5. The self-retreat of the interpreter

An analysis of teasing and toasting in intercultural discourse

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This paper reconstructs the process of achieving intercultural understanding during the interpreting of humorous teasing in toasting situations at an international research meeting. The analysis focuses on the self-retreat of the interpreter. This self-retreat is an extreme result of the discursive handling of the interpreter’s role conflict, which stems from the fact that he or she transmits the utterances of the original speakers and is at the same time an autonomous participant of the interaction. Proposals are discussed that assign certain translatory actions of the interpreter to the continuum depending on his action space. At one end of the continuum, the interpreter is regarded as a so-called translation machine; at the other end, he is considered to be an equal participant in the interaction. The self-retreat of the interpreter has not yet been extensively addressed in the research literature but can be reconstructed with respect to this continuum. The analysis also shows how interpreters reflect and act upon the achievement of functional equivalence in the tripartite discourse structure. The paper concludes in stating that the distinction between ‘professional’ and ‘non-professional’ interpreters is actually questionable.

1 Introduction

Linguistic research in the field of intercultural communication has recently changed its focus of interest. Misunderstanding no longer dominates analyses, and with self-evident and successful intercultural discourse now attracting increased attention. Moreover, it is now recognized that the mere presence of people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds does not automatically yield an intercultural discourse. Individual analyses must show to what extent the discourse is institutional and to what extent it can be characterized as intercultural (ten Thije 2006a).

This paper does not focus on intercultural misunderstandings. Rather, it reconstructs the process of intercultural understanding by reflecting on institutional and intercultural discourse structures. ‘Non-professional’ interpreters (Knapp-Potthoff and Knapp 1987) have a special task in mediating cultural differences, yet the potential of their translatory actions is limited. This becomes clear in cases in which interpreters resign from their position and are replaced by other colleagues. In this paper, stretches of discourse that document the

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The concept of interpreter is ambiguous. In the most elementary sense, an interpreter is solely an ‘in-between’ between two primary speakers who do not speak or understand each other’s languages (Knapp and Knapp-Potthoff 1986a, 151). The task of the interpreter in a triadic conversation (Wadensjö 1998, 10) can be realized in different modes depending on the action space the interpreters have at their disposal when translating the primary speakers.

Various analyses on interpretation refer to the role of the interpreter as a continuum. Bot (2005) uses the notions translation-machine versus liberal interactive model as the two poles of the continuum. The translation-machine model assumes that the interpreter merely translates the utterances of the primary speaker into the other language without actually participating in the interaction himself. Consequently, the interaction between the primary speakers develops following the same interaction patterns as it would in a monolingual configuration. The only difference relates to the fact that the so-called translation-machine is positioned between the two primary speakers. The liberal interactive model gives the interpreter more action space, which leads him to rely more on his own initiative. Instead of merely functioning as a translation-machine, the interpreter becomes a third participant who bridges the gap between the primary speakers by organising turn-taking and ensuring thematic continuity, for example.

The same continuum can be found in the work of Knapp-Potthoff and Knapp (1986, 1987), who distinguish between a professional and a non-professional interpreter. The professional interpreter corresponds to the translation-machine, as he transmits the utterances between the primary speakers precisely. According to Knapp-Potthoff and Knapp (1986), the function of the non-professional interpreter moves continuously along the continuum and is situated somewhere...
between transmission and mediation. In his or her role as a mediator, the non-professional interpreter not only transmits the interactions of the primary speakers but also explains and explicates presumptions and can even introduce new topics to the conversation. Hence, he or she participates as an autonomous third interactant. Knapp-Pothoff and Knapp (1986, 153) stress the fact that the participation of the non-professional interpreter can change its position along this continuum throughout the course of the interaction. They refer to the non-professional interpreter as ‘the man or woman in the middle’ (ibid).

Apfelbaum (2004) argues that the distinction between professional and non-professional interpretation is based on text-external criteria such as education, training and payment. Based on a conversation analytical study of the interpretation carried out during international expert communication, she concludes that the discursive means and strategies of both professional and non-professional interpreters are essentially the same and that their distinct use can be characterized in a more sophisticated manner based on a continuum that complies with the fundamental linguistic structures of authentic speech.

Wilton (this volume) also presupposes such a continuum with respect to the different roles of the interpreter in translatory action. Her analyses of the interpretation of humorous activities in informal everyday conversations confirm one extreme of the continuum. In fact, Wilton analyses interactants whose main role is that of a fully competent and integrated participant who only takes on the role of a translator on certain occasions during the interaction. They are so-called “self-selects as translators”. They switch fluently between the role of a translator and the role of a normal participant depending on the needs for the progression of the informal conversation.

Wadensjö (1998) proposes a so-called dialogical interpretation model. According to this model, the interpreter does not function as a translation-machine but rather participates in the interaction process on his or her own. She describes the task of the interpreter as that of relaying and co-ordinating. She analyses the translations of the interpreter by focussing on the fundamental question of what relationship exists between the interpreter’s contributions and the original contributions of the primary speakers. In this context Wadensjö distinguishes between renditions and non-renditions with respect to the contributions of the interpreter. The latter notion concerns all of the interpreter’s contributions that do not contain a translation or reformulation of an utterance made by a primary speaker. The former notion relates to the coordinating task of the interpreter within the interaction. For instance, the interpreter may clarify turn assignments and meta-communicative comments. Wadensjö states that renditions and non-renditions can also co-occur in one contribution. She proposes a taxonomy of six renditions including close renditions, expanded renditions, reduced renditions, substituting renditions, summarizing renditions, and lack of renditions (1998, 70).

Meyer (2004) considers Wadensjö’s taxonomy to be a reductive model, since it does not account for the institutional configuration in which translatory actions are carried out and the interpreter must fulfil his task of relaying. In comparing Wadensjö’s model with the analyses of Bührig and Rehbein (2000), Meyer (2004) finds that both approaches analyze the interactive structure of interpretation by focussing on deletions and additions on the part of the interpreter. Wadensjö (ibid.) categorises these changes in her text linguistic-based taxonomy of (non-)renditions as previously indicated. Within a functional pragmatic framework, Bührig and Rehbein (ibid.) reconstruct the consequences of the interpreter’s changes in the propositional content for the institutional actions of the primary speakers. They assume that an interpreter is both observer as well as transmitter of the interaction of the primary speakers. Consequently, the interpreter is able to plan his or her contribution based on the mental schemata developed by primary speakers when structuring their contributions.

While Bot (2005), Knapp-Pothoff and Knapp (1986), Apfelbaum (2004), Wilton (this volume) and Wadensjö (1998) all concentrate on the external formal interactional characteristics of the interpreter’s actions, Bührig and Rehbein (2000) focus on the mental dimension of the
interpretation process. In their theory of *reproductive action* they assume that the interpreter’s translation does not consist of the arbitrary transformation of an utterance from the source language (SL) into an utterance in the target language (TL). They assume that the interpreter’s translation of speech actions results from a reproductive process in which the interpreter’s knowledge is directly related to the translation process itself.

