1 Introduction

Until recently, most of the research on intercultural communication has focussed on native-/non-native speaker interaction both in the context of immigration and minorities and in intercultural politics and business. Interaction among non-native speakers of a language, however, has not received much attention. When speakers do not share each other’s language but can resort to a third language for communicative purposes, they use a lingua franca, a language which is the mother tongue to neither of them. This paper is concerned with this latter type of intercultural communication.

A lingua franca may be any natural or any artificial language which is used among speakers of different mother tongues. It may be used either intranationally, like e.g. English in India or Nigeria, or internationally e.g. English between Germans and Japanese. Whereas speakers of intranational lingua francas have often acquired these as nativized second languages and use them in a variety of domains, most participants in international lingua franca conversations need to be regarded as learners of a language they use for restricted purposes only. Because of the diverse linguistic and cultural background of speakers, conversation in lingua franca English is rather heterogeneous. In the course of this paper, the most noticeable features of lingua franca English small talk conversation will be discussed. Suggestions will be made for both the analysis and the interpretation of intercultural conversations involving speakers who do not form a stable speech community and who, therefore, need to negotiate the norms for every individual conversation depending on the specific participants.

2 Lingua franca communication research

Lingua franca communication differs from other forms of intercultural communication such as native-/non-native communication and communication via a professional or non-professional interpreter. Participants in lingua franca conversations are representatives of their individual mother cultures. Hence, they have their individual cultural backgrounds regarding communicative norms and standards. We will, therefore, expect interferences from the different mother tongues. At the same time, speakers have to a certain degree acquired the norms of either British (BrE) or American English (AmE) when learning the language. Thus, at least three but sometimes even more cultures are involved in lingua franca communication. Unless the speakers are familiar with the others’ mother tongues, the amount of different cultures interacting in these situations demand that speakers cope with the unexpected, by having to apply imperfect knowledge of and competence in the language they use (cf. Knapp 1991: 43). The resulting level of insecurity experienced by the participants has the effect of making them establish a unique set of rules for interaction that may be referred to as an inter-culture, a “culture constructed in cultural contact” (cf. Koole and tenThije 1994: 69) or as a lingua franca culture, and which is reflected in specific linguistic characteristics. These characteristics are apparently not influences of the speakers’ mother tongues and will be discussed at a later point in this paper. At the same time, the speakers must - in most cases - be regarded as learners of the language they use as a lingua franca. Their communicative behaviour is not only a reflection of cultural norms, but it also represents the individual stages of their interlanguage with its specific characteristics as well as the results of adaptation to the interlocutors.

Lingua franca or non-native-/non-native communication has basically been studied from two different perspectives. Firth (1990 and 1996) and Gramkow Andersen (1993) analysed business telephone conversations between speakers of different European mother tongues, taking an interactional approach and focussing on the way participants cooperate to achieve the goal of their conversation. Others have approached lingua franca conversations as interactions between learners. Schwartz (1980) and Varonis / Gass (1995) investigated the negotiation of meaning between non-native speakers of English with different linguistic backgrounds. Yule (1990) studied the management of verbal conflict among Indian, Chinese and Korean students interacting in lingua franca English. Meeuwis (1994) and Meierkord (1996 and 1998) provide analyses of the discourse features of lingua franca small talk.

The above-mentioned studies yield interesting results and offer important insights. As a basic finding, they all stress the cooperative nature of lingua franca communication. Being in clear contrast to the findings of e.g. Thomas (1983) who emphasized the pragmatic problems encountered by non-native speakers when interacting with native speakers of English, cooperation among non-native speakers manifests itself e.g. in collaborative overlap and joint construction of what is usually called a turn. If our aim is to arrive at valid generalizations regarding the different varieties of lingua franca usage, quantitative analyses of larger copora are needed. A frame of reference, which is capable of dealing with the data’s heterogeneity will need to be applied to the data. Categories useful for the analysis of lingua franca talk-in-interaction have been proposed by both Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis. However, as neither of these models have been designed to fit lingua franca data, modifications seem to be necessary and will be suggested below. Apart from modified tools for analysis, lingua franca data also requires a differentiated interpretation of the results produced by data analyses, taking into account both the intercultural as well as interlanguage aspects of this variety of English.

