CHAPTER THREE

CULTURE AS INTERRUPTION: HOW PARTICIPANTS' PRACTICES MAKE CULTURE AS INTERACTION IN LINGUA FRANCA CONVERSATIONS*

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Abstract

This chapter offers data driven support to theoretical discussions on the multifaceted nature of culture as interaction, in an English as a Lingua Franca context. By a turn by turn examination (analytical downscaling) of participants' talk at a micro level, mezzo level culture-as-interaction practices are discussed that challenge macro level assumptions (analytical upscaling). In particular, by focusing on whether the alleged interruptional large culture characteristic of conversations was transferred by Greek participants in ELF conversations and the role it possibly played in the process of small culture making, large culture assumptions were challenged. Analysis of the data excerpts at a micro level revealed that the Greek participants did indeed transfer their L1 'interruptional' sociolinguistic strategies into ELF conversations, but as they were considered by co-interactants as co-operative/support moves, they contributed to harmonious, effective communication. Analysis at a mezzo level revealed that interruptees collaborated with the Greek interrupters in the creation of a common or 'third culture' by using similar interactional patterns to co-develop either a topic or interactional pattern. These findings challenge macro level assumptions, de-naturalising them. It is argued that when examining culture as interaction-making processes, moving between scales is of paramount importance in any discussion of culture, as by doing so the static, essentialist perception of cultures is being challenged.

Keywords: culture as interaction, small/large culture, ELF, interruptions, scales

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I offer data-driven support to theoretical discussions on the multifaceted nature of culture as interaction, by means of turn by turn examination ofparticipants' talk and how their interactional practices make culture (see also Porsché, this volume; and Lazarro, this volume).

In particular, by examining issues of cross-cultural[1] communication in a micro-community sharing the same 'lingua franca'—English—whose members did not necessarily share a common culture,[2] I claim that in order to try and account for the culture making processes exhibited by the participants, micro, mezzo and macro community factors should be considered. In other words, in order to account for successful culture making processes, especially in lingua franca conversations, we have to constantly shift our analytical focus from the practices employed by the participants themselves at a local (micro) level to how these practices contribute to the creation of culture as interaction by all participants involved (mezzo level), despite the alleged large (macro) level community differences among members (see also Victoria, this volume).

*My housemates, that were the inspiration for this study and who agreed to being recorded, deserve a special thanks. I would like to thank Marianna Patrona for her valuable and insightful comments as well as my co-editors Jaspal and Dorottya for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this chapter. Needless to say that any shortcomings are solely my own.

[1] I use cross-cultural rather than intercultural communication to emphasise the perceived acute differences in this kind of communication.

[2]I use culture here, as a starting point, in its common sense notion, that implies a community's shared "system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting" (Goodenough 1971, 41, cited in Firth 1996, 238).

2. Previous Research on English as a Lingua Franca and the Notion of Culture

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has been defined as "a contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common national culture and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication" (Firth 1996, 20).

A vital concern of previous studies on negotiation strategies in ELF conversations—from either a Pragmatic or a Conversation Analytic perspective, or from a combination of both—has been to show how people who share neither a common national language nor a common national culture manage to make this type of communication work (Meierkord 2000; 2002; Firth 1996; Wagner and Firth 1997; House 2002; 2008; 2009; Baumgarten and House 2007; 2010; House and Lévy-Tödler 2009; 2010; Canagarajah 2013). Research findings indicated that the participants' interactional behaviour was 'unique' in the sense that it did not mirror existing research findings in relation to how native speakers of a given language do interactional work, shaping and co-constructing a given speech event, nor was it reminiscent of language learning environments. ELF participants did their *own* interactional work, shaping and co-constructing the speech event, achieving ordinariness via a 'make-it-normal orientation' (House 2013; Canagarajah 2013) where potential trouble sources were normalised in a preventive way, rather than being foregrounded. As Firth (1996, 237, emphasis in original) puts it: "participants *do interactional* and *discursive work* to imbue talk with an orderly and 'normal' appearance, in the face of extraordinary, deviant, and sometimes 'abnormal' linguistic behaviour".

This led to the use of the notion 'community of practice' (Wenger 1998) to describe ELF interactants' status as language users (House 2013). What seems to bring ELF users together is their joint purpose to communicate effectively and efficiently in English though without being constrained by native speakers' norms. A similar point is made also by Meierkord (2002 119−20) when she discusses how ELF participants' style of communication leads to the creation of a 'third culture'. This 'third culture' lingua franca communication she claims"presents itself as being both a linguistic masala and a language 'stripped bare' of its cultural roots" (Meierkord 2002, 129).

The aforementioned descriptions of ELF interactants as belonging to a community of practice and being able to do their own interactional work and create a 'third culture', although not explicitly discussed by ELF scholars as such, is reminiscent of the notion of culture as interaction where "speakers are neither interacting with, nor are they in interaction; they are interaction" (Wagener 2009, 274). Moreover, as Wagener (2012) claims, in this definition of culture speakers have to be understood as language users whose communication difficulties may (not) necessarily arise from intercultural issues. Based on this, he proposes that intercultural analysis should not prevail over interindividual analysis, an idea also put forward by Sarangi (1994; 2011) where he suggests that intercultural analyses tend to consider individual participants as representatives of their respective 'cultures' ignoring their individuality as interactants.