Their reconstruction is based on the following argument (see also Bührig 1999; 2004): The interpreter acts as a transmitter in an interaction in which interactants do not speak the same language. This means that the normal input and output conditions which characterize monolingual interaction are no longer guaranteed. The speech actions of primary speakers are characterised by a rupture between two languages, with the interpreter helping to overcome this rupture. As a consequence of this process of ‘going-in-between’, the speech situation of the primary speakers is dilated by the interpreter. The primary speakers receive a *mediated* rather than an *original* message. In summary, Bührig and Rehbein (ibid.) analyze specific characteristics of the interpreted speech situation based on the assumption that interpretation is realised within an *internal dilated speech situation*.

One of the means used by the interpreter to bridge the barrier is to *characterize* the speech action of the original speakers. Bührig and Rehbein (ibid.) identify the following dimensions of the interpreter’s characterisations: (1) the propositional content of the action of the primary speakers, (2) their action purposes, (3) the pre-history (causes) of their actions, (4) their constellation, (5) the discourse species (the genre) of the speech actions, and finally, (6) the interactional nexus (connectivity). The relevance of these dimensions and the extent to which these characterisations are adopted by interpreters depend on the actual need to bridge the language rupture, which varies according to specific speech actions in the source language or the specific action configuration. Not all translatory actions imply the use of characterisations. In fact, Bührig and Rehbein’s six dimensions can be compared to Wadensjö’s taxonomy of (non) renditions with respect to the fact that both account for the change between original and translatory action. However, the former accounts for the institutional constellation in which the change is taking place. The dimensions can be traced back to a functional pragmatic approach to discourse (Ehlich 1991; Rehbein 2001; Bührig and ten Thije 2005).

A discursive rupture is not characteristic of the interpreter’s discourse alone. This rupture occurs in all speech situations in which time and place do not correspond with one another. According to Ehlich (1984; 1991), dilation occurs whenever a textualised message is transmitted instead of the original message. Ehlich uses the notion of *text* in order to denote this transmission of knowledge in a dilated speech situation in either a written or an oral mode. Bührig and Rehbein (2000) also refer to knowledge transfer in a dilated speech situation as a form of *textualization*. Characterization is one of the possible forms of textualization. The way people characterize their messages depends on *textuality*—in other words the *transmissibility* of the *linguistic action*. Texts with a high transmissibility have a special linguistic structure, as in the case of rhymes, for instance. Rhymes can be remembered more easily than an improvised oral story, for example.

Bührig and Rehbein (ibid.) consider an interpreter in a face-to-face interaction to be a *messenger*. The dilation of the speech situation is *internal*, as only the temporal orientation of the transmitted speech action is dilated in a given speech situation, whereas the spatial orientation remains constant. In the case of external dilated speech actions, interactants have neither a common spatial nor temporal orientation. It is essential for both internal and external dilation that the messenger characterizes the speech actions, resulting the textualisation of the speech actions (Bührig 2004).

Bührig and Rehbein (2000) claim that the existence of an interpreter as a translation machine is impossible. Changes always occur as a consequence of translatory action, these not being arbitrary but rather dependent on the systematic translation process that takes place in the mind of the interpreter. This translation process is determined by the interpreter’s mental acti-
vities. He or she does not repeat the utterances of the primary speakers but rather reproduces them. The interpreter produces an utterance in his or her L2 that is already available via his or her L1 knowledge, embedding utterances in the ongoing discourse while also realizing his or her own purposes.

Primary speakers – in contrast to interpreters – must organize and structure their knowledge before producing an utterance. Their production requires a speaker plan that differs from an interpreter’s speaker plan. When a primary speaker realizes an utterance, the interpreter becomes subject to the following situation: The utterance of the primary speaker is available in the source language (SL), while the utterance in the target language (TL) is unknown for the primary hearer (H). This utterance is Rheme for the (primary) hearer; it contains new knowledge. Since the interpreter understands the source language, it becomes Theme of his knowledge (known). The interpreter thus has the task of transmitting the utterance from SL to TL for the hearer, i.e. from Rheme to Theme of H’s knowledge. Hence, the translatory knowledge relation concerns the relation of Rheme to Theme.

The interpreter in consecutive translation has a double task. First, he or she transmits knowledge from Rheme to Theme for the hearer by realizing translatory actions. At the same time, the interpreter functions as the third speaker in the discourse by realizing speech actions on his or her own accord. Hence, the interpreter is simultaneously translator and third interactant. With respect to the interpreter’s translatory actions, this means that he or she reproduces these actions second hand. Consequently, the illocutions of the primary speaker are not reproduced as actions themselves, but rather as perceptions of the primary speaker’s actions. The utterance ‘bon voyages’ in the first fragment below is translated by ‘he wishes you bon voyages’. According to Austin (1962), this distinction can be seen as a change from phatic to rhetoric speech.

In summary, face-to-face translatory discourse can be considered from a functional pragmatic approach to be realized in an internal dilated speech situation. The interpreter characterizes the original speech action with the purpose of delivering a textualized speech action. The interpreter always participates in a double role, both as transmitter and as third participant. The resulting tripartite discourse structure is constituted by interrelated mental and discursive dimensions. The analysis aims at a reconstruction of this interrelatedness.

3 The end points of the continuum: constellations for retreat

In light of this functional pragmatic theoretical framework I introduce the question of which constellations can lead to the interpreter’s retreat. The retreat of an interpreter is characterized by the interpreter ending his or her translatory actions. This issue has not yet been the subject of intensive consideration in translation studies. Various constellations can lead to a retreat of the interpreter. Only some of these are discussed in the literature on translatory action:

- The interpreter determines that the primary speakers understand each other even without his translations, making translatory actions redundant. Bronsrijk (2006) analyses interrogations