3 The data

The following discussions are based on tape-recorded naturally occurring face-to-face group conversations. The data was collected in a
3.1 Data analysis in lingua franca communication

Lingua franca communication implies the mingling of different cultures and the associated communicative norms that apply within these cultures. Discourse produced in lingua franca English has its specific characteristics, and these make it difficult to apply existing categories proposed by Discourse and Conversation Analysis (CA), which both had originally been developed for interactions between native English and American speakers. In the following subchapter a short account of the most central unit of analysis in CA, the turn, will be given. The subsequent subchapters will then be devoted to the criticism this unit has been facing when being applied to cross- or intercultural data, which, in turn, will lead to an investigation into the applicability of the model to lingua franca talk-in-interaction and to a discussion of necessary modifications.

3.1.1 The concept of turn

Conversation Analysis developed from approaches by a number of American sociologists in reaction to the quantitative methodology applied in their field. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) applied ethnomethodological methods to spoken conversation. Analysing a corpus of informal spoken discourse they arrived at the conclusion that turn-taking is the essential characteristic that distinguishes conversations from monologic speech. Rules which seem to govern the turn-taking process were identified together with transition-relevance-places at which speaker change was found to occur, but the central concept, that of the 'turn', has remained only vaguely defined. This problem has been extensively discussed in Blublitz (1988: 148 f.). It is the way simultaneous speech and pauses have been included in these definitions, that is of interest when we are dealing with lingua franca discourse, because both occur in a specific way in lingua franca discourse, as will be explained below.

Schegloff (1968: 1076) claimed that participants orient themselves towards the rule 'one party at a time'. This claim was supported by Schegloff and Sacks (1973: 293 f.), who argued that any violations of this rule would be classified as 'noticed events' by the participants of a conversation, and that these violations would result in the application of repair mechanisms. Similarly, overlap was characterised by Sacks et al. (1974) as a turn-taking error and hence as being a violation of turn taking requiring repair. Though Östergren (1983: 135) admits that "speaker-shift is seldom, if ever, an entirely smooth process", he goes on to argue that "the interactants generally try to see to it that the transitions from one speaker to another take place in a non-abrupt manner and they therefore try to avoid simultaneous speech and interruption."

What is central to these early statements is the fact that overlapping speech is regarded as being erroneous and a violation of some rule. Even though this argument is still prevalent in many recent discussions of the term 'turn', the existence of unproblematic overlap has also been considered. McCarthy (1991: 127) for example states that "speakers predict one another's utterances and often complete them for them, or overlap with them as they complete", and Langford (1994: 114) interprets this kind of overlap as displaying "close attention and support". Yule (1996: 74) adds a further aspect: the collaborative use of overlap:

For many (often younger) speakers, overlapped talk appears to function like an expression of solidarity or closeness in expressing similar opinions or values. [...], the effect of the overlapping talk creates a feeling of two voices collaborating as one, in harmony.

Even though the authors acknowledge cooperative overlap, they do not refer to it as being used to jointly build up a collaborative turn. Immediately related to the concept of turn is the distinction of participants' roles into speaker and hearer, which assigns to the hearer only those passive activities which support the speaker. Schegloff, however, has recently (1996) claimed that participants jointly create talk-in-interaction, and as a result prefers to label them co-participants. As I shall demonstrate further below, this must necessarily lead towards a re-definition of turn as a jointly completed unit of conversation, which will also have to include a discussion of the term back-channel, i.e. those utterances that are usually being considered to be the hearer's contributions.

3.1.2 Co-participation and the floor

A series of problems have been encountered by researchers who tried to use the turn concept for analyses of non-dyadic interactions. Edelsky (1981) found the category of turn and its definition difficult to apply to multi-party informal talk. In her corpus, two or more participants often "either took part in an apparent free-for-all or jointly built one idea, operating on the same wavelength" (1981: 384).

