autobiographical story
which is set in the former GDR. Again, the East German applicant uses the
indexical temporal expression *früher* ('then') in order to locate the word
Kaderabteilung ('personnel office') within the reference system of GDR
society:

Example 3

B: und ich komm da in=ne KAderabteilung <<rall>hieß das da früher un:d (.) sie
      sagte zu mir (.) eh (-) die war=ne> SCHULfreundin meine ehemalje
      <<acc>SCHULfreu=mit der ich inne SCHUle jegang=bin> .h sie SASS da
      DRIN; ja, und und   [hatt] ich GLÜCK daß [ich   ]
I1:   [mhm,]
                                              [KAder,]
      (-) heißt persoNALabteilung; ne,
B: ja, jetzt persoNALabteilung; ja:, un:d e:h (.) ich hab
      wirklich den l' (.) letzten ARbeitsplatz bekomm.

B: and I walk into the *cadre department it was called then* and she said to me eh
      (-) she was a school friend my former school friend who i went to school with (-)
      she sat
      in there, and and
      [i was] lucky that [i   ]
I: [hm]   [cadre] (-) *means personnel department,* doesnt it
B: yes, *now personnel department;* yes and eh (.) i really did get the last job.

When she uses the East German word *Kaderabteilung*, the interviewee adds a
comment about the cultural boundedness of the term ('as it was called then').
She thus constructs it as an outdated term. The interviewer nevertheless
interrupts with a clarification request bringing the semantic equivalence of
Kaderabteilung and *Personalabteilung* into play. This is done not only to
display competence in the East German reference system but also to instruct
the Eastern interviewee about the "legitimate" (cf. Bourdieu 1982) expres-
sion. Notice the absence of indexical features in his turn: the utterance is not
located in time or place (through deictic expressions such as *here* and *now*) but
appears universally valid:[3] the Western expression is contextualized as the
doxical (standard) form.[4]

   Thus, what at first sight seems to prove participants' orientation towards

potential knowledge deficits of their (Eastern or Western) recipients and to be an attempt to compensate for them by translation turns out to index knowledge about the 'other' social worlds. Translations are thus activities of inclusion and exclusion: although equivalence is produced on the surface, a contrast is established at the same time by pairing two expressions which function as symbols for the two divergent frames of reference (East and West). Such utterances can be understood to produce interculturality by reflecting speakers' perception of their interlocutors' Western or Eastern identities, respectively.

2.2 *Cultural expansions in biographical narratives*

We now turn to more complex ways of dealing with (putatively) diverging background knowledge between East German applicants and West German interviewers. Our examples are taken from the biographical narratives which usually occur in the early parts of job interviews. Most interviewers start the 'interview proper' by asking the applicants to give a short account of their curriculum vitae. In biographical narratives, speakers always construct and claim a social identity (cf. Linde 1980, 1986); in job interviews, however, these identity claims are at least partly co-ordinated with genre-specific goals (cf. Adelswärd 1988). Accordingly, many applicants restrict themselves to a more or less straightforward description of their professional career constructed in terms of causal coherence and consistency. However, when compared to West German speakers' verbal construction of curriculum vitae, East Germans employ a set of different structural devices to construe their narratives. These differences — which might be regarded as evidence for cultural variance in genre performance; cf. below, Section 3.2. — can also be explained as the result of a specific cross-cultural recipient design oriented to knowledge compensation between East and West.

Example 4

I: (2) <f> oKEE. (-) JA.> frau TOEPfer. dann? (-) schaun=wir=mal? dann:
        [(-) eh (-)] FANgen wir einfach mal an?
B: [mhm?]
I: indem SIE uns=n bisschen erzählen was sie so bislank; (-) eh
        geMACHT haben? (-) [.h eh: (-)   ] das ist ja
I2:   [((clears throat))]
I: noch NICHT so (.) ganz FÜRCHterlich viel, (-) aber
        TROTZ[dem;] <<acc>sie können sicherlich schon=ne ganze menge
B: [ja]
I: erZÄHlen übers STUdium.>

((...))
I: <<f>JA.> fangen sie einfach mal AN. (-)
        [legen sie einfach LOS.]
B: [ja; (-) vielleicht ab   ] dem ZEITpunkt; ab dem es für MICH relevant wird
        dass ich mich für eine beRUFSausbildung entscheide? (-) die beRUFSwahl
        fängt in der neunten KLASse an, daß HEISST also für mich dass (   );
        für mich stand FEST dass ich das abiTUR ablegen (-) WOLlte? (-) das lernen
        fällt mir LEICHT, (-) ich lern sehr GERne, und (-) so wollte ich also auch noch
        (.) WEIter lernen;
I: <<p>mhm,>
B: es reichte mir nicht AUS, nur die REIfeprüfung abzulegen, (-) sondern
        ich wollte von der MÖGlichkeit gebrauch machen die es gab;
        (-) beRUFSausbildung und abiTURausbildung zu koppeln;
        (2)
B: in den achtziger JAHren kam so die LOsung auf; mikroelekTROnik
        das ist die ZUkunft; (-) und beSONders (-) die MÄDchen wurden
        in diesem bereich geFÖRdert; (-) das interesse MEInerseits (-) war
        vorHANden, (1) EInerseits (.) ehm=da ich meine FREIzeit viel mit
        meinem drei jahre älteren bruder verBRACHte? und zum ANderen;
        wurde man (.) in der SCHUle schon (-) auf (-) die TÄtigkeit im
        beTRIEB vorbereitet. durch das FACH produktive ARbeit.
        (2)
B: die: (-) beRUFSausbildung fand in X-stadt statt? das beDEUtete dass
        ich die WOche über im interNAT untergebracht war;
        ((...))
B: bereits im ersten LEHRjahr? mussten wir für   [eine STUdiumrichtung
I: [((clears throat))]
B: entscheiden. und ich wollte informaTIONStechnik stuDIEren.