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2 Bührig and Rehbein (2000), like many other researchers (Pöchhacker and Shlesinger 2002), distinguish between three constellations, specifically translations on the one hand and simultaneous and consecutive interpretations on the other hand. When translating a written text, the translator is able to oversee the complete text structure including the underlying knowledge structure in SL before transferring the text into the other language (TL). However, in the case of simultaneous interpretation, the interpreter must anticipate this overall knowledge structure based only on parts of the linguistic structure, as these are uttered in a linear sequential manner. Consequently, the interpreter transfers pieces of utterances from language (SL) into pieces of utterances in language (TL) by presupposing an overall plan on the part of the original speaker. Finally, in the case of consecutive interpretation or so-called ‘turn related interpretation’, the interpreter is able to oversee a completed turn and therefore understands the utterance and the underlying knowledge structure before the actual transmission into another language is executed. This overall insight into the mental plan of the original speaker enables the interpreter in consecutive interpretation to translate the utterances from language SL into language TL having already acquired an overall understanding of the discourse purposes of the original speakers.
of asylum seekers by Dutch functionaries. The presence of an interpreter is legally required
during these interrogations. However, since some asylum seekers have lived in the
Netherlands for a long time prior to these interrogations, they already understand Dutch and
are capable of answering the questions of the functionary directly. Consequently, the
interpreter often retreats.
- Interpreters retreat because primary speakers start to use a language that they cannot translate
appropriately. Ten Thije (2007) reports on the interpreter’s practice in interviews in which
asylum seekers must display their language competencies in all language varieties of their
region of origin. The assigned interpreter is not always capable of translating all these
different varieties and languages. As a result, the interpreter retreats.
- Interpreters are requested to stop their translatory actions due to the fact that they create a
communicative breakdown between the primary speakers, who are then no longer content
with the suggested translations. Bührig (1999) analyses the retreat of a conference interpreter
as a consequence of the discontent of the primary speakers.
- The interpretation is linked to a very specific discourse type (e.g. a humorous genre). Wilton
(this volume) illustrates in her analyses the self-select and, consequently, the self-retreat of
the interpreter in informal conversation depending on the specific need to explain a punch
line. The interpreter retreats after the translation of the punch line.
- The interpreter becomes tired and thus physically and mentally incapable of fulfilling his or
her translatory actions in the appropriate manner and thus retreats.
- The primary speakers structure their interaction in such a way that translatory actions cannot
be realized at all by realizing turns that last for too long without a pause, for instance.
- The interpreter retreats because the primary speakers talk about a topic that requires
professional expertise or specific inside knowledge that he or she ostensibly lacks.
- The interpreter retreats because he can no longer handle the double involvement as both a
translator and third discourse participant. Subsequently, a changeover of the interpreters
takes place in order to guarantee the continuation of the interaction.
This paper focuses especially on the last constellation of self-retreat. Hence, the paper focuses on
the question of how the double involvement of an interpreter may become contradictory. This
double involvement is inherent in translatory actions. Consequently, the reasons for contradiction
can be reconstructed from the two extreme ends of the continuum: (1) from the role of the
interpreter as a translator and (2) from his or her role as a third interactant. From the first
perspective, one could imagine that the interpreter characterizes speech actions of the primary
speaker in such a way that the translated speech action pattern is abandoned and another pattern
is adopted in which the interpreter his- or herself is addressed as primary speaker. The resulting
translatory actions cannot be combined with his or her actions as a third actor. From the second
perspective, one could imagine that primary speakers discuss a topic in which the interpreter is
addressed directly as a primary speaker. Consequently, the interpreter must realize speech
actions on his or her own account in order to continue the interaction between primary speakers
and thus fails to realise the translatory actions.
Based of authentic data, I will examine in detail how these contradictions are dealt with
in discourse. It is important to begin this case study by analyzing the institutional and
intercultural constellation (see also ten Thije 2002) in order to be able to reconstruct the specific
institutional qualities of the interpreter’s contradictions.

4 The data

The data for this paper were collected in the context of an international academic project in
which Germans, Dutch and Danes worked together with Russians (see also ten Thije 1998,
2003, 2006b). The main purpose of the project was to develop a curriculum for new forms of
training in the field of ‘social work’ in post-Soviet-Union society. Russian colleagues were
trained at Western European universities by Western European colleagues in order to become acquainted with the theory and practice of social work in Western European countries. The coordinating team consisting of representatives from each of the countries involved in the project met regularly in Russia. The team worked together for a long period of time and experienced a large number of administrative difficulties in accomplishing their tasks. The goals of the project needed to be reached within a strict time schedule. In this respect, the project resembles many other cooperative supranational projects which can be seen as a result of the Eastern European expansion of the European Community and the rebuilding of societal systems in Eastern Europe (De Stefani 2000). The core of the Russian team consisted of six women, whereas all of the members from the Western European countries were men, meaning that gender also played a role in shaping the institutional and intercultural teamwork.

Although English was used as a *lingua franca*, the restricted language competencies of the Russian team members did not always guarantee mutual understanding. Certain team members therefore took up the role of ‘non-professional’ interpreters (Knapp / Knapp-Potthoff 1985) in order to facilitate the intercultural understanding for their colleagues. This type of communicative situation created a transparent constellation (Müller 1989), since half of the Russian team members were already moderately proficient in English and could understand the foreigners speaking English directly. Emerging intercultural misunderstandings were sometimes dealt with and sometimes neglected, with team members often discussing assumed expectations tied to linguistic and cultural knowledge. Consequently, team discussions reflected the process of reorganisation of fixed expectations and the emergence of a common ground. Ten Thije (2003) analyses this process as the genesis of a *discursive interculture* within the international project.

The multilingual Dutch-English-Danish-Russian constellation offered all parties the opportunity to use their own language for internal consultations, even during official meetings. When using their Dutch or Russian mother tongue, participants could be sure that non-Dutch speaking or non-Russian speaking team members were not able to understand what was being said. Müller (1989) characterizes these constellations as non-transparent constellations. Obviously, these non-transparent constellations also affected the interaction in English. This group-specific manifold communicative potential contributed to a type of *discursive interculture* which Fienemann and Rehbein (2004, 264) refer to as a "*lingua franca interculture* with a *multilingual base*".

Each of the meetings of the multicultural coordination team were audio-recorded over the course of three years. During working visits in Russia, the delegation visited many different social institutions. Consequently, the recordings included meetings, receptions, presentations, guided tours, general small talk, preliminary consultations, conversations during dinner and the proposing of toasts. The total length of the corpus is about 40 hours. For this paper, a subset of the corpus containing the toasts proposed during a team visit to Russia was extracted, transcribed and analyzed in detail. Ten Thije (1998) presents a first analysis of the discourse species of toasting. This paper expands upon this study by means of an analysis of institutional and homileic (i.e. phatic) discourse while focussing on translatory actions.

### 5 Toasting as institutional discourse

Frake (1972) has shown in his classic sociolinguistic study that proposing a toast in other cultures can be seen as an elaborate institutional discourse species: among the Subanum, the procedure of toasting establishes social hierarchy and administers justice. Kotthoff (1995; 1997) presents an extensive analysis of the thematic, interactive and institutional structures of toasting in Georgia.

In Western European cultures, the discourse of toasting is not as significant as in Georgia. Nonetheless, the discourse of toasting can be considered an expression of a polite
action in many cultures. Fienemann and Rehbein (2004, 225) state that by using polite forms of speaking and acting, interactants express a certain courteous goodwill by acting in accordance with the respective social measures, i.e., their - potentially - incompatible control field (i.e. their sphere of command) is "neutralised" and their respective “action fields” (i.e. power dispositions) are calibrated. Subsequently, the authors (ibid.) state that by acting politely, speakers usually undergo a process of reflexivity in which they view the constellation from the perspective of a third party, i.e. they take on a "bystander-role" (Goffmann 1981).

By proposing a toast in intercultural discourse, interactants demonstrate their “courteous goodwill” towards one another. They act according to social conventions in order “to neutralise” potential threats stemming from their different social and cultural standards, while their courteous words simultaneously reveal to what extent they take existing power relations into account. In fact, the analysis will assess how the toasts express these mutual estimations. Moreover, verbalisation of the reflective activities from a 'bystander position', as suggested by Fienemann and Rehbein (ibid.), may provide insight into the interculturality of their interactions. Consequently, whenever a toast is realized in a multilingual constellation in which an interpreter is needed, the interpreter’s translatory actions result in specific discourse structures. Thus, one may gain specific insights into the process of intercultural understanding conducted by interpreters by means of reconstructing translatory action of toasting in multilingual constellations.