This notion of culture, as individuals' talk-in-interaction, that enables them to make culture is a particularly useful notion in ELF interactions as it may not only explain *how* individual interactants shape the given social reality into a community of practice, but also *how* their potential L1 interactional transfer may shape the given community of practice. Or as Wagener (2012), citing Lüsebrink (2005) and Spencer-Oatey (2008), claims,although the interpretation given by the researcher based on the concept of culture does not change the rules and principles of social interaction, it may shed light on the culture-making process itself.

In this kind of research the notion of scales (Kell 2013) as a means to move from the macro to micro to mezzo in order to be able to explain (larger) phenomena from unique instances of communication, may be particularly useful. In other words, employing both notions of culture (large versus small, as discussed by Holliday 1999; 2011) by means of scales may be particularly informative when trying to account for the creation of culture as interaction.

3. Viewing Large Culture Characteristics from a Small Culture (Making) Perspective

The study involved a postgraduate student community sharing a common flat in which the author was a member. Our ten-member micro-community could not be characterised as a speech community in Saville-Troike's terms (1996, 356); at least not from the very beginning. All of us shared a common language, but since it was a lingua franca there were differences between the members' communicative competence, as discussed by Saville-Troike (1996, 362−63). Matters were more complicated, concerning our shared rules of speaking and interpretation of speech performance, as well as sociocultural understandings and presuppositions with regard to speech. There were two majority groups amongst us. Five out of ten (50%) were Greeks and two out of ten (20%) were British. Those

two majority groups shared the last two characteristics of speech community mentioned above, namely rules of speaking and interpretation of speech performance and sociocultural understandings and presuppositions with regards to speech. This inequality placed the remaining three occupants (Korean, German, French) in a 'minority' position.

Although as already discussed, speakers of English as a Lingua Franca do not necessarily need to share interactional norms, the fact that in our community there were two 'dominant' groups, might have had implications on the way our micro-community would or could become a speech community, or a community of practice forming their own interactional norms.

Saville-Troike (1996, 365) mentions that, when speakers interact in a second or foreign language, they often transfer elements from first language competence, even after having acquired considerable proficiency in the target linguistic code. This was also confirmed by pragmatics research on Lingua Franca interactions (House 2002) but this transfer was reported to be used locally/collaboratively by interactants as a means to support and not to impede interaction. Meierkord (2002) on the other hand, in her conversation analytic examination of lingua franca small talk conversations, reported that interference from L1 interactional norms was almost completely absent and/or when it was present it gave the resulted communication a hybrid form. As she puts it: "Behaviour largely depends on what culture a speaker wants to construct in a particular conversation" (Meierkord 2002, 129). Canagarajah (2013, 78) bringing together Conversation Analysis and pragmatics, argues along similar lines, claiming that participants in ELF conversation can move away from their 'native' cultures and construct third cultures, but even if they do foreground their cultural differences, these can be a tool for meaning making and not an obstacle. He further argues that the macro-level context and identity differences are not extras in the micro-level meaning-making process, but central factors deserving close examination.

In the case of the micro-community under analysis, an interesting area of investigation was whether and to what extent a possible sociolinguistic transfer—in Chick's (1996, 332) terms —of the majority group impaired communication, or if, after having lived as a group for some time, interaction skills were mutually adapted and appropriate communicative behaviour was negotiated.[3] In other words, I was interested to see whether the successful negotiation of different interactional norms resulting in the collaborative creation of a speech community, or culture as interaction, was possible when there is a 'dominant' L1 group (in this case Greek speakers) in Lingua Franca conversations. Or in Holliday's (2011, 199) terms, whether and to what extent large culture characteristics/attributes as manifested in small culture interaction de-reify or de-essentialise themselves.

The specific large-culture characteristic that I was interested to examine is that Greeks do not strictly observe the 'one-speaker-at-a-time' turn taking principle (Schegloff 2000), resulting in frequent interruptions and overlaps during conversations. This simultaneous speech, large-culture interactional characteristic has been investigated byMakri-Tsilipakou (1994) in relation to its affiliative or disaffiliative function in mixed gender conversations among Greeks, and by Tzanne (2001) in Greek broadcast talk. Lastly, Chalari (2012) has tried to give a syntactic explanation of overlapping in conversations among Greeks.

All the above researchers examine the non-observance of 'one-speaker-at-a-time' principle within an L1 and not an ELF context, from different perspectives. Chalari (2012), tries to account for the national stereotype that Greeks are impolite, talk all together and interrupt each other—which she takes for granted—in terms of the syntactic properties of the language itself. Makri-Tsilipakou (1994), in her study redefined the function of interruption in Greek interactions, looking at it from the point of view of 'face'/'preference' and relating it to gender. Examining peer conversations among Greek women and men, she found that although both sexes displayed comparable outputs of simultaneous speech, for women this was a tool of support, agreement and ratification whereas men used it equally in agreement and disagreement with current speaker/topic (Makri-Tsilipakou 1994, 416). In a similar vein and building on Sifianou's (1999) findings that Greeks tend to prefer more positive politeness strategies, Tzanne (2001) suggests that instances of simultaneous talk create an atmosphere of solidarity and familiarity in the encounter.