I: *(2) okee. (-) yes. miss toepfer. then? (-) lets have a look? then [eh   ]*
B: *[mhm]*
I: *we will make a start by you telling us a little bit about what you have done*
        so far? (-) [.h eh: (-)   ] that has ah
B: *[((clears throat))]*
I: *not been an awful lot so far, (-) however you can surely tell us a lot about*
        your studies
        ((...))
I: *yup. Why dont you just make a start. (-)*
        [off you go]
B: *[yes; (-) maybe from] the moment when it becomes relevant for me to decide*
        to do professional training? (-) choosing a profession starts in ninth grade,
        that means for me that ( ); i was sure i wanted to take the abitur (-) i'm
        good at learning, (-) i like learning very much, and (-) so i wanted to
        continue learning.
I: *mhm*

B: *it was not enough for me to just take the abitur, (-) i wanted to make use of*
     the opportunity that existed; (-) to combine training for a career and studying
     for the abitur;
                                        (2)
B: *in the eighties the slogan had come up microelectronics (-) thats the future;*
     (-) and particularly (-) the girls were encouraged in this area (-) there was
     interest on my part, (1) in part (.) ehm because i spent plenty of my
     spare time with my older brother? and partly; in school they
     had already prepared us for company work (-) in the subject productive work.
                                        (2)
B: *the professional training took place in x-city? this meant i lived in a*
     boarding school during the week;
     ((...))
B: *already in the first year of training? we had to*
     [decide on a course.   ]
I: *[((clearing his throat))]*
B: *and i wanted to study computer science.*

From the very beginning of her autobiographical narrative, the candidate stresses the perspectives of *decision-making* and *wanting* which run through it like a theme. As a result, the biographical events (*Abitur*, *studies* etc.) appear as mere results of the candidate's own decision-making processes. This may reflect the applicant's orientation to genre-specific constraints; in job interviews, applicants should present themselves as determined and goal-oriented. Especially when applying for leading positions, the ability to make a decision is regarded as one of the key qualities (cf. Adelswärd 1988).

But another issue is involved: it is a commonly held opinion among West Germans that there had been no room for individual decision-making in the GDR because everything was taken care of by the state. The perspective chosen may reflect the applicants' indirect orientation to this stereotype: since she may assume that the interviewer shares this prejudice, her focus on decision-making may accordingly be an attempt to work against this prejudice. The exchange thereby takes on an intercultural dimension.

While this interpretation may be somewhat speculative, interculturality is certainly achieved in another way. Notice the long orientational expansions on GDR-specific sociocultural background knowledge with which the presentation is interspersed, such as 'in the eighties the slogan had come up microelectronics — that's the future' or 'in school they already prepared us for company work in the subject productive work'. Structurally, the expansions function as comments on and reasons for single biographical moves and link them together. The speaker establishes causal connections between external facts and

personal biographical changes, and thereby achieves biographical continuity and consistency, something which, as a consequence of the cultural cleavage between East and West Germany, is in no way taken for granted. In job interviews with West German applicants, expansions referring to cultural facts and circumstances are hardly ever produced; thematic coherence is achieved differently, since potential culturally bound knowledge deficits do not have to be compensated for. The West German candidates' presupposition of a shared cultural background is reflected in sequential structure which in turn is the result of a specific monocultural recipient design.[5]

In sum, we have described two conversational practices in this section — translations and a particular type of expansion — which inter alia are used by participants in our job interviews to construct East/West categorisations and thereby turn the meeting into an intercultural one. Since these practices occur quite frequently, we can conclude that in terms of an interactionally produced orientation towards the cultural categories 'East' and 'West', our data are intercultural data.

3.   Cultural differences due to diverging frame knowledge

It would clearly be inadequate to restrict the notion of interculturality to more or less explicit orientations towards cultural categories. In fact, the most prototypical cases of intercultural misunderstandings described in the linguistic and anthropological literature are based on the very opposite assumption, i.e., that speakers are unaware of the culturally constrained ways in which they speak, and that they may not orient themselves at all (and definitely not explicitly) to their co-participants' divergent cultural background. It follows from this that explicit or implicit reference to membership categories such as 'East German' and 'West German' is not a necessary condition for establishing an encounter's intercultural dimension.[6] Culturality can also be more implicitly produced on the level of the participants' diverging performances and their interlocutors' interpretations of them. Gumperz in particular has shown in various publications (e.g., Gumperz, Jupp & Roberts 1979; Gumperz 1982b) how constellations of culturally specific linguistic features operate as contextualization cues signalling utterances' meaning and contextual presuppositions, and how misunderstandings between interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds may occur if contextualization conventions are not

shared. As an example, consider Gumperz' analysis of the Croy trial (in this volume) in which he argues that "epithets [by the defendant, a native American Indian in California; p.a.] like 'kill some cops', 'tear Yreka up' which the prosecution cited as evidence in support of the conspiracy charge, must be interpreted as a form of hyperbole patterned on expressions commonly used in minority group protests" (this volume, p. 42). Here, the police who interpreted the defendants' words according to their own cultural assumptions were unaware of the different meaning they may have when native American Indian contextualization cues are fallen into consideration.