As guests of the Russians, the Western European team members became familiar with Russian toasts and learned to respond appropriately to this verbal expression of hospitality. The Russian toast is less literal or stylised than the Georgian one, yet nonetheless represents a part of everyday discourse (cf. Kotthoff 1995, 1997). Toasts are often proposed when people drink vodka or champagne together (cf. Jatzkowskaja 1994) and rules the pertaining to the content, form and order of toasts are expected to be adhered to (Richmond 1992).

As an example of a Russian toast, I will present the following text excerpt in which a Russian official, Vladimir, proposes a toast to the Dutch delegation at the end of their working visit at the Russian institution (see also ten Thije 1998). In his toast, the director of the department addresses the two Dutch team members. Hans is the project coordinator and has already been to Russia several times, whereas Otto is visiting Russia for the first time. The Russian official thanks the Dutchmen for their participation in the international project. Fienemann (2006) describes the speech action pattern of rendering thanks as a reflective communicative process that interrupts the exchanges of gifts. Rendering thanks is not only an expression of emotional feelings, but also a reflection of the social means that constitute courteous goodwill whereby the speaker enables the hearer H to act in accordance with this goodwill. (Fienemann and Rehbein 2004, 256). The toast below displays both courteous goodwill as well as reflections on social measures of the international cooperation.

Since I begin with an analysis of the discursive structures of toasting, the translatory actions of the interpreter are left out in the first two fragments. The deletion of the translation actions is marked with the signs (**). The toast of the Russian host official is as follows:

**Fragment 1: Toast of the host**

Participants:
RV: Vladimir (Russian official)
NH: Hans (Dutch delegation leader)
NO: Otto (Dutch team member)
RW: Wera (Russian team member, non-professional interpreter)
All: six Russian team members
RV: [1] Now my dear friends I would like to thank you from all our heart for / for the splendid work you've done here.
We'll wish you bon voyage. nach / nach Holland. (***)

All: [3] laugh

RV: [4] Well for just for Hans, while Hans is quite a different situation because he's been part of our teaching staff already. (***)
[5] He is / As for / as for / as for Otto to whom I would like to have him as our constant member in the future. (***)
[6] So for our future cross cultural contacts for many many years ahead. (***)
[7] So happy return home. (***)

This toast includes typical characteristics of a Russian toast, e.g. standard formulations such as from all our hearts, splendid work, so for our future ... contact for many, many years ahead, and even the required creative expressions, such as the double code-switching 'bon voyage nach Holland', which alludes to the special multilingual framework of the project. The toast expresses praise for the activities carried out during the working visit, respect towards the individual members of the delegation, a certain satisfaction with the international company, the hope of continuing the cooperation, and the wish for a safe return home. According to Fienemann (ibid.), this toast reflects social measures that constitute courteous goodwill within an international team, whereby the host enables the Dutch partners to act according to the social measures of academic colleagues.

The second example of a toast was proposed by the Dutch delegation leader, Hans, during the same working visit to an old people’s home. After proposing an initial toast in which he thanks the director of the home for his hospitality, he proposes a second toast in which he specifically addresses the six female Russian team members, as the visit to the home coincided with International Women’s Day (March 8th). This second toast from the Dutch project co-ordinator is presented as follows:

Fragment 2: A toast on International Women’s Day
Participants:

NH: Hans (Dutch delegation leader)
NO: Otto (Dutch team member)
RS: Stanislav Stanislavovitsch, forename Alec (Russian, director of the rest home)
RB: Boris (Russian student, non-professional interpreter)
RZ: Zina (Russian team member)
RW: Wera (Russian team member)
RN: Natasha (Russian team member)
RA: Anna (Russian team member)
RI: Ida (Russian team member)
RT: Tanja (Russian team member)
RX: an unnamed Russian team member

NH: [1] Alec, may I bring another toast?
[2] In Holland I am not used to bring so many toasts. (***)
[3] But now I got a special reason for it. (***)
[4] It’s â€/ the first was about the visit to this (institution). (***)
[5] My second goes to â€ the fact that it is the eight of March today (***)
[6] and we are glad that we have six of such beautiful examples of the female human nature among us (***)

RW: [7] laughs (***)

RZ: [8] it’s compliment (***)

RB: [9] it’s joke (***
NH: [10] Some/ some/ äh sometimes äh our compliments are a bit doubted (***)
[11] But this is a very serious one (***)
[12] I am very glad to be here with you and
[13] I äh I wish you everything good in your life, all the things that you as a woman
deserves to have in you life. (***)
RA: [14] Good said
NH: [15] (raising his glass) Tanja, Zina, Ida
RI: [16] Thanks. You are the right / you are the right gentlemen.
All: [17] Clinking of glasses

After asking for permission from the director to propose another toast in segments s1 and s2, the Dutchman announces the special reason for his second toast (s3). Subsequently, he reminds the audience of his first toast (s4) and refers to the actual date, the eighth of March (s5). In s6, he compliments the female team members on their beauty. The compliment provokes different reactions: Wera laughs (s7) and Zina explains that the toast is meant as a complement (s8), whereas Boris, the non-professional interpreter, remarks that it is a joke (s9). The Dutchman seems to recognize the various interpretations, as he hesitates at the beginning of his utterance in s10 and subsequently confirms that his compliments are not always taken seriously by the Russian team members. However, he states in s11 that this time his complement should be taken seriously, he reinforces the compliment, expresses his pleasure with respect to the present company (s12,) and he wishes all of the women “all the things they deserve in life” (s13).

The reactions in s14 and s16 clearly show that the translatory constellation in this discourse fragment is partially transparent (Müller 1989,), since at least two Russian team members obviously understand English and are capable of responding directly in English. The compliment is accepted and appreciated. In s16, the Russian team member first thanks and then compliments her Dutch colleague by addressing him as the right gentlemen. According to Fienemann and Rehbein (2004, 225), this fragment shows various polite forms of speaking and acting, as the male and female actants demonstrate mutual courteous goodwill by acting according to standards of mutual politeness. Both refer to particular female standards on the occasion of International Women’s Day that are regarded as high social values both in Russia and in Western European countries.

To sum up, the toast shows that the Dutch team member is capable of proposing a toast in an adequate and appreciated form and is even capable of repairing possible misunderstandings. Moreover, the toast shows that the relationship between men and women in the team is respected and addressed in an honourable manner. These observations are important since the relationship between men and women is one of the issues addressed in the next toast. The teasing within the next toast is responsible for the replacement of the interpreter (see the fragments below). Accordingly, the next section focuses on the discourse structure of teasing.

6 Teasing as homileic discourse

Humour is often regarded as very important for the success of intercultural understanding (cf. Hofstede 1991). Although research on humour in general is extensive, little work has been carried out in the field of intercultural communication. Although Chiaro (1992), for instance, has discussed problems in translating humour and Kotthoff (1998) has presented different analyses of humour in interaction, the matter of how humour shapes intercultural discourse is scarcely analysed. Lee’s work (1994) contains an example in which he discusses how jokes can cause considerable conflicts in intercultural communication due to the fact that hidden cultural knowledge is often presupposed. He presents some discourse strategies developed
especially for coping with these problems in achieving intercultural understanding. While Lee (ibid.) focuses on the intercultural understanding of cartoons and Dimova (2000) investigates the translation of jokes, Wilton (this volume) analyses conversational humour and the interactive translation of punch lines. Bührig (2004) analyses the interpretation of persiflaging discourse. Persiflaging and teasing can both be regarded as features of homileic discourse. According to Ehlich and Rehbein (1979), homileic discourse refers to discourse forms such as small talk, telling stories, jokes, etc., which function primarily in establishing a community but can also be functionalized for institutional purposes. In everyday language, one could speak of applied humour (cf. Mulkay (1988 cit. in More 1993).