Taking into consideration the above, the focus of my analysis was on whether the (alleged) interruptional large culture characteristic (macro level) of conversations was transferred by the Greek participants in the ELF conversations (micro level) and the role it, possibly, played in the process of small culture making (mezzo level). As Holliday (2011, 206−208) discusses, by examining activities

[3]See Kakava (1993) for a discussion of a Greek student's 'pragmatic transfer' of argumentative strategies to negotiate disagreement in the formal context of a university classroom. Her study indicates that there was indeed a pragmatic transfer of argumentative strategies from L1 to the L2 environment, but as the Greek student in her data was in a 'minority' position; this might not be the case in ELF or EFL environments where Greeks are the majority group.

that give cohesion to small cultures, we move to a mezzo level analysis, that enables us to discuss processes of naturalisation both at a large-culture and small-culture level. In this case, examination of how interactants made culture as interaction at a mezzo level by examining their micro talk-in-interaction could shed light on macro level (alleged) characteristics.

4. The Data

The recordings were made in student residences at Aston University, UK, within a two week period and comprise 6.5 hours of conversations. Whenthe recordings were made all the participants in the interactions had been living with each other for a period of more than two months and presumably certain norms of interaction had been established between the members of that micro-community. The time, however, in which the recordings were made was an exam period and most occupants were extremely busy studying for their exams and did not frequently socialise in the kitchen area where the recordings were made. As a consequence, mostly four people—two Greeks, one English and one Korean—were recorded, but for the purposes of the study this was adequate, as the majority of the interactants were Greeks, so the research focus could be maintained.

5. Method of Analysis: Conversation Analysis as a Means of Examining How Micro-communities Create Culture as Interaction

I decided to approach and analyse the data at hand by means of Conversation Analysis (CA) for several reasons. First of all, the primary concern of Conversation Analysis with "how language both creates and is created by social context" (Schiffrin 1994, 232) suited my concern of how the interactants in our group actually created their own unique context/culture. Heritage (1984, 242) claims that "the significance of any speaker's communicative action is doubly contextual in being both context-shaped and context-renewing". In that sense, analysing the data by means of investigating the procedures and resources by which actors engage in interaction, as proposed by Heritage(1984)—the emic perspective adopted—would shed light on how meaning is negotiated through turn by turn micro-analysis of the interaction from the perspective of the participants themselves and not the analysts'. Thus an emic perspective can be seen as analytical downscaling. In turn, this interactional collaborative activity of culture making would shed light on the participants' mezzo level communicative activities.

An additional reason was that the emic perspective offered by CA would enable me as a researcher but also as a member of the group and a Greek myself to minimise any biases I might have that would possibly affect data analysis. In other words, by examining the strategies used by participants themselves to mutually negotiate meaning, achieve communication and create culture, I would shed light on how any potential instances of 'Greek interruptional' turn taking (latching, overlapping) would be locally treated, without labelling them as 'interruptional' beforehand unless they are being treated as such by the interlocutors themselves. Or as Widdicombe (1998, 191) puts it:

> [Conversation Analysis] takes the view that normative knowledge has to be invoked and can be challenged and transformed, and this suggests that we cannot delineate category attributes or specify in advance which features of a category will be brought to bear on the business of identity on a particular occasion.

Previous CA studies of ELF interaction (Firth 1996; Meierkord 2000; 2002), in their demonstration of how issues such as cultural membership are relevant only if they are made relevant by the participants themselves, although not explicitly stating so, employed a similar claim made by Drew and Heritage (1992, 21); that "'context' and identity have to be treated as inherently locally produced, incrementally developed, and by extension, as transformable at any moment".

The particular focus of the analysis is whether or not Greek interlocutors interrupted other speakers and if they did, what types of interruptions they employed.[4] Although previous CA research on ELF (Firth 1996, Meierkord 2000) has indicated the need to adjust the given turn-taking mechanisms originated by CA research on English native speakers to Lingua Franca conversations, and indeed to any other non-English conversations, I decided to compare the turn-taking patterns exhibited by the

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[4]For a detailed discussion on the different types of interruptions (neutral, intrusive/power interruptions, co-operative/rapport interruptions) see Goldberg (1990) in relation to American talk in interaction and Murata (1994) in relation to cross-cultural talk ininteraction. See also Makri-Tsilipakou (1994) on affiliative/disaffiliative interruption in mixed gender Greek everyday conversations. In this chapter,'interruptions' are considered instances both of overlap and latching as classified by the analyst. The extent to which they were regarded as such by the co-interactants will be discussed in the analysis section.

participants in my data to the idealised CA turn-taking mechanisms of white middle class English speakers for two reasons. Firstly because ELF interactions rarely have the same participants, so any turn-taking mechanisms identified in previous ELF research have to be verified once again in any other data involving different participants. Therefore, a good starting point is to compare them to the ‘prototypical’ rules and then see if the interactional patterns match previous research. Secondly, as the majority of the participants in my data were Greeks, it could be argued that I should compare their turn-taking practices with CA research on Greek speakers.However, since previous CA research on Greek interactions did report the frequency of simultaneous speech in interactions, but did not produce a specific turn-taking mechanism, the next best thing to do was to compare the participants’ interaction techniques to the idealised English norm. In that way both possible ‘interruptional’ turn-taking patterns on the part of the Greek speakers would not be normalised and large culture assumptions about the Greek participants’ interactional behaviour would be (re)examined. In other words, by attending to the locality of turn-taking (analytical downscaling), large scale assumptions would also be attended to (analytical upscaling) in order to account for what is produced at a mezzo level.