We will now turn to some examples of this kind of interculturality in our East/West German job interview data.[7]

3.1 Lexical change from an intercultural perspective

Linguistic research on post-unification Germany has to a large extent concentrated on lexical change (for an overview, see Auer and Hausendorf, 2000). Indeed, massive word shifts have occurred in connection with the disappearance of many GDR-specific social and economic structures and their replacement by Western ones. However, what has not been investigated in sufficient detail is the fact that when replacing East German vocabulary with West German words, East German speakers may not transfer the full range of usage subtleties attached to them in the West. Thus, transfer of words and transfer of usage rules may not coincide. This may in turn become problematic in intercultural contexts (cf., e.g., Rost-Roth 1994).

One example (of many) is the West German word *Team* which has replaced East German *Kollektiv*. Analysis of the Eastern and Western role-played job interviews[8] shows that although many East and West German speakers use the same word (*Team*), they may express different ideas with it. We first look at some uses of *Team* by West Germans:

Example 5

B: h=ja; ich möchte also (.) gern in ihrem (.) unterNEHmen als
      gleichberechtigte PARtnerin, zum SCHLUSS, eh im team MITarbeiten?
      (1) und ich weiss natürlich dass das ein bisschen ZEIT dauert? man muss (.)
      viel LERnen?=und (-) ich DENke aber dass: (.) dass ich das: im LAUfe
      der zeit schon (LERne) und da hätte ich sehr viel LUST zu.

B: *so i would like to work in the team in the end as an equal partner*
      (1) and of course i know that that will take some time? one has to learn

a lot and (-) but i think that (.) that i will learn that in the course of time
and i would very much like to do that.

Example 6

B: ich DENke mir dass es SICherlich GANZ wichtig is für diese positiON
      ein (.) geSUNdes äh eine gesunde BAsis sprich=n gutes FACHwissen zu
      haben, .h äh dann sollte da SICherlich au:ch der KAUFmännische
      beREICH=also das KOStenbewusstsein sollte da sein; <<f>=UND>
      (.) GANZ wichtig noch (.) äh=n bestimmtes DURCHsetzungsvermögen;
      weil wir ja mit MITarbeitern zu tun haben,<<dim>=also sprich mit=ner
      ganz senSIblen maTErie;>
I: und wir (.) äh (2) <<faster>(ham natürlich hier auch)>
      (-) das (moDERne) noch recht stark auf TEAM (-) TEAMarbeit;
B: ja:,
I: EINgestellt;=so dass ein (.) ABsolutes DURCHsetzungsvermögen
      <<p>natürlich nicht> UNbedingt (-) NÖtig iss=weil wir das doch
      geWOHNT sind ((clears throat)) im KREIse die (.) äh entSCHEIdungen
      gemMEINsam zu treffen,

B: *i believe that it is definitely very important for this position to have a*
      (.) sound ehm a sound basis that means a good professional knowledge,
      .h ehm then obviously the commercial side I mean knowledge of cost
      effectiveness should be there; AND (.) VERY important ehm some kind
      of ability to assert oneself; because we are dealing with employees,
      that means very sensitive matter;
I: *and we (.) ehm (2.0) (of course here we have) (-) the (modern) very much*
      built on team (-) team work;
B: *yeah,*
I: *so that an absolute ability to assert oneself of course isnt really necessary*
      because we are used to ((clears throat)) making decisions together in a
      group

In both segments, the speakers use *Team* in contexts in which they want to stress the idea of co-operation within a group of people. In example (5), the candidate declares that it is her ultimate goal to work with others in a team and have equal rights. In example (6) the interviewer contradicts the interviewee's contention that for the particular job in question the ability to assert oneself would be an asset, and stresses the idea of a team-based enterprise in which decisions are made together. Other examples also show that the term *Team* is closely connected to notions of co-operation and partnership in the West.

In contrast, the following examples demonstrate how the word *Team* is used by East Germans in our data:

Example 7

B: in: meiner VORherigen anstellung, als produktiONSleiter, (-) war ich
    diREKT unterstellt dem beTRIEBSteilleiter? (-) dessen STELLvertreter
    ich gewesen bin? (-) und in der funktiON als produktiONSleiter war ich
    verANTwortlich für ein TEAM von insgesamt .hh zweiunddreissig
    MITarbeitern? (-) die ich ANzuleiten hatte. (-) deren tätigkeiten ich zu
    koordiNIEren hatte? ((etc.))

B: *in my previous job as a director of production, (-) i was directly responsible*
    to the deputy director of the company? (-) whose substitute i was? (-) in the
    function of a director of production i was responsible for a team of thirty
    two employees altogether? (-) whom i had to direct, (-) whose activities i had
    to coordinate? ((etc.))

Example 8

B: AUSbildung von: (-) jungen WEHRpflichtigen? (1) eh: FÜHrung von' (-)
    kollekt'(-) eh (-) TEAMS? (-) ja:. und diese TEAMS, =zum erFOLG führen,
    das ist eigentlich die; (-) aufgabe der arMEE.

B: *education of (-) young conscripts? (1) eh leadership of (-) collect' (-) eh (-)*
    teams? (-) ye:s and leading these teams to success, this is really the (-) task
    of the army.

These speakers do not talk about co-operation and partnership when they use
the term *Team*, but about how to direct and co-ordinate people and lead them
to success. In the first example, the applicant describes his previous job,
particularly his responsibilities as the leader of a group of workers, and in the
second case the interviewee speaks about his former position as an officer in
the army and the duties connected to it. Contrary to West German usage,
speakers do not use the word *Team* to refer to a group of people with equal
rights or at least shared responsibilities, but rather when referring to them-
selves as the leaders of a group.