According to Eder (1993) and Günthner (1996), teasing exhibits a double actant’s structure: on the one hand, the speaker, i.e. the teaser, makes a provocative remark - which can include mock challenges, negative commands or even hostile threats, if taken literally - towards another person, the teased person. The teasing remark can contain exaggerations, contradictions and implausible expressions, or it can be accompanied by para-verbal or meta-communicative comments, signalling to the teased person that he or she should take the remark in a playful manner. The success of teasing depends to a large extent on the reactions of the audience. As long as the audience laughs, the teasing is successful. As soon as the audience quiets down or agrees with objections raised by the teased person, teasing has then failed. The best possible reaction for the teased person is to turn the situation around and to tease the teaser. According to Alberts (1992), the positions of teaser and teased person cannot be as easily reversed in the context of male-female communication in the workplace. Thus, when a man teases a woman in the context of workplace communication, this may result in an allegation of sexual harassment.

The toast presented below is proposed by the Dutch leader of the delegation in response to the farewell toast offered by the official Russian host (see fragment 1). In his response toast, the Dutchman initially pays respect to the institutional toasting conventions discussed in section 4. Subsequently, he realizes certain speech actions and addresses topics which belong to the discourse of teasing. The embedding of the teasing in the toast results in contradictory provocative claims by the Dutchman towards the interpreters, resulting in their retreating twice.

7 The self-retreat of an interpreter

In the following, I will take a closer look at the self-retreat of the interpreter. The complete fragment of the response toast proposed by the Dutchman can be found in appendix 2. Fragment 3 below contains the discourse stretches in which the interpreter, Wera (RW), retreats resulting in her colleague Vladimir (RV) taking over. This exchange occurred as the result of a teasing remark made by the Dutchman, who states that he himself has been harassed. The exchange of interpreters takes place after RW confesses that she was the subject of the teasing. In section 3 above, I concluded that an interpreter can occupy two possible positions: translator and third participant. The thesis suggests that the interpreter can retreat when these two positions contradict each other. In the following fragment, the primary speaker indirectly mentions a topic in which the interpreter is addressed as primary speaker.

This fragment begins after the Dutchman expresses his thanks towards the Russian official for his hospitality in accordance with the conventions of toasting. He then makes the following remark in his toast.

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3 Bührig (2004) differentiates between persiflaging and teasing. She argues that while teasing starts with the teaser making a negative remark towards the teased person, persiflaging is also concerned with the communicative prehistory of the negative remark and aims at the reflection of the teased person towards the exaggerated comments made by the teaser.
Fragment 3: T4/20-33; ‘Toast to say goodbye’

RV: Vladimir (Russian official, second interpreter during toast)
RB: Boris, (Russian student, interpreter during working visit)
NH: Hans (Dutch delegation leader, proposer of the toast)
NO: Otto (Dutch team member)
RW: Wera (Russian team member, first interpreter during toast)

All: six Russian team members

2NH2 ['And I have to tell you one problem we had to deal with.]

2NH2 ['There was really one serious problem.]

2NH2 ['Except from the harassment of some of your employees.]

2NH2 ['You can translate as well]

2NH2 ['There was an/']

2NH2 ['At/ At] Apart from the harassment by one of your employees.

2NH2 ['What exactly?']

2NH2 ['Чё такое?']

2NH2 ['Well, that’s what we talked about, laughed about on Sunday.']

2NH2 ['ара, ара']

2NH2 ['uh-huh, uh-huh']
Apart from the bother,
caused for him by one of the employees of our university.
Well, that was me.

There was really one serious problem that

Well, that means, he said.
Uh-huh, that means, he said.

That there was one problem, Otto and I have already discussed this, in general.
We don't know, who we can trust and who not.

The analysis below is structured according to the following three argumentative steps: the first step is related to the question of how teasing is realized within this multilingual discourse fragment. The second step concerns the translatory actions of the interpreter, while the third step refers to the self-retreat of the interpreter.

The realisation of the teasing phases can be reconstructed as follows: In s37-38 the Dutchman (NH) addresses the Russian official, Vladimir (RV) as the representative of the institution and announces that the Dutch delegation has had a serious problem during their
working visit to the Russian university. The interpreter, Wera (RW), summarizes this announcement in s 39 by reproducing that a problem exists. Subsequently, NH formulates in s 40 a side sequence (cf. Jefferson 1972) starting with apart from, followed by the harassment by one of your employees. Within the pattern of teasing, this remark can be considered as a provocative one. The remark is directly addressed at the official by making use of the deictic procedure your and, therefore, his institutional responsibility is engaged which makes the allegation even more severe. No translation is formulated by RW. In s 41 NH coughs, and begins to repeat his remark, but stops and addresses the interpreter RW directly by asking her to translate you can translate as well. This direct request to translate is remarkable in a constellation in which RW has been the interpreter from the very beginning of the toast. Within the pattern of teasing, this request could be interpreted as an indication that something uncommon or unexpected is at hand, in which the addressed person plays a special role. The interpreter (RW) hesitates in s 44 uttering and and in Russian. Subsequently, NH repeats his remark in s 45, and rephrases his allegation more precisely by stating that not some but one of the Russian employees has behaved impolitely. According to the teasing pattern (Günthner 1996), the teased person is always addressed directly. It is striking that in this stretch of discourse the teased person is addressed by way of an allusion. Wilss (1988) notes that allusions can only be understood if the alluded knowledge is available to all participants involved in the discourse. In this case, the teaser creates a specific group-bound communicative task of discovering the person intended by his remark regarding the harassment.

The reproach of the teaser is not translated immediately. Rather, it initiates an internal non-transparent (Müller 1998) Russian discourse, in which the speech situation is no longer dilated, instead creating an interaction space of its own. The language rupture between English and Russian is not bridged. Consequently, the Russian discourse cannot be understood by the Dutch participants. It is striking that the interpreter (RW) does not formulate a clarification turn by asking the primary speaker to explain his speech, something which happens quite often in non–professional interpretation (Knapp-Potthoff and Knapp 1987). In that case the interpreter would have asked NH what he means by harassment. Instead, she indicates to her English speaking Russian colleagues RV and RB that she does not understand this notion. The subsequent Russian discourse s 47-s 55 includes the clarification of the notion harassment, but also the realisation and completion of the teasing pattern. In s 47 the Russian official (RV) starts to describe the word harassment and is interrupted in s 48 by RB. The latter is the Russian student who was responsible for interpretation during the entire working visit. He refers, in s 48, to a common humorous experience at an earlier stage of the working visit. Within the teasing pattern his remark can also be considered a meta-communicative comment. RW acknowledges this humorous event in s 49 and confesses in s 51 that she herself is the person who is being blamed for the harassment. This means that she accepts being the teased person. The official (RV) accepts RW’s confession in s 53 and, subsequently RW and an unidentified person (R?) start laughing (s 54, s 55). This laughter can be considered the positive audience reaction within the teasing pattern by at least part of the audience.