As Ellis (1999, 34‒35) claims in relation to the micro-macro problem:

> Any category summarizing a collection of individual behaviours is translating from a microreality to a macroreality and back again. […] The advantage, then, of requiring social concepts to be fixed in microevents is that they gain their most dependable empirical expression. Often this empirical grounding is complex, difficult, and perhaps only an approximation, but it is the best test to the macroconcept and the best place to begin a reevaluation of the macroconcept.

His view on the micro-macro relationship does not only place interaction at the heart of it but also echoes Holliday’s (1999; 2011) claim that small cultures are the reification of large ones and Kell’s (2013) discussion of scales as a tool enabling the passing from the local to the global.

6. Analysis

Before starting my analysis, I would like to talk briefly about the participants. I am going to refer to them by pseudonyms, apart from myself, the analyst, who also participated in the interactions stating in parentheses the initials by which they are going to be indicated in the transcripts and some demographic information about them, including their nationality,[5] sex and some background information. The group of my participants consisted of six females and one male and their age ranged between 20 and 35. The Greeks recorded are: Argyro (A), Stamatia (St), Eleni (E), and Nafsika (N), all females. Other housemates that were recorded are: Fred (F), British, male, Renata (R), German, female and Susan (S) Korean also female. Except for myself (Argyro), Stamatia, and Fred, who were Computer Science and Humanities students, all the others were then students in a Business School. I tried to analyse interactions where different Greek speakers participated, but that was not always possible for reasons discussed above. Regarding the CA transcription system used, I followed Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998) and Ten Have (1999)(the full list of transcription conventions is attached at the end of this chapter).

Excerpt 3-1

Context: Susan is talking about advertising in Korea.

1		S:	O::r using ‘event. it’s one of the way of promotion and
2			(.) it,[not]
3	→	N:	[what?]
4		S:	‘event
5		N:	ev’ent
6		S:	Ye:ah, like (.)
7	→	N:	That’s another, (.) event sponsorship you mean?
8		S:	It’s another way of promotion like (.) mmm, sometimes
9			there is an exhibition…

Susan continues by giving an example

In this excerpt, Nafsika seems to interrupt Susan twice (in lines 3 and 7) since the points at which she enters the interaction are not at a ‘legitimate’ transition relevance place (TRP),in Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson’s (1978) terms. In the first instance, Nafsika enters at a point where Susan was about to continue talking, signaling that she has not reached the end of a Turn Constructional Unit (TCU). This

[5] By nationality here I refer to the legal term used to describe the relationship between a person and a country. It also denotes the person’s mother tongue and self-identification unless otherwise stated.

was indicated both by the use of the pronoun "it" in line 2, that refers both anaphorically to "event" in line 1 and cataphorically to what is to follow, as well as Susan's rising intonation, indicated by the comma in the transcript. So, Nafsika's contribution resulted in overlapping speech and since it came at a non-legitimate TRP, it can be regarded as violative interruption, in Levinson's (1983)terms.

However, Nafsika's question in line 3 is in accordance with Heritage's (1995, 398) idea of speakers addressing themselves to preceding talk, usually the immediately preceding talk. Her question at that point was not a violative interruption of Susan's talk, but rather a means of checking what Susan was referring to, by the wrongly stressed 'event' in line 1; a question designed to clarify the preceding talk. In those terms Nafsika's interruption is a neutral interruption that addresses "the immediate needs of the communicative situation" (Goldberg 1990, 888). It is designed not to claim the floor from the previous speaker or change the topic but to clarify a point.

In the second instance, in line 7, Nafsika's contribution is more 'legitimate' since it comes after a short silence on Susan's part in line 6 that can be called a silence that carries meaning in Saville-Troike's (1989, 146) terms, since it is a hesitation on the part of the current speaker that occurred within the turn of talking. Nafsika's contribution at that point, addresses "both the preceding talk and shows an understanding of a prior action" (Heritage 1995, 398). "That", in line 7, refers anaphorically to what Susan was describing in line 1, maintaining thus a topical coherence, and Nafsika's next word "another" shows her understanding of what was previously mentioned. Lastly, her question is a means of clarifying the concept and self-checking/reformulating what the previous speaker has said. Thus, Nafsika's interruption in this case is an instance of neutral interruption in Goldberg's (1990) terms or a co-operative interruption in Murata's terms. As discussed by Murata (1994, 387), co-operative interruptions, as in this case, may take place without any actual overlapping or threat to the ongoing talk and after the conversational partner supplies the word or phrase the speaker was searching for, the floor is granted back to the interuptee. This is the case in the example under analysis, with Nafsika not claiming the floor or changing the topic in neither case, but yielding it back to Susan to continue her talk in lines 6, 8 and 9. Later on in the same conversation, the following happens:

Excerpt 3-2

1		S:	how can you make the special meaning with art, using art
2			for people don't (.) really understand ( ) I mea::n, ok
3			then. let me explain(.)[about
4	→	N:	[It's a little bit technical
5		S:	Mmm, ye::ah (.) mmm.hhh, ok. one advertisement…

Susan gives an example

In this case Nafsika's contribution in line 4 seems to take place at a 'legitimate' point as it comes after a micro pause in the previous speaker's turn (in line 3), a pause that carries meaning, thus her resulting contribution could be regarded as an overlap and not an interruption. As both Goldberg (1990) and Murata (1994) though have emphasised, drawing clear lines between overlaps, interruptions and different types of interruptions is not always possible and/or it is context sensitive. Here I would argue that Nafsika's contribution is an interruption and not an overlap. It does not occur at a TRP, as evident by the use of "let me explain" by Susan in line 3, indicating that she intended to hold the floor, thus, in a no-gap-no-overlap model interaction, Nafsika should not regard the micropause as a hesitation marker and should refrain from talking.