She therefore suggests to concentrate on the floor, "the acknowledged what's-going-on within a psychological time/ space. What's going on can be the development of a topic or a function (teasing, soliciting a response, etc.) or an interaction of the two. It can be developed or controlled by one person at a time or by several simultaneously or in quick succession." (1981: 405) In case several participants jointly hold the floor, this can be done in two different ways. In case of what Edelsky calls a 'free-for-all', there is "much simultaneity, joint building of an answer to a question, collaboration on developing ideas [...], and laughter." (1981: 391) In less 'unorderly' stretches of talk, she found that participants, though speaking sequentially, shared "in the creation of an idea or a function (joking, suggesting, etc.)." (1981: 393)

Though the concept of 'floor' provides important insights into what actually happens when speakers talk simultaneously and identifies overlapping speech as being a kind of speech that is in no way erroneous, the concept of the 'turn' is an unquestionably valuable one for any analysis of intercultural communication, but it still needs to be modified. Edelsky (1981: 403) proposes what she calls a non-technical definition and defines turn as "an on-record speaking (which may include nonverbal activities) behind which lies an intention to convey a
message that is both referential and functional.

3.1.3 Cross-cultural and intercultural data

3.1.3.1 Cross-cultural contrastive discourse analysis

Evidence from languages other than English has further proven that existing definitions of the turn need to be modified before being applied to cross- or inter-cultural data. In his observations in the Antiguan speech community, Reisman (1974) found that unlike the case with speakers of English overlapping speech is neither cut off nor ‘repaired’. Rather, the current speaker continues speaking when another participant starts her utterance. In her study of conversations between New Yorkers and Californians, Tannen (1984) also identified cross-cultural misunderstandings regarding those overlaps that have usually been termed turn-taking signals. New Yorkers obviously rather use overlaps to support the speaking partner by uttering short questions, while Californians take them for turn-claiming signals. Kotthoff (1993: 168) therefore states that the status of an overlap as either being a support or rather an interruption needs to be negotiated during the course of the interaction. This, again, implies that a static, technical definition focusing on an isolated turn must necessarily fail.

Szatrowski (1993), who analysed the structure of Japanese conversation, also encountered problems with the concept of the turn. She claims that, different from English conversations in which for the most part one participant talks one-sidedly (in turn), it is a distinctive feature of Japanese conversations that one participant offers a piece of information and the other participant cooperatively completes a unit she calls *wadan* (information unit). The concept of *wadan* resembles that of the turn in its functional definition. *A wadan* has been completed when a semantic content has cooperatively been negotiated. Within one *wadan*, participants exchange sense units, which may be sentences, phrases or single words.

3.1.3.1 Lingua franca data

In this central chapter, two extracts from my corpus will be discussed at length. Despite their being enormously different with regard to the participants' linguistic actions, they are both representative of lingua franca interactions and reveal the heterogeneity which both the analysis of and interpretation of lingua franca interactions have to cope with.

example 1

```
1 Jeen: Go there. It's a secure career.
2 Shiraz: That's the best thing is.
3 Tsu: 'I thought'
4 Jeen: 'accountancy is good'.
5 Shiraz: [[If you want to] do
6 Shiraz: accountancy do two things. One is... do
7 Shiraz: accountancy and audit. and other...
8 Tsu: [Yeah]. And audit.
9 Shiraz: specialize in liquidation as well. [Because when
10 Tsu: [Liquidation now]
12 Shiraz: this time comes [...] start liquidation. @'[90]
13 Anja: [00]
14 Tsu: [Yeah]
15 Tsu: Yeah. These bankruptcy lev eh lawyers [are...
16 Shiraz: [That's
17 Tsu: doing a lot of money at the moment.
18 Shiraz: right they're making money now].
```

The brackets on the left side indicate simultaneous talk, and their number reveals that there is a high amount of simultaneous speech going on. It is important to note, that the three speakers who actively participate in this stretch of talk (Anja is passive) do obviously not regard each others' utterances as competitive. Rather, they react to the contents of each others' contributions and thus collaboratively achieve the completion of the *wadan* and the information expressed within this unit.