Within the monolingual teasing pattern (cf. Günthner 1996), this laughter indicates the success of the intended teasing. One must observe, however, that most members of the audience do not react verbally to the teasing remark and remain silent, meaning that the teasing was not successful for everybody in the audience. Moreover, in the multilingual constellation in which the Russian discourse is not being translated, we can conclude that the teaser (NH) has formulated a provocative remark in English. This initiated a teasing pattern that led to the Russian-only speech situation. RW accepts the position of the teased person in the newly initiated Russian speech situation. The teased person (RW) and part of the audience (R?) begin laughing in s 54 and s 55 as a reaction to the confession of the teased person. Her confession is not translated to the teaser himself. Nonetheless, the non-verbal reactions of laughing can be observed and interpreted by the teaser. Although the speech situation in Russian is not internally dilated at this moment, laughing may overcome the language rupture, i.e., the teaser (NH) might
conclude that his teasing was at least partially successful. From the subsequent discourse during
the remaining part of the toast it becomes clear that after her confession of being the teased
person, RW does not verbally react to the Dutchman’s provocative remark. She only comments
on the toast at the end by saying Ah, what a joke (s91).

On the basis of the reconstruction of teasing, we can now progress to the next step of the
analysis by asking the question of how the interpreter translates the utterances made by the
primary speaker. The answer to this question will shed light on the question of how the non-
transparent Russian discourse functions in the overall translation and also help us to understand
what caused the self-retract of the interpreter. Interestingly, the dimensions of the
characterisation presented by Bührig and Rehbein (2000) can be used to analyze the speech
actions in the Russian discourse. In s46 the interpreter (RW) indicates that she does not
understand the propositional content of the primary speaker’s speech action (i.e. the meaning of
the word harassment). RW can consider NH’s utterance as a Rheme of her knowledge. RV
begins to characterize the propositional content by using his linguistic knowledge of English. He
is interrupted by RB who, in s48, characterizes the propositional content by mentioning the
prehistory of the speech situation and realizing the common group knowledge with respect to the
discussion and laughter on the previous Sunday. In fact, RB characterizes the common
experiences as a discourse species with homileic qualities. His characterization clarifies the
potential action purpose of the speech action of the primary speaker (NH), both for the
interpreter (RW) and for the rest of the Russian audience. From the common knowledge of the
prehistory, the indirect realization of NH’s reproach can be interpreted as a provocative remark
directed at RW. Subsequently, RV translates the notion of harassment in s50 with the notion of
bother. RW accepts and reformulates this characterization in s51 as intense interest.

Furthermore, RV changes one of your colleagues in s48 into one of the employees of our
university in Russian. Hence, RV changes the deictic and symbolic procedures of NH’s speech
action. He redirects the personalized address of the remark initially directed at himself as the
academic official in charge of the project by indicating that some member of the general
academic community of the university is responsible for the harassment. In the utterance made
by the primary speaker (NH), RV is addressed in his institutional position. RV’s reformulation of
the institutional constellation in the actual speech situation is adequate because he splits his roles
of the interpreter (RW) and primary speaker (RV). He thereby indicates that he can handle the
potential contradiction of the interpreter’s double role.

The successful functional equivalence of RV’s translation can be seen in the reaction of
RW in s52, in which she confesses that she is the member of the university that NH is referring
to. In sum, NH’s reproach is translated for the Russian audience by referencing (1) the prehistory
and (2) the propositional content as well as through (3) the constellation in the actual speech
situation and (4) the discourse species (i.e. genre) of the speech actions. Although (5) the
purpose of the speech action (i.e. reproach) is not explicitly textualized, the different dimensions
of characterization as a whole clarify the reproach of NH. The confession made by RW in the
Russian discourse makes it clear that RV’s translation is also successful from another
perspective, i.e. that the speech action pattern of a reproach is conventionally followed either by
a denial or a confession. RW’s confession removes the potential threat of NH’s reproach for the
whole Russian delegation. If the accusation had remained unanswered, these courteous words
would indicate that the power relations between the Dutch and Russian delegations could end
up out of balance.

One might observe that the translatory actions of RV and RB do not characterize (6) the
interactional nexus (e.g. connectivity) of NH’s speech action in s40/s45. In fact, the connectors
‘expect from’ in s40 and apart from in s45 are not actually translated. The side sequences that
these formulations would normally initiate create a new speech situation here in which the
speech pattern of teasing is not only translated but also realized and completed. This completion
seems reasonable in the constellation of the international cooperation in which one of the
employees of the responsible official is being accused of acting impolitely. The translatory actions can be considered to be functionally equivalent.

Finally, in the third step of the analysis, the self-retreat of the interpreter RW will be analyzed: RW does not know the Rheme of the speech action of the primary speaker in s40 and s45. As soon as she realizes what is meant by harassment as a result of the clarification by her colleagues (RV and RB), she understands that she is actually being addressed as the primary speaker herself. In the discourse type of toasting, in which the toaster has the right to speak for a longer period of time, she accepts that it is not possible to react to the primary speaker immediately as a third speaker. However, in the Russian non-transparent speech situation, she openly takes responsibility for the presumed impolite action and also publicly admits that she is the person being teased. The Russian discourse is not translated for NH. Consequently, he cannot understand that RW has confessed to her colleagues in Russian. Due to the non-verbal laughing of RW and R?, NH might conclude that his teasing has been acknowledged by the teased person RW and by some other members of the audience (R?). The self-retreat of the interpreter is the result of the contradiction of her double role. Through her self-retreat, she also contributes to the successful continuation of the toast. The Russian official (RV) takes over the position of the interpreter in s59.

In the next fragment we see how the toast continues. RW has retreated and RV has taken over the interpretation, but the latter also hands over his role. In fact, the subsequent interpretation is carried out in tandem, with two interpreters being involved. Wilton (this volume) illustrates the same reason for a change of interpreter within interactive translation. The interpretation in the next two fragments contains a cooperative narrative in which additional participants work together in order to recall and display common group experiences (Quasthoff 1980). The exchange between the interpreters reveals discourse structures that are fundamental to translatory actions. Self-retreats in our data nicely show how the double role of the interpreter as both transmitter and third participant can be coped with successfully.

Fragment 5 is taken from the last part of the same toast shown in fragment 4. After the critical remarks concerning the sexual harassment, the Dutchman addresses other precarious topics that for space reasons cannot be analyzed in this paper in detail. I will therefore merely mention the subsequent speech actions. NH reveals that the Dutch team members did not know whether they could trust their Russian colleagues. He explains this statement by asserting that the Dutch made compliments during their working visit which the Russians did not accept or take seriously. NH continues by stating that the Dutchmen had agreed to reduce the number of compliments and to only tell the truth. Afterwards, he begins to tell a story that is shown in the fragment below.