Nafsika's interruption in line 4 seems to be a rapport interruption (Goldberg 1990), i.e an interruption that expresses interest, and has a dual function; it both reflects on the preceding talk and shows understanding of it by providing an evaluation. Nafsika's use of "it" which anaphorically refers to the preceding turn (what Susan was trying to explain) coupled with the use of the word "technical" reflect on the preceding talk and maintain both a topical and cohesive fit with Susan's previous turn. The use of "technical" in line 4, seems also to function as an evaluative comment on the preceding talk, a kind of response to the cajoler[6]"I mea::n" used by Susan in line 2, an indication of: 'I know what you mean', and a characterisation of what the previous speaker was trying to say.

Alhough Nafsika's talk in Excerpts 3-1 and 3-2 does not follow the 'let it pass' principle identified in previous research on ELF conversations (Firth 1996; House 2013), namely does not ignore any 'issues' in the unfolding interaction, it *does* indicate rapport towards the current speaker.This is the case as her interruptions do not change the topic but build on it, providing the interuptee with immediate feedback (Excerpt3-2) or filling in information/clarifying (Excerpt3-1). These interruptions fit topically and coherently with the interrupted talk and yield the floor back to the interruptee when

[6] Cajolers (tokens such as*youknow, you see*) are hearer-orientated and are used by a speaker as an appeal for understanding (Edmondson 1981, 155).

completed, thus they are co-operative interruptions (Murata 1994) or rapport interruptions (Goldberg 1990). The next three excerpts coming from conversations between different housemates exhibit a slightly different 'interruptional' pattern that has the same co-operative function.

Excerpt 3-3

Context: Fred, is talking about "authentic" French restaurants.

1 F: If I produce (.) nice good French foo:d, (0.2) they make
2 a lot of money because they are busy all the time,
3 [because people appreciate it
4 → A: [.h Yes!
5 F: what they eat, they appreciate it and they go on, that's
6 really really good >you know<, they (.) they pay a lot
7 more than they would (.) [( )
8 → A: [That might be the case
9 but >you know< on the other hand some people…

Argyro argues her case

In this excerpt, I overlap twice, in lines 4 and 8. In the first instance my overlap functions as a back-channel signal[7] indicating active listenership, a type of 'affiliative' interruption in Makri-Tsilipakou's (1994, 407) terms. In the second instance in line 8, my contribution seems to have a different function. To begin with, it comes after a micro pause and by means of "that", which anaphorically refers to the previous turn, serves as an acknowledgement of the previous talk, thus being a licensed turn taking move—in Edmondson's (1981, 158) terms—since the next speaker takes the floor as s/he has understood the first speaker's message and has responded to a move before it has been made. Despite the licenced nature of my turn it does not seem to be a co-operative interruption. This is the case since, although not far from the conversational topic/argument made, my turn does not, strictly speaking, sustain it, but adds to it. Thus, following Murata's (1994, 387–90) classification of interruptions, my contribution seems to be an intrusive floor-taking interruption as the contribution made is not co-operatively sustaining the conversational topic, but is developing it.

But as Murata (1994, 390) claims, in line with the emphasis placed on the examination of the talk recipient's turn in CA, whether an interruption is considered as intrusive or co-operative depends on the interruptee's interpretation and not on the analyst's. What actually determines whether the interruption was co-operative or intrusive is the first speaker's (Fred's) reaction. In this case as the interuptee did not claim back the floor but allowed me to argue my case indicates that he considered my interruption as co-operative and not intrusive. This might be the case as my contribution seems similar to one of the three types of speaker contributions, namely 'supporting by supplementing', identified by Bublitz (1988), that are used by British speakers in everyday conversations.[8] More specifically, Bublitz identified that the secondary speaker can anticipate the primary speaker by "producing a continuation of the latter's contribution, […] the second speaker looks ahead and contributes what he thinks the primary speaker himself was intent on contributing, but as yet has not realised" (Bublitz 1988, 247).

The next excerpt, Excerpt 3-4, exhibits the same technique.

Excerpt 3-4

Context: Renata, is talking about an incident that happened two days ago.

1 R: (They were shouting) (.) I went out in the window, but
2 I couldn't (.) couldn't [(.) beli::eve
3 → A: [>you can't see many things out
4 A: of the window<]
5 → R: [I COULD'T BELIEVE THAT]
6 R: the security people standing, were standing there doing
7 nothing.
8 (.)
9 A: Really?!