In line 2, Shiraz, an accountant, starts with an utterance stating his opinion about what is the best way to pursue a career in accountancy. He continues in line 6. At the same time, more or less, Tsu gives his impression of the profession: "I thought accountancy is good." in lines 3 to 4. Shiraz continues to talk about what he considers to be those special branches of accountancy which best assure a secure career in the field. He is supported by Tsu in line 9 "Yeah. And audit.", which restates the last part of Shiraz' utterance in line 8. In line 10, Shiraz reasons that a specialization in liquidation would also be useful. Towards this, Tsu reacts with "Liquidation now", which has more or less the same propositional content as Shiraz's next sentence implying that he considers a specialization in liquidation to be...
useful because of the present economic situation. The same occurs in lines 15 to 18. Shiraz and Tsu simultaneously express a very much similar contents, i.e. the affluence of bankruptcy lawyers.

In the above example, the two or three participants are not only supporting each other by using back-channels as in line 9, but they are also collaboratively achieving a certain meaning regarding the topic under discussion. The units discussed above are framed and shaded in grey. What both have in common is that they are completed when the participants have jointly negotiated the argument structure of the sequence's propositional content through addition of, deletion of and agreement on arguments.

The situation is somewhat different when less competent speakers interact in lingua franca English. This is the case in example 2, which will appear more 'orderly' than the example just discussed in that there is not much overlapping talk.

Maria, a Spanish student and Sooki, a Korean woman, negotiate the contents of a book Maria offers to lend to Sooki, who needs information on Spanish arts. In lines 1 and 3, Maria tells Sooki about the existence of the book and Sooki, in line 4, asks what the book is about more specifically ("What about?"). Maria immediately reacts to this short question (lines 3 and 4), but Sooki is obviously still not satisfied, as in line 6 she asks whether the book does in fact cover arts. Further down in lines 13 ff. Maria tries to clarify her notion of this book by telling Sooki for what kind of addressees it is intended. In the following sequence (lines 15 to 25), the participants collaboratively work out the content of what Maria wants to express, namely that this is a book for stewardesses.

example 2

1  Sooki:  Uhm, we have some / we have a project ... each.
2  Sooki:  wel, so ... You understand? Eh-
3  [Maria:  Eh [...] It's 9. And I have uh get my book.]
4  Sooki:  [Umm].
5  [Maria:  the the (   ), and Uhm ... it's] about the
6  Sooki:  [What about]?
7  Maria:  person. It is about the kitchen.
8  Sooki:  About art.
9  Maria:  In general.
10 Sooki:  Uhm, yeah, it's OK.
11 Maria:  Eh, Uhm and it's about the kitchen, and con/
12 Maria:  Uhm construction Uhm, the art is there.
13 Sooki:  [It's] OK.
14 Maria:  Erh, but eh my book it's Uhm ... psychology.
15 Maria:  Eh, it's eh .. for (2.5 sec.) Do you know eh.
16 Maria:  (/estuar/)? Eh-
17 Anja:  What?
18 Maria:  The person who ... who works in the plane. And ..
19 Maria:  and I eh-
20 Sooki:  Pilot?
21 Maria:  No, Eh the women, eh-
22 Anja:  Eh, steward and stewardess.
23 Sooki:  Stewardess?
24 Maria:  (/estuar/)
25 Sooki:  Yuh, Stewardess.
26 Maria:  Eh, I didn't ... I didn't know.
27 Sooki:  Oo

Here, we can observe further features that occur frequently in my data: pauses, cut off utterances, restarts, hesitation phenomena and laughter, which do all occur within the wadan Sooki and Maria build by interactively reacting to each others' questions, hesitations and suggestions. Most of these features are due to the fact that the participants of these conversations are learners of English. Much more than native speakers, they need to re-plan their utterances. This results in pauses, hesitation and restarts. Such phenomena make it difficult for the analyst to assign stretches of talk or non-talk to single turns. In line 15, Maria starts her utterance by trying to express whom her book is intended for. Due to her lack of the vocabulary item stewardess, she needs to cut off her utterance. After approximately two seconds, she starts with a request for help by asking Maria and Anja whether they are familiar with the Spanish translation.