The speech actions of the proposer of the toast can be considered reflections on polite actions and courteous goodwill within this type of international cooperation. Again, their provocative formulations comply with the teasing structure, in which the teased person is not addressed personally - here, the Russian team members are addressed - and teased - as a group. The Russian official (RV) is the interpreter of the toast. It is striking that RV comments on the toast during his translatory action (see s69 in the annex) by saying in Russian that the proposer of the toast (NH) expresses himself in a very complicated manner. This comment indicates to the audience that the speech actions of the toast might be ambiguous.

The second self-retreat can be observed in s79, shown in fragment 5 below. The interpreter (RV) notes that he was not present at the described event and therefore retreats. Subsequently, the previous interpreter (RW) again takes over by translating this utterance (s80). Afterwards, RV continues translating until the end of the recording.

*Fragment 5: T4/47-56: Continuation of the ‘toast to say goodbye’*
We got a toast. It was during one of the evenings.

We got a toast and it was said: 'we are coming to the end of the evening'.

I was not present there.

Now he says, one of evening at
the home of one of our friends, he said:

'So, now the evening is coming to an end'.

So of course again we thought this is honest.

So we/ we shamed/ we felt shamed and we packed our things and run out of the door.

But of course, they took it seriously and they thought, that

it did indeed mean that the evening was coming to its end.

we so to gathered our things and we blushed.

Everything the honest truth

and we so to gathered our things and we blushed.

We were uncomfortable and we wanted to leave.

In s79 the Russian official (RV), instead of translating the previous utterance of the primary speaker (NH), states that he was not present at the event referred to in the toast. In professional interpretation, not being present would not be a valid argument for a change of the interpreter, but this fragment indicates that personal involvement and knowledge of the prehistory of the communicative events addressed by the primary speakers are important prerequisites for effective interpretation. From ethnographic sources we know that the Dutchmen never left the house, nor did the hostess scream out of the window. In fact, this story represents a ‘persiflage’ of what actually took place. The formulations used by the proposer of the toast correspond to the kind of exaggerations that are characteristic of teasing.

The story of the toast made by the toast giver refers to the repair of a misunderstanding that can be traced back to a lack of cultural knowledge on the part of the Dutch with respect to the social sequence of Russian toasting at home. The penultimate toast is reserved for the hostess to praise her guests and thank them for their presence. The last toast should be
proposed by the guests themselves (cf. Kotthoff 1995, 1997). Although the penultimate toast functions as an initiation of the leave taking process, the visitors are expected not to leave immediately. A group may stay seated after the meal for a moment to avoid a rash farewell, as this would be very unusual for many Russians.

Due to the premature ending of the (audio) recording, the audience’s final reaction to the toast is unfortunately not documented. The question as to whether the toast was successful, however, can be answered as follows: The fact that teasing was embedded in the toast raised the expectation on the part of the Russians that the formulations would correspond to speech actions such as praise, mutual respect, satisfaction and hope for future co-operation - actions that had also been uttered in previous toasts between team members and thus constituted part of their common team knowledge (see fragment 1). As soon as the audience recognized that the Dutch toast contained playful exaggerations, which became clear during the funny story, the other critical remarks could be retrospectively reinterpreted. The doubt expressed with respect to Russian reliability (s58, in the annex) could also be interpreted as an apology for impolite actions, while the reproach concerning sexual harassment (segments 40 and 45) could be interpreted as an exaggerated compliment. Such a positive interpretation of the compliment could be based on the association of the toast on International Women’s Day (see fragment 2). Finally, these re-interpretations can be confirmed with reference to ethnographic information revealing hearty laughter and the joyful raising of glasses by all of the interactants at the end of the encounter.

Fragment 6 shows the last part of the recorded toast in which the Russian team members comment on the teasing and toasting.

**Fragment 6: T4/57-61: Final part of the toast to say goodbye**

> But then they shout from out of the window: ‘No no, it’s not honest. Come back.’

Then, as we got going,

> he called out and said, that no, it was not meant seriously,

Ah, what a joke.

> ‘It’s not true, come back’.

Well, it’s such a joke.

> ‘No no, it’s not honest. Come back.’

> ‘It’s not true, come back’.

> ‘It’s not true, come back’.

> ‘It’s not true, come back’.

> ‘It’s not true, come back’.

> ‘It’s not true, come back’.
The comments made in s91 and s93 are highly important for the overall analysis of the toast since they show that at least two interactants actually interpreted the teasing in the toast as humour. In fact, the formulation of the second comment (s93) firmly categorizes the toast as a joke. The utterance made by RX contains a generalization in which the Dutchman’s joke is qualified as a group characteristic of how they make jokes. However, one does not know whether she is referring to that’s the way men joke or that’s the way the Dutch joke or that’s the way Western Europeans joke. In any case, according to Barth (1969), one could note that a cultural boundary has been interactively constructed, separating an in-group and an out-group. In summary, one can conclude that intercultural understanding does not mean that all participants agree on the same values; rather, they seem to recognize and respect them.

It should also be noted that these comments are not actually transferred to the Dutch speaker, i.e., the proposer of the toast and teaser does not know whether the teasing contained in his toast has actually been understood. The ultimate grounds for my diagnosis of successful mutual understanding are based on ethnographic sources.

8 Conclusions

This paper has described a case study of institutional, intercultural and translatory discourse. The analysis exemplifies the functional pragmatic approach to translatory action by focussing on an extreme action of the interpreter, namely his self-retreat.

In a survey of different theories of translatory discourse, I have shown that the distinction between professional and non-professional interpreters should be rejected and replaced by the concept of a continuum of the interpreter’s action space. On one pole of this continuum the interpreter is considered as a sole transmitter of utterances between the original speakers and on the other pole is regarded as an autonomous (third) participant equal to the original speakers. The action space of the interpreter can be conceptualized by an internal dilated speech situation in which the language rupture between the original speakers is bridged by the reproduction of their speech actions in various translatory modes. The stages of this continuum can be reconstructed as different forms of textualization by the interpreter. The characterization of the primary speaker’s utterances is one means of reproduction.

The analysis of the translatory actions has been reconstructed in recurrent analytical phases that can be summarized as follows (cf. also ten Thije 2002):

Firstly, the institutional constellation of the cooperation of an international team is analyzed in order to determine the institutional positions of the Russian and Dutch officials and their functionaries. The reconstruction reveals different language competencies in English, Russian and Dutch with respect to the various team members. These differences in language competency explain the need for interpretation for some of the Russian team members. This language constellation also explains the occurrence of non-transparent speech situations both in Dutch and Russian; both parties can speak their own language without being understood by the others. This multilingual constellation appears to be an important factor in international cooperation and the establishment of a discursive interculture (Koole and ten Thije 1994, 2001; ten Thije 2003).
Secondly, the discourse type or genre of toasting is reconstructed as a form of polite action in which courteous goodwill is formulated while paying respect to social measures. Certain standards of this discourse type could be identified on the basis of the Russian discourse type of toasting. The characteristics of an intercultural realization of this discourse type could then be reconstructed based on these cultural standards. This intercultural realization was determined by embedding the speech action pattern of teasing in the toasting. The proposer of the toast simultaneously acts as the teaser, while the interpreter is addressed as the teased person and the other participants are treated as the audience of the teasing.