Excerpt3-4 is particularly interesting because it seems like a clear case of violative interruption, since in line 3 I entered the conversation at a non-legitimate place—even if there was hesitation on the other speaker's part—and moreover I did not repair the trouble by stopping prematurely (as suggested by

[7]The use of "back channel signals" (tokens such as*mm*, *yes*)is a way conversational cooperation is communicated and monitored by participants Gumperz (1982, 163).

[8]Makri-Tsilipakou (1994, 407) has made a similar claim, regarding anticipatory or coinciding sentence completion in every day conversations among Greeks classifying it as a back-channel response, and considering it as affiliative interruption.

Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1978) but finished my sentence. I would argue that the contribution made here was not a violative interruption, but a 'sympathise' according to Edmondson (1981, 148):

> In a sympathise a speaker implicitly seeks to claim to share an emotional state known or assumed to be held by S(peaker) with respect to the state of affairs A. S(peaker) therefore in a Sympathise may be held to seek to establish a social bond between himself and his interlocutor.

This is the case as first of all, it came after the previous speaker's twice repeating the same word, "couldn't" in line 2, and after two short hesitations that could result in strategic anticipation on the part of other speakers to take the turn 'offered'. Secondly, two words in the overlapping talk ("can't", "window" in lines 3 and 4) co-refer to and address the previous talk ("window" in line 1, and "couldn't" in line 2), maintaining a topic and coherence fit with the previous talk, functioning thus as a means to support the current speaker by readopting and/or repeating (Bublitz 1988). Lastly, although my turn is rather long, it does not take or claim the floor from the previous speaker—since it serves the purpose of a sympathise "I know what you mean, I have the same problem" uttered noticeably quicker—an indication that the floor was not claimed from the second speaker due to a disagreement. So there is no reason for repair, and the first speaker continues her turn. As the overlap did not involve a topic change, a disagreement or the speaker did not claim the floor, it qualifies as co-operative (Murata 1994) or rapport type interruption (Goldberg 1990).

Alternatively, taking into consideration Sifianou's (1999) claim that Greeks tend to prefer more positive politeness strategies, it could be argued that this was an instance of addressee-oriented face-saving strategy—'agreeing'—and thus an instance of affiliative interruption in Makri-Tsilipakou's (1994, 406) terms.

But taking into consideration Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson's (1978, 40) comment on 'recipient design' as "the talk by a party in a conversation [that] is constructed or designed in ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are the coparticipants" Renata's reaction in line 5 (she speaks in a louder voice in order to be heard) characterises the utterance as not displaying sensitivity to the particular other co-participant. In those terms repair should have been made and I should have stopped prematurely. Or in Goldberg's (1990) and Murata's (1994) terms since the interruptee interpreted the listener's rapport move as a power/intrusive one, this qualifies the move as a violative interruption (Levinson 1983), power interruption (Goldberg 1990) or intrusive interruption (Murata 1994).

The next example in Excerpt 3-5 exhibits instances of overlapping talk that is used by co-interactants to collaboratively construct the conversation, similar to the collaborative turn-building strategies employed in conversations among equals, identified in Tannen (1989).

Excerpt 3-5

Context: Fred is talking about the name of the Irish Black pudding.

1		F:	But they call it black putting (.) em, I, I can't justify,
2			(.) or can't say why, [but
3	→	A:	[so, there is,=
4	→	F:	=there is no,=
5	→	A:	=connection=
6	→	F:	=linkage=

In this excerpt,I overlap in line 3 at a seemingly TRP, as the current speaker seems to be ready to give the floor as indicated by the two micro pauses in lines 1 and 2, the hesitation marker "em" and his claim that "he can't say why". Furthermore, as it is resolved quickly, by my withdrawing from talking, it qualifies as overlap and not interruption. What is interesting though is that my contribution starting with "so" paraphrasing the previous talk, apart from signalling to the current speaker that I have received the message of the previous turns, provides the next move that is effectively taken by both speakers in the next three turns. In lines 4−6 both speakers complete each other's turns, in a sequence of latching speech, collaboratively constructing meaning and co-developing a topic. This seems to be in line with McCarthy's (1991, 127) claim that "speakers predict one another's utterances and often complete them for them".

In Excerpt 3-3 to Excerpt 3-5, instances of overlapping and/or latching are instances of action patterns that are similar to the ones exhibited by British speakers in everyday conversations discussed by Bublitz (1988, 223−49). In particular, by "paraphrasing the previous speaker's talk and/or completing it" in Excerpt3-5, by "extending on it" in Excerpt3-3, and by "readopting" in Excerpt3-4, the current speaker signals her support by anticipating the previous speaker's utterance. Or in Makri-Tsilipakou's (1994, 407) terms instances of overlapping talk/latching are affiliative interventions as

they either develop affiliative topics, in Excerpt 3-3 and 3-5 or function as back-channel responses, in Excerpt 3-4. As was the case in Excerpts 3-1 and 3-2, in Excerpts 3-3 and 3-5 the first speaker, by means of his next turns, acknowledges that the overlaps/latching are co-operative and not intrusive as the ongoing topic is not changed but enriched through the second speaker's contributions.

This mutual goal orientation and interactional pattern is also exhibited in the next two excerpts.

Excerpt3-6

Context: Argyro and Fred are talking about eating in a foreign country. Argyro has just said that eating traditional food from the country one is in is part of getting to know the place.