3.1.4 A synthesis

Evidence from Antiguan, Japanese and lingua franca English data reveal that a lot of the existing definitions and categories are ethnocentric constructs that do not stand a test with intercultural data and need re-definition. Taking into account the newest approaches regarding co-participation (Schegloff 1996), collaborative construction of talk-in-interaction (Gramkow Andersen 1993 and Firth 1990) and jointly constructed units of speech (Szartrowski 1993) together with a combination of grammatical and semantic categories that
account for possible units of collaboration may be rewarding in the explanation of lingua franca interactions. The unit of wadan, which is located somewhere between the turn and the exchange (in the sense of Discourse Analysis, cf. Coulthard (1985) or Stenström (1994)), may provide a category capable of grasping the heterogeneity encountered in lingua franca conversations.

3.2 Interpreting lingua franca conversational data

Care must be taken when assigning individual pragmatic characteristics of lingua franca talk-in-interaction to either cross-cultural interferences, the existence of a "third" culture or to learner language strategies. It has already been demonstrated (cf. Firth 1990 and 1996, Gramkow Andersen 1993 and Meierkord 1996 and 1998) that in lingua franca conversations speakers establish their own particular conversational style and that its characteristics can in most cases not simply be interpreted as the results of interferences with the individual speakers' mother tongues. This is also the case with the corpus analysed for the present paper.

3.2.1 Characteristics of successful lingua franca English conversation

On the level of pragmatics, the informal register of English as an international lingua franca differs from the native speaker varieties BrE and AmE regarding both discourse structure and what is usually referred to as politeness phenomena. The special characteristics have been shown (cf. Meierkord 1996 und 1998) to comprise the following:

Regarding discourse structure, apparent differences can be observed on all levels of discourse with the informal variety of lingua franca English in this corpus. Unlike BrE or AmE native speakers, lingua franca speakers do not link opening and closing phases to the core phase of the conversations by using illocutions like extractors (e.g. 'I'd better be off now.'). Rather, pauses occur between conversational phases, especially at the end of a conversation, to mark the transition from one phase to the other. Participants also prefer safe topics such as talking about the meals and life in the hostel, about their jobs or university classes. They keep the individual topics very short and tend to deal with them rather superficially. Most topics in the corpus were changed after less than ten turns had been devoted to them.

The participants' speech displays frequent and long pauses both within and in-between turns. At the same time, simultaneous speech occurs. The instances of overlap, however, vary considerably. Some speakers do not overlap with their interlocutors at all, whereas others frequently talk simultaneously with other participants of the conversation. Those who do so are all very competent speakers. Altogether though, stretches of simultaneous speech in lingua franca English are shorter than those Oreström (1983) has observed with BrE native speakers, i.e. they are two words long as compared to the native speakers' three word overlaps.

There is also considerable use of politeness phenomena, i.e. routine formulae in opening and closing phases, back-channels and other gambits. Speakers hardly vary in the actual choice of the routine formulae they use. A lot of those expressions commonly found with native speakers' speech do not occur at all, and lingua franca English speakers mainly restrict themselves to stereotype phrases such as "How are you?", "Good Morning.", "Hello." and "Bye."
The back-channeling behaviour of participants in the conversations is very similar to what has been observed with British English native speakers. Participants use the same amount of supportive back-channels (e.g. mhm, right, yeah), though verbal back-channels are frequently replaced by supportive laughter. At the same time, speakers employ a comparatively high amount of sentence completions and restatements. Non-back-channeling gambits were realized in a way that significantly differs from native BrE speakers (cf. Meierkord 1996). Of special interest is the very high amount of cajolers (verbal appeals for the listener's sympathy, e.g. you know, I mean, you see) that occurred in the corpus, and which expresses the speakers' desire to cooperate and involve her interlocutors.