Note that in the second example, the applicant uses the word *Team* in
connection with the armed forces, a context in which the word is inappropriate
in West German usage. Since East German *Kollektiv* was indeed commonly
used in the military context, the speaker seems to overgeneralize the term
following the East German model: the *signifiant* of *Kollektiv* is replaced by
that of *Team*, while the *signifié* remains the same. In addition, *Team* is
produced in such a way as to mark its ad hoc substitutional character: the
speaker self-interrupts in the course of the production of *Kollektiv* in order to
replace it with *Team*.

The examples discussed so far show that the East German participants are
well aware of the symbolic value of using *Kollektiv* or *Team*, but use the latter
as a mere synonym of the former. In intercultural contexts this can lead to
problems, as the following example from an authentic interview shows (West
German interviewer, I2, and East German applicant, B). In this particular case,
we are in the analytically fortunate position that a third party (interviewer I1)
intervenes in a sequential context which is becoming highly awkward for both
I2 and B due to the different meaning attached to the word *Team*, and directly
links this awkwardness to the categories 'West' and 'East' (by a translation of
the kind discussed in more detail in Section 2.1 above):

Example 9

I2: (1) was verBINden sie mi=m TEAMgedanken zum beispiel. (-) was (.) was
     HEISST das für sie. (-) wenn=se=n kolLEgen haben;
                                    (2)
     ham=se FRÜher kollegen gehabt?
                        (1)
B: naTÜRI[i:ch; (und das is auch   )   ]
I2:   [naTÜRlich; und (.) was ham=se] an denen geSCHÄTZT?
                        (2.5)
     wie is das geLAUfen?
B: <<p, hoch> GUT eigentlich ja;>
I2: und waRUM is das gut gelaufen? WAS is gut gelaufen?
                        (7)
B: ko(m)=ich=(in)s STOLpern (ja/grad) (hh[h) he he he   ]
I2:   [<<f>WAS=denn?]>
B: .h <<laughing>jetz komm ich ins STOLpern>; he [he he   ]
I2:   [<reassuring> n:ee:.]
B: (   )   [(das war)   ]
I1:   [(das würd ich nicht] sagen)
I2: nee;
I1: das war kein TEAM, war=n kollekTIV. (-)   [ne,]
B: [(k)] (-) ja:;
I1: da HAM sie-
B: das war sowieSO wie eine faMIlie muss ich sagen; wir ham IMmer zusammen (-)
I2: ja
I1: viel zusammen geMACHT? priVAT?
B: (1) mh: mh (1) privat NICH.
I1: mhm,
B: glaub ich' (.) nee (.) privat NICH;
I1: mhm,
I2?: im bü[ro;]
B: [auf] ARbeit (.) ham wir alle zusammen(.) gehalten;

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I2:    (1.0) for instance what does the notion of a team mean to you. (-)
       what (.) what does it mean for you. (-) when you have colleagues;
                                   (2.0)
       have you had colleagues before?
                                   (1.0)
B:     of [ course; (and this is     )
I2:       [ of course; and (.) what did you appreciate in them?
                                   (2.5)
       how did it work?
B:     quite well, i guess;
I2:    and why did it work well? what went well?
                                   (7.0)
B:     (there i'm) messing up (well) he [ he he he
I2:                                      [ what?
B:     .h <<laughing> now i'm messing up>; he [he he
I2:                                            [no::.
B:     (        )        [(it was)
I1:                      [(i wouldnt) say (that)
I2:    no;
I1:    it wasnt a team, it was a collective. (-) [wasnt it,
B:                                               [(k) (-) yes:
I1:    there you
B:     in any case it was like a family i'd have to say; we always used to (-)
I2:    yeah
I1:    do a lot together? privately?
B:     (1.0) ehm ehm (1.0) no not privately.
I1:    mhm,
B:     i think (.) no (.) privately no;
I1:    mhm,
I2?:   in the of [fice?
B:               [at work (.) we all (.) stuck together;
```

The second interviewer wants to talk about the notion of teamwork and what it
means to the applicant. As she hesitates to answer, he rephrases his question
several times ('have you had colleagues before?', 'what did you appreciate in
them?', 'how did that work?', 'what went well?'). Yet the applicant does not
seem to be able to make sense of the question; for her, the Western connota-
tion of cooperation is not included in the word *Team*, nor is the idea that teams
may work more or less efficiently depending on their internal structure which
may make co-operation more or less difficult. In order to help, the first
interviewer suggests that at the time the applicant was not working in a *Team*
(in which it would make sense to ask questions such as the ones the second
interviewer has asked) but in a *Kollektiv*.

Note the difference in the East German speakers' usage in the two
examples: the two terms are construed by the first interviewer as standing in
fundamental opposition, i.e. as being completely incompatible. The applicant
agrees to this with some hesitation (cf. the elongation on *ja*:), but continues by
reproducing a common East German stereotype about the socialist economic
sphere, i.e. that the *Kollektiv* was like a 'family' (a stereotype which refers to
the solidarity dimension of the *Kollektiv*, cf. the applicant's 'we always used
to do a lot together'). The interviewer eagerly completes the syntactic frame
opened by her ('we always used to...') by suggesting that the collective also
extended into the private sphere ('...*do a lot together? privately?*'), an inter-
pretation which is rejected by the East German, however. Again, the seman-
tics of *Kollektiv* do not seem to be exactly the same for I1 and B: for the West
German interviewer, the *Kollektiv* is a private *and* economic institution which
has nothing to do with goal-oriented co-operation in a *Team*, whereas for the
East German interviewee, it is an institution which provides social security
and solidarity.

So even a relatively simple pair of words — one associated with the West,
the other with the East — reveals cultural processes of lexical acquisition;
while both the East and the West Germans have acquired the corresponding
word from the opposite social system, neither of the two parties seem to use it
in the same way in which it was used in pre-*Wende* times. The different
meaning attached to words such as these surely needs to be explained in
cultural terms.

3.2 *The structure of complex turns in job descriptions*

We now turn to another difference between the interviewees in our data which
may be linked to differences of cultural background. This difference is not at
the level of vocabulary, but at that of genre knowledge (or lack of it)[9] and
performance in complex turns at talk. We will argue that in and underlying the
performance of the genre investigated, structural patterns, discursive strate-
gies, and normative expectations may be identified, which are part of two
different (communication) cultures — one of the East, one of the West — and
which come together in the situation at hand.

In the course of job interviews, applicants are regularly asked to describe
their previous job(s). Such sequences are of vital importance to both inter-
viewer and candidate. While the interviewer can check whether the candidate

meets the demands of the job in question, the applicant is given extensive access to the floor to present his or her professional competence.

The following examples come from interviews in the construction trade and represent two prototypical answers to such questions. The company advertised two vacancies, one for a building site manager and one for a project leader. It is of central importance for the interviewers to learn exactly what the applicant has done in his previous job, particularly since the meaning of the terms *Bauleiter* ('building site manager') and *Projektleiter* ('project leader'), as they appear in the applicants' written CVs, are vague and can include the same activities.

Example 10