Line		Speaker	Utterance
1.		F:	Yes, but (.) what usually happens is (.) that if you go
2.			somewhere (.) exotic and you eat the food and is everything
3.			very interesting fo:::r, >I don't know< however long, but
4.			eventually you say ah, I really need(.) so:me (.) you know=
5.	→	A:	=Yes=
6.		F:	=hamburger,o[::r (.) fries o::r,
7.	→	A:	[Ye:s, that happens.definitely,
8.		F:	whatever you want.]
9.	→	A:	definitely, definitely]
10.		A:	Yes, but (.) >I mean< that may happen [after a while]
11	→	F:	[Yeah, yeah]
12.		A:	[but not from the very beginning
13	→	F:	[no::, no::

In line 5,I latched and uttered"Yes" as an immediate response to the cajoler (Edmondson 1981) "you know" used by Fred in the previous turn. As discussed in the analysis of Excerpt3-2, by using a cajoler, the speaker seeks to increase the likelihood that the communicative act being performed will be acceptable to the hearer. In that sense, I would argue that "Yes" in line 5 is not simply a back channel response, but the preferred[9]second part of an adjacency pair (cajoler=seeking confirmation; back channel=confirm). My overlapping speech in lines 7 and 9, serves both as a confirmation and agreement of the preceding talk. "Yes" in line 7 indicates the current speaker's agreement with the preceding talk and "that" in line 7 refers anaphorically to the previously explained situation, maintaining thus a topical coherence.

So in that sense both the latching in line 5 and the overlaps in lines 7 and 9 serve as a means of "supporting the previous speaker by readopting" (agreeing) in Bulblitz's (1988, 247) terms, or an affiliative intervention in the form of preferred second pair parts in Makri-Tsilipakou's (1994, 406) terms. Also as they do not claim the floor from the current speaker, and/or maintain a topical or cohesive fit with the interrupted talk, they are co-operative or support interruptions. What is equally important in this excerpt is also the first speaker's interactional behaviour in lines 11 and 13, where he uses the same interactional techniques as me, namely using supporting back channel responses in the form of overlapping speech.

Apart from claiming that the overlapping speech produced by both participants functions as rapport interruptions co-developing a topic, as was the case in Excerpt3-5, I would also argue that by mutually overlapping, the two participants co-develop a common communication pattern. This is also exhibited in the following multi-party interaction in Excerpt 3-7 below.

What is particularly striking in this excerpt, is the amount of 'latching' (lines 4−5,11−13,17−18) and the extended overlaps that seem not to impair interaction. The overlaps in lines 7−15 although extended are not repaired, since they do not claim the floor from the previous speaker. They are back channel responses indicating active listener involvement in the ongoing talk and evaluative comments concerning the context of the preceding talk, indicating active listenership. In this case, the overlapping talk on the part of the Greek interactants is in accordance with the 'recipient design' talk of every day conversations (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1978) since it displays both orientation and sensitivity to the other co-participant, who seems to realise that and continues his turn (line 8). Thus those instances of latching and overlapping speech are rapport or co-operative interruptions.

What is equally interesting about latching in this excerpt, is the way the participants build their talk by co-referring back to each other's previous turns (line 13 "Mykonos" with lines 5 and 8 "Mykonos", line 11 "fish" with line 8 "fish"). It seems thus that the latches apart from functioning as a means to support the current speaker also provide the next turn quickly, which is taken by the co-participants, enabling them to co-construct and co-develop the topic(s). This is in line with Tannen's (1989, 51−80) claims about the function of repetition in casual conversations among friends in the American context.

[9] Although not discussed in terms of preferred second pair parts, a similar claim is made by Tannen (1989, 62) about the use of 'yes' as a way to ratify the previous speaker's contribution.

In particular she claims that repetitions of key words or phrases by different participants in interaction do not only maintain topical coherence but are indicators of interpersonal involvement.

In Excerpt 3-7 below, it seems that latching and overlapping speech have a similar double function. Firstly, they are the means to support the previous speaker(s) by reproducing, evaluating, completing and supplementing what was said. Secondly they are used by all participants, regardless of their nationality, not only to co-develop a common topic but also to co-develop an interactional pattern.

Excerpt 3-7

Context: Fred, Stamatia, Eleni and Argyro are talking about Greece and Fred says that he feels something is missing from his life because he has not visited Greece.

1		F:	>I'll go there one day<◦
2			(0.3)
3		St:	When? .haa (.) When you are seventy?!
4	→	F:	Yeah!,=
5	→	St:	=Seventy in Mykonos!.haa Yes!
6		F:	I'll be on a cruise ship (.) [I'll be on a cruise ship
7	→	St:	[n::::o, n:::::o
8	→	F:	[I'll go to Mykonos and say " I want fish and chips"]=
9	→	St:	[n:::::o, n:::::o, n:::::o]
10	→	A:	[.haaaaa, .haaaaaaaaa, .haaaaaaaaa]
11	→	St:	=Ah, ye:s (.) I think you can find fish and chips (.)
12			it's not s::o=
13	→	A:	=In Mykonos?
14	→	E:	there are a lot o:f [(things there)]
15	→	St:	[Why not?]
16		A:	Aha, fish!
17	→	E:	Yes, fish=
18	→	St:	=fish, he can order fish a:nd then chips (.) he can
19			combine!
20		A:	Yes, but [(.) he will be] served a real fish, with
21			bones
22		F:	[I don't mea:n]
23		A:	>you know< and he will say "What's that?! I want a fish.
24			that's not a fish!"
25			(0.2)
26		F:	A fish is supposed to look like this!
27		A:	Yes. .haaaa, .haaaaa
28		F:	[This is how you catch them]
29		A:	[.haaaaa, .haaaaa, .haaaaaa]
30		St:	[.haaaaa, .haaaaa, .haaaaaaa]