If we are to interpret these characteristics, the first attempt may be to regard them as being interferences from the speakers' mother tongues. However, although "cultural transfer is evident in the types of communicative events that learners expect to occur in a given situation, the manner of their participation in them, the specific types of acts they perform and the ways they realize them, the ways topics are nominated and developed, and the way discourse is regulated" (Ellis 1994: 187), Ellis emphasises the importance of not overstating the role of the non-native speakers' mother tongue and culture. In the present corpus, most of the features that have been stated to characterise lingua franca English conversations could be shown not to be reflections of the participants' mother tongues' communicative norms (cf. Meierkord 1996).

3.2.2 Lingua Franca Conversation as Learner Language Interaction

Kotthoff (1991) examines learner-language and inter-cultural reasons for communicative problems in native-/ non-native interactions. She states that these conversations display structures which are not reflections of either culture, but which are determined by pragmatic deficits of the learners and compensatory accomodation by the native speakers. Thus, communicative problems that can be observed in native-/ non-native interactions cannot be interpreted as solely being grounded in inappropriate transfer of mother tongue norms. Rather, communicative strategies typical of learner language must also be taken into consideration. Learners produce an interlanguage pragmatics, which differs from both L1 and L2, and which in addition to intercultural interferences is characterized by learner language communication strategies, employed to compensate for deficits in English (cf. Ellis 1986: 176 f. and Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991), i.e. reduction and compensation. Research into pragmatic aspects of learner language, especially on the organization of discourse, is still very scarce, so that there is up to now no clear account of what is characteristic of learner language discourse. Based on the results single studies have yielded, the characteristics pointed out above may be commented on as follows.

The fact that pauses occur frequently between and also within turns may indicate that learners face production problems and pause to solve these. The long pauses between turns can be understood as resulting from their reliance on pauses as turn-taking-signals, thus
The small amount of simultaneous speech within this interpretative framework needs to be interpreted as being induced by classroom discourse which - being teacher-centered - discourages overlapping speech (cf. McCarthy 1991: 128). Pupils usually do not have much opportunity of taking a turn without having previously been selected to do so. On the other hand, as stated above, some speakers display a rather high amount of simultaneous speech. Within the 'learner language interpretation', these participants may be said to inappropriately interpret what they conceive as turn-yielding signals (cf. Götz 1977). However, if this were the case, simultaneous speech should be cut off, which in most instances it is not.

When participants choose 'safe' topics, they will - as learners - probably do so as a result of a reduction strategy, i.e. as due to vocabulary deficits they feel incapable of dealing with more complex, philosophical or political themes and therefore avoid these. This incapability furthermore explains the short length of the individual topics, as participants may only be able to discuss the individual topics superficially, again due to a lack of the necessary vocabulary items.

The low variation in ritual speech acts is a further classroom- or textbook-induced characteristic. At the same time, it reflects an economic language learning behaviour, i.e. only so many expressions are learned as are necessary to succeed in conversation. More competent speakers may still prefer to use 'standard' or 'stereotype' expressions as they want to make sure that they will be understood by their interlocutors and may even wish to avoid embarrassing them by using expressions these may not understand.

Altogether, the results reveal that participants attempt to create a variety which assures a maximum of intelligibility. This had previously been observed by Blum-Kulka (1982) and Koike (1989). At the same time they seem to be concerned not to intimidate their interlocutors by putting them in a situation they cannot cope with due to deficits in their knowledge of English. "As Varonis and Gass (1985: 84-85) remark, in such interaction, the parties are likely to 'recognize their shared incompetence' or to 'admit a language deficit'. The risk of losing face is considerable lower, and meaning can thus be negotiated without too much embarrassment" (Meeuwis 1994: 67). These remarks refer to informal conversation among peers. Data from more formal conversations which are characterized by a less close relation between the participants or by asymmetric power relations (cf. Bremer et al. (1996)) may reveal a different picture.