```
I1:   und sie habn (-) für hoch tief als ge uh (0.7) WAS dort gemacht;
B:    =eh:
I1:   =proJEKTleitung? (-) BAU [leitung], (.) oder?
B:                           [eh:    ]
B:    die proJEKTleitung=eh (-) mit dementsprechenden proJEKTsitzungn?
      (-) die koordiNIErung (.) der (-) eh: eh: (.) der (-) eh (.) einzelnen
      geWERke (-) sowieSO,
I1:   ja
B:    im bereich der beSPRECHungn? (0.7) aber (-) auch (.) die:=eh (0.8) interne
      koordinierung (-) m:it STEIgenberger SELBST, das heisst also (-) mit (.) dem:
      eh ( ) über AUSstattungsmerkmale und alles was daZU gehört, (.) und
      DEMentsprechende . h terminierungn (-) von (0.6) KÜChn
      ((etc.))
```

```
I1:   and you did (-) for hochtief as a GU[10] (0.7) what?
B:    ehm
I1:   project leading? site [managing? or what?
B:                         [ehm
B:    project leading=ehm (-) with the various project meetings? (-)
      coordination of ehm ehm the ehm the particular jobs of course,
I1:   yeah
B:    in the area of meetings? (0.7) but (-) also (.) the=ehm (0.8)
      internal coordination (-) with steigenberger himself, which means (-) with
      the: ehm ( ) about fittings and everything in that field, and the relevant
      time scheduling (-) for (0.6) kitchens
      ((etc.))
```

With his question, the interviewer introduces the two vacancies as the relevant topic ('leading the project' vs. 'managing the site') The candidate picks up the syntactic format of the interviewer's utterance and continues with a list of his previous tasks and duties which becomes more and more detailed. He thus

produces his utterance in syntactic and thematic accordance with the interviewer's question. The chosen list format focuses on the mere facts; the candidate contextualizes his utterance as primarily information-giving.

Compare this with the following sequence from another interview for the same vacancies:

Example 11

```
I1:   un:d (-) wenn sie (.) SAgn, (.) sie ham da also (-) BAUleitung gemacht, vom
      erstn SPAtnstich, (1) eh (-) vom erstn SPAtnstich an, (-) gehörte dann (-)
      zu ihrer aufgabe (-) die arbeit vor (.) ORT? (.) die überWAChung (.) der
      bauarbeitn? (-) einschliesslich (-) EINtaktn, (-) organisatiON, (-)
      SUBunternehmer, (-) terminplanEINhaltung,
                                  (1)
      <<rall>oder WAS (-) war da (-) ihr>
B:    ja (-) ja [eh der eh          ] wir hattn (-) eh (muss' wolln) ma
I1:             [((clears throat))]
B:    SO sagn (-) vielleicht; eh
                                  (2)
B:    des (.) des (-) proGRAMM nannte sich KOStngünstiges BAUen. (-)
I1:   ja
B:    das war so mehr oder weniger auf (-) TYpn ausjerichtet?
                                  (2)
B:    und=eh (-) für (.) für diese (-) speziellen TYpn=eh (-) gab=es denn noch
      nen computerprogramm vom be ah' (.) ABlauf (-) her, (-) also nen
      bauablaufplan im prinZIP? (-) den man uff de baustelle (-) RAUSjekriecht hat?
      (1) von=der arbeitsVORbereitung; (-) die: (-) die firmen (-) eh (-) beNANNT
      jekriecht hat, die termine warn im bauablauf denn DA, (1) praktisch die
      ganze koordiNIErung, (-) terMINkontrolle, (-) qualiTÄTSkontrolle,
      (-) EINschliesslich denn nachher der gesamtn ABrechnung.
I1:   mhm
B:    des des jehörte eben zum. (-)
I1:   ((clears throat))
B:    abnahmen und und was eben so kam <<dim> zur (.) AUFgabe.>
```