The analysis of the embedding of teasing (Günthner 1996) in toasting (Kotthoff 1995, 1997) led in a third analytical phase to the conclusion that this concurrence of discourse structures provided the Dutch with the opportunity to playfully reflect on differences in Russian and Dutch social measures of polite action. The main topic of the toast refers to the problem of giving compliments and showing personal interest in male – female international cooperation. The issue wittily addressed by the toast giver refers to the question of to what extent giving compliments must to be taken seriously, when such compliments actually support effective team cooperation, and when they are overdone and hence might be considered personal harassment. The analysis demonstrates the characteristics of the complexity of gender discourse in intercultural communication. Although this case study may only hint at the importance of gender discourse, it is quite clear that gender should not be considered as a language external factor but should rather be incorporated in the discourse analysis from the beginning (Eckert and McConnel-Ginet 2003).

Finally, I wish to summarize the conclusions with respect to the analysis of translatory action. By presupposing an internal dilated speech situation for translatory action, I was able to reconstruct the manner in which the teasing pattern was initiated in a dilated speech situation and completed in a non-transparent Russian interaction space. In fact, the problem of translating the notion of harassment was resolved by initiating a clarification turn that was not directly addressed at the original speaker, as one would expect, but rather at the Russian audience. As soon as her Russian colleagues explain the notion and the interpreter understands the propositional content of the speech action of the Dutch primary speaker, she displays her understanding by realizing the hearer-side of the illocution of his reproach in the target language. The interpreter confesses that she was the person involved in the harassment. The analysis reveals the collapse of the two roles of the interpreter, which subsequently leads to her withdrawal from the position of interpreter.

The constellation of the self-retreat of an interpreter has scarcely been discussed in translation studies. This case study reconstructs in great detail how the roles of an interpreter as a transmitter on the one hand and as an independent third participant on the other contradict each other and result in the retreat of the interpreter. At first glance this conclusion corresponds to the common sense rule that interpreters should not be actively involved in the discourse they are interpreting. However, as I concluded from a review of the state of the art of translation studies, interpreters are always more or less involved in the discourse, a phenomenon that can be described on the basis of a continuum. Consequently, paying more attention to the constellation of self-retreat increases our understanding of translatory action in general. This case study shows one case of self-retreat caused by an excessive degree of personal involvement and one caused by a case of too little involvement on the part of the interpreter. The theoretical impetus of this case study thus relates to the reconstruction of the everyday notion of the personal involvement of the interpreter.

9 References


Koole, Tom and Jan D. ten Thije (1994) The construction of intercultural discourse. Team discussions of educational advisers, Amsterdam & Atlanta: RODOPI.


Wilton, Antje (this volume) ‘Interactional Translation’.
Appendix 1: Transcription conventions

Score transcription conventions
The score format follows musical notation. Each speaker is given three lines:
- a verbal communication line (indicated by speaker initials in capitals; e.g. RI);
- a non-verbal communication line (indicated by italics);
- an intonation line (indicated by >).
Verbal and non-verbal communication transcribed above each other within a score indicates simultaneity.
In addition, the following conventions are used:

Verbal communication line

/  Repair
(not understood
(walks)  good guess
bucks)  pause of 1 second
.  pause of less than 1 second
(language)  naming a verbal activity
'Hm'  not certain which speaker uttered 'Hm'

information on the section between brackets is given under the score

number of segment

number of subsegment
.,  (full stop) sentence final falling intonation
?,  non sentence final rising intonation

Intonation line

!  stress
-  lengthened
/  rising intonation
\  falling intonation
V  doubling
^  shortened

Appendix 2: Toasts to say goodbye (March 9th 1996)

NH  Hans
NO  Otto
RV  Vladimir
RZ  Zina
RW  Wera
RN  Natascha
RA  Anna
RI  Ida
RT  Tanja
RX  Unknown

"I am very glad I have had the opportunity to see VXXXXXXXXXX"
2NH2 by snow.  "That was the first time.  "Yeah

2NO2

"Yeah?

2H2O2

"Hm

2K

2KO2 (1 sec.)

"Hans saw Vxxxxxxx covered in snow for the first time yesterday

2K

3K
Yes, please. You are the head of the team.

Let's have a top-up!

So please

take glasses again. this is yours.

glasses

all laugh

Don't drink it all!

That's the problem.

I'm not such a good drinker, so

So, That's it. just like brothers.

That's the problem. He doesn't drink, so

anything he drinks has a very big influence.
\[ \geq \nabla \xi \geq \& \nabla \xi \geq \geq \left\{^{24} \text{ laughs} \right\} \]
Владимир, спасибо большое.

Владимир, спасибо большое,

Владимир, благодарю вас за подтверждение своего положения в университете.

Владимир, спасибо большое,

Владимир, спасибо большое,

Владимир, спасибо большое,

Владимир, спасибо большое,

Владимир, благодарю вас за подтверждение своего положения в университете.

Владимир, благодарю вас за подтверждение своего положения в университете.

Владимир, благодарю вас за подтверждение своего положения в университете.

Владимир, благодарю вас за подтверждение своего положения в университете.

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{30} вернётесь
{26} return.

{19} And I have to tell you one problem we had to deal with.

{20} There was really one serious problem.

{21} Except from the harassment of some of your employees.

{22} You can translate as well

{23} Apart from the harassment by one of your employees.

{24} That means / that by the way means

{25} well, that’s what we talked about, laughed about on Sunday.
≥ ≥
≥ ≥
≥ ≥
2RV2 [номимо значит беспокойства, которое представл/которое представляла
≥ ≥
≥ Apart from the bother
≥
≥ ≥
2RV2 ∈ [повышенный интерес
≥ ≥
≥ intense interest
≥ ≥
≥
≥ caused for him by one of the employees of our university.
≥ ≥
≥ ≥
2RV2 [на это я
≥ ≥ Well, that was me.
≥ ≥
There was really one serious problem that

It was not possible for Otto and me to

know when we can trust people or not.

We gave a lot of compliments and they were not taken for serious

but they were not taken seriously like they were meant

So we agreed to reduce the number of compliments, but to be
very honor/ honest.

therefore we decided to reduce the number

very sincere

of compliments and consequently be very sincere.

very sincere

But immediately on that very point that we started to be

so, he expresses himself in a very complicated manner.

хм

and therefore, as soon as we began to talk less, we assumed that,

everything would be taken as it was meant.
We got a toast. It was during one of the evenings.

We got a toast and it was said: 'We are coming to the end of the evening'.

Now he says, one of evening at the home of one of our friends, he said:

'So, now the evening is coming to an end'.

So of course again we thought this is honest. So we/ we shamed/

We felt shamed and we packed our things and run out of the door.

But of course, they took it seriously and they thought, that
действительно значит что вечер подошёл к концу

it did indeed mean that the evening was coming to its end.

факт

и мы так сказать уже собрали свои вещи и покраснели

and we so to gathered our things and we blushed.

честно по честному

Everything the honest truth

и нам было неудобно и мы собрались уходить.

We were uncomfortable and we wanted to leave.

но, но,

But then they shout from out of the window: 'No no,
it's not honest. "Come back.'

Then, as we got going,

he called out and said, that no, it was not meant seriously,

'it's not true, come back'.

So, that's how they make jokes

(36) (end of the tape)