3.2.3 Lingua Franca Conversation as Reflection of an "Inter"-culture

If we regard the features mentioned in chapter 4.1. as being reflections of an established inter-culture, we may interpret them as resulting from the participants' appreciation of the intercultural situation and the insecurity all of them have to cope with. The norms operating on both opening and closing phases are much different across cultures. In some cultures, these phases are highly conventional and ritualized. There are also differences regarding the constraints on the choice of phrases that may be used during conversational openings and closings. As most participants in lingua franca conversations will be uncertain about the greeting and leaving behaviour acceptable in their interlocutors' mother tongues, they will prefer not to experiment during these phases. Using only those routine formulas they know to be acceptable in either BrE or AmE gives them certainty about not violating any rules (cf. Tannen and Öztek 1981).

Within the inter-culture interpretation the preference of 'safe topics' can easily be explained as being due to the participants' insecurity as to the acceptability of the topics they introduce. Even though they are aware that cultural differences regarding delicate topics may exist, they will hardly be able to exactly identify taboo subjects. Participants will therefore avoid any topics that may be taboo and select topics which are known or at least expected to be 'safe' in BrE and AmE. Topics about which this certainty does not exist are avoided. In case a topic is introduced which is not known to be safe, its acceptability needs to be negotiated with the interlocutors. If it turns out to be unacceptable, it is prone to be cut off after relatively few turns (cf. Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991). These cut offs occur frequently throughout the corpus and account for the average short length of the individual topics.

Apparent differences in the non-native speakers' pausing behaviour and simultaneous talking may provide further evidence of the existence of a linguistic inter-culture created by the interlocutors. Being aware of possibly existing cultural differences, speakers appreciate these and thus tolerate longer in-turn and in-between-turn pauses and avoid overlapping speech.

As a general rule, the linguistic behaviour of participants in lingua franca face-to-face conversations seems to be governed by the following two principles:

- Participants wish to save face. They avoid insulting behaviour and putting their partners into embarrassing situations by e.g. using expressions their interlocutors may not understand.

- As a result of the uncertainty regarding the cultural norms and standards that apply to lingua franca conversations, participants wish to assure each other of a benevolent attitude. The high amount of supportive back-channels - both verbal or in the form of laughter - as well as the excessive use of cajolers found in the corpus are discursive manifestations of this intention.

Both interpretations rest on the assumption that participants are aware of both their status as learners of English as well as of their different cultural backgrounds, especially of differences in communicative norms and behaviour. Though it has been claimed that participants in intercultural communication situations are to a large extent not aware of these facts (Knapp 1995), recent research (Meierkord and Sugita, in preparation) reveals that Japanese are to a certain extent aware of linguistic reasons for their communicative problems in intercultural situations.
4 Conclusion

This paper has approached lingua franca communication in English as a form of intercultural communication characterised by cooperation rather than misunderstanding, and the most salient features of lingua franca English were summed up. The statements made in this article are valid for small-talk conversations. Further data are needed from other non-small-talk types of lingua franca interaction, e.g. negotiations, discussions etc. to corroborate the findings on a more general level. The examples presented and discussed in chapter 3.2. revealed that lingua franca English is highly heterogeneous. The heterogeneity of data was shown to cause problems for the application of traditional approaches to conversation, which were created for the analysis of Anglo-American native speaker discourse. In conclusion, suggestions were made for a multi-method analysis of data, which includes models designed for non-Anglo-American discourse. Furthermore, a differentiated interpretation of data was proposed, which takes into account both the intercultural situation as well as the fact that speakers need to be regarded as learners of the language they use.