```
I1:   and (-) when you say, you led (-) the project, from the first cut, (1.0) ehm (-)
      from the first cut of the spade, (-) was part of your job (-) the work on-site?
      (.) supervising (.) the construction activities? (-) including timing,
      (-) organisation, (-) tendering, (-) time scheduling
                                  (1.0)
I:    what (-) was (-) your
B:    yes (-) yes [ehm the ehm we had (-) (must lets) put it like this
I1:              [((clears throat))
B:    (-) maybe; ehm
                                  (2.0)
```

B: *the (.) the (-) programme was called bargain construction. (-)*
I1:   *yeah*
B: *it was more or less aimed at (-) types?*
                        (2.0)
B: *and=ehm (-) for (.) for each (-) type=ehm (-) there was a computer programme for the d (.) construction process, (-) in principle a sequential construction plan? (-) which you got given on the construction site? (1.0) by the job preparation; (-) which (-) was given the names of the companies, the timing was then already fixed regarding the sequence of construction, (1.0) practically the whole coordination, (-) scheduling, (-) quality control, (-) including afterwards all the invoicing.*
I1:   *mhm*
B: *that was part of the (-)*
I1:   *((clears throat))*
B: *the inspection and and whatever else there was to the (.) job.*

Like the previous example, the interviewer's question has the format of an unfinished list. But unlike example (10), the applicant does not answer the question directly, let alone pick up the interviewer's syntactic frame. He acknowledges the question with a simple *yes* and then starts anew: after a prefatory remark ('let's put it like this'), he engages in a long explanation of the building programme in which he participated in his previous job, the general characteristics of which are described without specifying his own duties within it. The information given in this section is "relevant setting information" (Polanyi 1985: 191) which a teller may produce in order to locate a narrative in time and space. Only afterwards does this applicant pick up the interviewer's list format to describe his own work within the setting previously established ('the whole co-ordination, scheduling, quality control, including afterwards all the invoicing…').

The first example is typical of a West German applicant, the second example typical of an East German one. The structural differences in the answers' internal construction are striking. Whereas the West German applicant produces a list of jobs immediately following the interviewer's answer, the East German speaker first offers general information on the professional setting and only then produces the answer itself. As a consequence, turns become more complex. Generally speaking, West Germans in our data often choose lists as a format for producing an answer to questions on professional experience. East Germans, on the other hand, prototypically give relevant setting information first before they locate and describe their own job within this area.

However, the shift of focus from the presentation of the mere facts of previous occupational tasks to a broader description of the professional environment can result in communicative difficulty. In the following extract, it leads to a clarification request on the part of the interviewer.

Example 12

I1:   was is denn IHre aufgabe da.
B: (-) .h (1.5) im GROSSteil sinds (1) CE programme; die auf den: geSCHÄFTSstellen der ((name)) zum EINsatz (kommen.) (-) auf jeder geSCHÄFTSstelle ham wir auch noch=n (em ix) dreiHUNdert, (1) die ham ihre eigene DAtenbank, und ihren KUNdenstamm, (-) berLIN; berLIner raum un und so   [WEIter-
I1:   [mhm,
B: .h (-) un:d (-) ja; (-) dann werden die <<rall>KUNden: ebend> (-) ANgeschrieben, die jetz <<rall>grade: neu:> EIN(geschrieben werden;) dann werden die aus der datenbank RAUSselektiert,
I1:   ((clicks tongue)) .h müssen SIE das machen.
      (2)
B: die proGRAMme schreiben, JA.
I1:   (-) ach SO.

I: *what do you do there.*
A: *well (1.5) mainly it is the programmes that are activated in the offices (-) in every office we additionally have a (em ex) three hundred (1) they have their own data bank, and their customers (-) berlin; berlin area and so [on*
I: *[mhm*
A: *.h (-) and (-) well (-) then the clients are informed that have just registered; then they are selected from the data bank,*
I: *((clicking his tongue)) thats what YOU have to do?*
      (2)
A: *write the programmes. (-) yes.*
I: *I see.*

Again, the East German candidate produces detailed information about the professional setting without explicitly identifying his own area of work within this environment. The interviewer interrupts to demand clarification. Only then does the candidate produce the required information. The comprehension problem on the part of the interviewer is due to the candidate's failure to focus verbally on his previous work experience.

In this section we have shown that cultural differences may be involved in cases where no reference to cultural labels such as 'East German' or 'West German' is made. Two examples — one on the lexical level, one on the level of turn construction — have been given in which we can be relatively certain

that speakers with a West German background prototypically follow different patterns from those we find among East German speakers.[11] The interculturality of these patterns resides in culturally diverging frame knowledge, connotations of words (as shown in examples 7–9), and suitability of communicative styles to usage (as shown in examples 11–12). It is the analyst's task to reconstruct them and, in addition, to show that they come into conflict, leading to misinterpretations, misunderstandings or other conversational problems.

4.   Intercultural discourse without intercultural communication

The third way of conceptualising interculturality (or rather, polyculturality) challenges the traditional view that in intercultural communication, each of the partners represents a monocultural, i.e. culturally homogeneous person. In cases of rapid or even abrupt cultural change (as in East Germany), this assumption — which is inherent in the first of the features of the orthodox view of 'intercultural communication' mentioned in the first section of this paper — is quite clearly false. It seems that the association of one participant with one culture, as commonly found in research on intercultural communication, is at best modelled on a restricted case. In fact, interculturality takes place within the speaker as well.

   This is particularly obvious in the role-played job interviews we recorded shortly after the collapse of the GDR, among participants who were little acquainted with the job interview (in its Western form) as a communicative genre. What we found in the Eastern participants' communicative behaviour in these interviews reflects a clash — or rather, incongruity — between the demands of the genre (being part of the communicative culture of the West), partly known or presumed to be known on the basis of post-unification experiences, and the communicative resources available qua membership of the East German (communicative) culture.

   Although both interviewers and interviewees in the role-plays were East German, we want to claim that their way of staging a job interview produced an *inter*cultural text, i.e. one which indexes elements from the West in addition to those from the East. It is possible to locate this interculturality at various levels of analysis. First of all, the situation was not really monocultural despite the fact that the primary interactants (the interviewers and applicants in the role play) were East Germans. Rather, a West German trainer (as well as a West German university team) participated as on-lookers and (in the first case) critical commentators.[112] However, even if neither the trainer nor the researcher had been West German, 'the West' would still have been present. In the first place, this is so because of the inherent tension between the Western communicative genre on the one hand, with its specific structures, tasks and demands, and the Eastern stylistic resources employed, which cannot be separated from their cultural-ideological values. Western genre and Eastern communicative style(s) are at odds:

– because one encourages explicit and implicit displays of one's abilities and prior experiences, while the other encourages modesty and concealment of one's abilities;
– because one builds on active contributions by the applicant and the other on avoidance of the agent-subject;
– because one is based on a superficial ideology of equality beneath which power relations are hidden, while the other exposes and underlines these power relations through formality and submission;
– because one is supposed to take place in a superficial atmosphere of informality, while the other requires formality;
– because one (at least superficially) requires and values frankness, while the other requires indirectness and vagueness; etc.[13]

This clash between the speech activity and the resources at hand brought stylistic elements from various (Eastern and Western) sources into play. As was to be expected, this was most obvious at the lexical level, where old and new words stood side by side. Participants frequently quoted words and idiomatic expressions from the East German state-and-party vocabulary, particularly when administrative matters were discussed; some examples are:

> *Kollektiv* (see above)[14]
> *Brigade* ('brigade', more or less the same as *Kollektiv*, as in *die Brigade der Betriebshandwerker*, 'the brigade of company workers')[15]
> *Kader* ('cadre', a group of qualified personnel, more often a person occupying a leading position)
> *Körperkultur* (lit. 'physical culture', in the sense of 'physical education')
> *Reproduktion, sich reproduzieren* (lit. 'reproduction', 'to reproduce oneself', in the sense of 'recreation')
> *Territorium* ('territory', in the sense of 'region')[16]
> *Aufbaustab* ('founding staff').

However, the 'Eastern' stylistic resources found in the interviews were not restricted to the lexicon. They also included a number of idioms and routines typical of GDR official language (such as *Ausführungen machen* 'make statements' or *aus kaderpolitischen Gründen* 'for reasons of cadre politics'), very depersonalised language (mainly due to the avoidance of personal pronouns as grammatical subjects with agentive function in a main clause), a high degree of nominalization, and generally a very formal style of speech (in the sense of displaying a degree of syntactic complexity which is unusual for spoken language), long turns with little backchannelling, a slow prosodic mode of delivery and a certain degree of indirectness and even vagueness.[17]

In addition to GDR official vocabulary and style, we found elements of an (Eastern) modesty-and-deference style, which was marked by a high degree of negative politeness.

On the other hand, very large number of new, West German words were used as well. As a blatant example of the resulting East/West mix, consider extract (13), in which the overall style is Eastern and is interspersed with the new Western vocabulary (*Kundengespräche, Arbeitsorganisation, Bankgeschäfte, Filialleitung*):

Example 13

I: also mit welchen erWARtungshAltungen, .hh GEhen sie an eine eventuelle
    ANstellung (1.0) (in unserer firma).
B: ich gehe GRUNDsätzlich an die erwartungshaltung (·) DIESbezüglich ran
    dass ich sage ich möchte in meiner position gefÖrdert UND gefOrdert werden?
    das heisst also AUFbauend auf den fähigkeiten und KENNTnissen die ich
    beSITze, die (nun auch) vorliegen das heisst KUNdengespräche:,
    ARbeitsorganisation:, (1.0) BANKgeschäfte ( ), (-) ( ), dass ich DAhingehend (-)
    die unterstützung habe, (-) DURCH, (-) die filialLEItung? (-) beziehungsweise
    (den bankdirektor) beziehungsweise den filiALleiter, .h dass dort möglichkeiten
    geSCHAFfen werden der (-) WEIterbildung.

I: *with what expectations do you approach a possible apppointment (1.0)*
    in our company
B: *i basically anticipate an attitude, .hh (-) relating to that i say i want to be*
    helped and challenged in my position? this means building on the skills
    and knowledge which I have, which ( ) are already present that means
    dealing with the customers, labour organisation, (1.0) bank transactions
    ( ), that i get support in this sense, from the management? (-)
    or (the director of the bank) or the manager, .hh that possibilites are
    created for in-service training.

A more complex example of the same process of mixing is the juxtaposition of Western and Eastern topics and topoi — the way in which Western and Eastern communicative cultures prescribe and prestructure what can or should be talked about, and how. A recurrent phenomenon in our data was that Western topoi such as 'economic expansion', 'on-the-job training', 'after-sales service', 'contented customers' mixed with Eastern topoi regarding, e.g., the social care East German companies used to extend to their employees and their families, such as 'kindergartens', 'holidays', even 'family planning'. At times, this resulted in sequences which sounded problematic, at least to Western ears. In the following example (14), the applicant answers the question regarding his family as if it was an innocent question; in the Eastern framework, this is possible since the question invokes the topos of 'social care for employees'. In the Western frame of a job interview, however, the question clearly aims at testing the candidate's ability and willingness to work abroad for a longer period of time. This possible innuendo, however, seems not to have been understood by the applicant, who answers by giving the facts only (and indeed, in the present context, it may not even have been intended by the East Geman interviewer):

Example 14

B: das würde (-) eigentlich meinen wünschen (-) sehr entGEgenkommen (0.5)
    auch im AUSsendienst zu arbeiten.
I: sind Sie eigentlich verHEIratet?
B: ich bin verHEIratet? (0.5) habe zwei TÖChter? meine frau ist LEHrerin?