Notes

1 For a concise review of research into intercultural communication see Dirven and Pütz (1993).
2 Barotchi (1994) uses the term lingua franca to cover also those instances in which speakers of different dialects use a common language for communication.
3 Knapp (1991: 78) questions whether this is indeed the case. He claims that the participants' utterances must not be understood as direct reflections of the norms existing in their mother tongues, but rather as indirect reflections in the form of interferences.
4 It is of course debatable whether these interactional constructs, which sometimes only exist on an ad-hoc basis for a limited period of time, should be referred to as cultures. Sarangi (1995), however, correctly remarks that the nature of culture is shifting in contemporary society. Thus, hybrid as well as transitory constructs result. Casimir and Asuncion-Lande (1988: 289) regards culture as generally being a "product or result of interaction" and claims the existence of situational subcultures, which he refers to as 'third cultures'.
5 Interlanguage is here used interchangeably with the term learner language. Both refer to a system of rules which either conform to the target of foreign language or are learner specific (cf. Kasper 1981: 29).
6 Cf. also House and Kasper (1981).
7 According to Zimmermann (1984: 100), a speaker is communicatively competent when she is able to form turns which are (1) grammatically structured, (2) adapted to the linguistic resources available to her, (3) suitable for the circumstances relevant to the conversation and (4) commonly used in the respective circumstances.
8 Cf. also Nofsinger (1991: 101f.).
9 Cf. also von Helmolt (1997) for similar observations in French-German interactions.
10 Cf. Henne (1979) for a similarly contents-based definition of the turn.
11 The individual pieces of information contributed by the speakers might bear some relation to tone groups (cf. Halliday 1985, Ladefoged 1993 and McCarthy 1991:99) or intonation units (Chafe 1994), i.e. stretches of speech characterized by a specific intonation curve. "For Halliday, tone groups are informational units; the speaker decides how to segment the information to be transmitted and encodes each segment as a separate tone group." (McCarty 1991: 99). Chafe (1994) had hypothesised that within each intonation unit one new idea would be expressed. However, in Chafe (1997) he concluded that an intonation unit sometimes contains several new pieces of information. Also, within a wadan one participant might supply more than one tone group before the next speaker takes over.
12 For a key to the transcription symbols used, please refer to the appendix in chapter 7.
13 All names have been changed to assure anonymity. Tsu is a male, Malay speaker. He is very competent in English and 24 years old. Shiraz is a male Urdu speaker, who is also very competent. He is 29 years old. Jean is from Zambia; he is 24 years old and rather competent.
14 Sooki and Maria are both less competent speakers of English. Maria is a Spanish student of 19 years. Sooki is from Korea and 24 years old.
15 Topics are labeled 'safe topic' according to Schneider (1987: 26) as being those "subjects about which agreement is immediately possible."

References


Ladefoged, Peter (1993): A Course in Phonetics. Fort Worth, TX.


Meierkord, Christiane und Sugita, Yuko (in preparation). "Communication and miscommunication in Japanese branch offices in Germany".


**Appendix: Key to transcription symbols:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Utterance</th>
<th>Symbol/Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal utterances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turns</td>
<td>Text, text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>back channels</td>
<td>mhm, yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hesitation phenomena</td>
<td>ehm, uh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phonemic transcriptions</td>
<td>(/estu:ard/)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increased loudness</td>
<td>TEXT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emphasised speech</td>
<td>text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lengthened vowel</td>
<td>text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spoken while laughing</td>
<td>@text@</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laughter</td>
<td>@@@</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cut-off turn</td>
<td>Text, te-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>re-organised turn</td>
<td>te/ Text, text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brief pauses (up to 2 secs.)</td>
<td>.., ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long pauses</td>
<td>(5s), (3m25s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metatranscription</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transcription not possible</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assumed transcription</td>
<td>(text)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comments</td>
<td>(())</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simultaneous speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simultaneous speech indicators</td>
<td>[</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boundaries of simultaneous speech</td>
<td>[ ], [2 2], [3 3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wadan</td>
<td>Text, text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>