    (-) meine beiden töchter sind ZWÖLF (0.5) und achtzehn JAHre, das heisst
    beide gehen noch zur SCHUle.
                            (3.0)
I: ich hab nochmal eine ganz speziELle frage,
    ((continues on a different topic))

B: *actually (-) this would come (-) very close to my aims (0.5) to work outside*
    the office too.
I: *are you married?*
B: *i am married? (-) have two daughters? my wife is a teacher? (-) my two*
    daughters are twelve (0.5) and eighteen, which means that both of them
    still go to school.
                            (3.0)
I: *now i have a very different question ((continues on different topic))*

All these examples of cultural heterogeneity *within* speakers of an East German biographical background question the basic assumption of the usual

approach to intercultural communication, i.e. that participants in such communication must be acquainted with, responsible for and invested with cultural background each in order for an intercultural event to emerge. There is a fundamental problem in assuming, in any given case, that a participant 'belongs to a (one) culture', for 'belonging to a culture' (or should we say 'taking part in it'?) is surely a matter of degree — and even of situational adequacy. What is at stake in the data investigated here is not a clash between two cultures impersonated in two participants, but rather the local selection of elements from different cultural frames which are at least fragmentarily available to all participants. Cultures come into contact within participants and within interactive episodes; but often they do not "belong" to one or the other participant.

5.   Conclusion

In this paper, we have discussed three approaches to interculturality and applied them to East/West German communication after unification. Each of them encapsulates different phenomena. In the first case, cultural categorisation by participants themselves is at issue: it is discursively produced via the participants' specific intercultural or monocultural recipient design. In the second case, the lack of underlying shared knowledge (which, however, is usually not openly oriented to by participants) reveals itself in diverging patterns of communicative style and leads to communicative difficulties; and in the third case, interculturality is located within a participant, who on the basis of his or her biographical background would seem to be completely 'monocultural'. All three approaches have some justification and are useful for highlighting some aspects of the complex processes of cultural adaptation and delimitation by East Germans currently taking place in Germany.

Notes

1.   The speakers' orientation towards 'East' and 'West' is shown in their utterances' recipient design. As Schmitt and Keim (1995) point out, the notion of *recipient design* offers a way of grasping the interactional relevance of culture in ongoing talk. According to Sacks et al. 1978, the concept is intended to collect a multitude of respects in which the talk by a party in a conversation is constructed and designed in ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are co-participants.

2.   Transcription conventions follow GAT (see Selting et al. 1998). English translations are simplified.

3.   See Kallmeyer and Keim (1986) for a thorough analysis of forms and features of utterances with universal validity.

4.   The fact that Western terms are never translated into their Eastern equivalents also demonstrates the dominance of the Western standard of reference over the Eastern.

5.   For examples, cf. Kern (1998).

6.   Cf. Schegloff (1997: 182) for an elaboration of this argument with respect to the category 'gender'.

7.   Other differences have been investigated, e.g. the conversational styles of agreement/ disagreement and perspectivisation (cf. Birkner and Kern (forthc.) and the use of topoi in job interviews (cf. Auer, Birkner and Kern 1997).

8.   For details of the role play materials, see Auer (1998). Both interviewers and interviewees were role-played by West or East Germans respectively.

9.   Cf. Günthner and Luckmann in this volume.

10.   GU= *geschäftsführender Unternehmer* (manager in charge)

11.   The list could of course be continued; see Birkner and Kern (2000) for further examples.

12.   Discussions after the role-play interviews revealed that participants oriented to the presence of the group, and to a lesser degree to that of the trainer. The researcher's presence was not particularly commented on, but may also have played a part.

13.   For details on these points, cf. Auer (1998).

14.   "Feste Gemeinschaft, Gruppe von Menschen, die sich zu gemeinschaftlicher Tätigkeit, bes. zur soz[ialistischen] Gemeinschaftsarbeit zusammengeschlossen hat und in der sich jedes einzelne Mitglied allseitig entwickeln kann" (*Handwörterbuch der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*, 1984 edition).

15.   "Kollektiv von Werktätigen, das zur Lösung gemeinsamer Aufgaben in soz[ialistischen] Betrieben aller Wirtschaftsbereiche gebildet wird" (*Handwörterbuch der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*, 1984 edition).

16.   The West German term *Territorium* means 'state territory'.

17.   See Auer (1998) for details.

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Cooperation, Collaboration and Pleasure in Work

Issues for intercultural communication at work

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The objective discharge of business primarily means a discharge of business according to calculable rules and "without regard for person"… the peculiarity of modern culture and specifically of its technical and economic basis, demands this very 'calculability of results'.
(Max Weber "Bureaucracy" from Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft pt iii in H. Gerth and C.W. Mills "From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology", 1946: 215).

In contemporary society almost everyone has service transaction, everyday. Whatever the ultimate significance of these dealings for recipients, it is clear that how they are treated in these contexts is likely to flavor their sense of place in the wider community.
(E. Goffman "The Interaction Order" 1983: 14)

The condition of contemporary Western society is variously described by sociologists as post-industrial, post-traditional, post-modern or even high modern. All agree however that late modernity, to use Giddens' term, has brought about fundamental shifts in the organization of economic, institutional and personal life (Giddens 1988). Globalization of social activities has made some real differences in both perceptions and practices of human relations. As a result of population movements, societies previously perceived as culturally homogeneous are coming to be seen as multicultural and pluralistic. Multiculturalism is beginning to be recognized as a permanent condition of contemporary life. This is particularly the case in complex societies where the bureaucratic organization which helped to begin the modern age has