Fred continues to mimick the English tourist who insists that fish sticks are real fish

Thus the function of latching and overlapping is to enable co-interactants to actively collaborate in both meaning making (topic) and (interactional) culture making

7. Discussion and Conclusions

The question this chapter aimed to address was whether and to what extent large-culture characteristics as manifested in small-culture interaction (de-)naturalise themselves. In particular, whether the alleged interruptional large culture characteristic (macro level) of conversations was transferred by Greek participants in ELF conversations (micro level) and the role it possibly played in the process of small-culture making (mezzo level).

Analysis of the data excerpts, at a micro level (analytical downscaling) revealed that the (female) Greek participants did indeed transfer their L1 'interruptional' sociolinguistic strategies into ELF conversations and these, in the majority of cases, contributed to harmonious, effective communication. This seems to confirm previous research on ELF in relation to the effective use of culture-based interactional strategies in ELF conversations (Meierkord 2002; Canagarajah 2013). As Canagarajah (2013, 95) puts it, ELF interactants effectively recontextualise culture-based interactional strategies.

Turn-by-turn analysis of the talk-in-interactionrevealed another important aspect of the given ELF conversations. In the majority of cases, the contributions made by the Greek participants were not considered by the co-interactants as violative interruptions, but as support or co-operative interruptions. By not claiming the floor from the current speaker, and by fitting topically and coherently with the previous turn simultaneous speech produced by the Greek participants attended both the speaker's and

listener's positive face needs (Brown and Levinson 1987).[10] As already discussed, in the majority of cases (Excerpts 3-1 to 3-3 and3-5 to 3-7) interuptees perceived them as neutral/co-operative and not power oriented interruptions, recognising their role in the mutual, shared goal orientation; that of friendly socialising.

Analysis at a mezzo level revealed that the interruptees, in the majority of the cases, collaborated with the Greek interrupters in the creation of a common culture as interaction. This was achieved either by collaboratively using latching, overlapping speech to co-develop a topic (Excerpts 3-1, 3-2, 3-5 and 3-6), or to co-develop an interactional pattern (Excerpts 3-6 and 3-7). This highly-involvement style of interaction between the participants in the given ELF conversations seems to confirm previous research on L1 conversations among peers both in the Greek context (Makri-Tsilipakou 1994) and in the British context (Bulblitz 1988). In that sense the common culture as interaction created by the speakers in the given interactions is somehow similar to the notion of a 'third culture' in Meierkord's (2002, 119–20) terms; a 'linguistic masala' though *not* stripped of its cultural roots.

These findings at a micro and mezzo level seem to challenge macro level assumptions, requiring us to perform an analytical upscaling, questioning large culture assumptions. If the 'interruptional moves' performed by the Greek speakers were not intrusive but co-operative/support moves, are Greeks really interruptive/insensitive to the listeners' face needs or not? In the same token, the presence of overlapping speech/interruptions is an interactional phenomenon that has great value in certain 'cultures' (like the Greek one) that prefer more positive politeness strategies and less value in 'cultures' (like the British one) that prefer more negative politeness strategies?[11]Or in Holliday's (1999; 2011) terms, do large culture characteristics/attributes as manifested in small culture interaction de-reificate themselves?

Despite the limitations of this study, a tentative answer can be given to the above questions. As already discussed, analytical downscaling at a micro level has indicated that interruptions produced by (female) Greek speakers in the specific ELF conversations, in the majority of cases,were not regarded as power or intrusive interruptions but as neutral or rapport/co-operative ones.Analysis at a mezzo level has indicated that these instances of rapport interruptions both contributed in the co-development of a 'third culture' among co-participants and were similar to action patterns exhibited by Greek and British speakers in everyday conversations. In other words, participants in these ELF conversations created their own culture as interaction by successfully utilising and echoing each other's interactional patterns. These findings in turn challenge the large-culture characteristic that Greeks'violently' interrupt other participants in interaction. They also challenge the assumption that high value is placed on the presence of (simultaneous) speech in everyday interactions *only* in cultures that prefer more positive politeness strategies and not in others that prefer more negative politeness strategies. Further empirical research in ELF and L1 contexts and also in single or mixed gender conversations both among peers and professionals would verify or contradict these findings, in relation to culture (as interaction) making processes. But what is important to note is that when examining these processes, moving between scales is of paramount importance in any discussion of culture, as by doing so the static, essentialist perception of cultures is being challenged.

Transcription Conventions

adapted from Hutchby and Wooffit(1999)and Ten Have (1999)

(0.5)	The number in Brackets indicates a time gap in tenths ofa second
(.)	A dot enclosed in a bracket indicates a pause in the talk of less than two-tenths of a second
=	The "equals" sign indicates "latching" between utterances.
[ ]	square brackets between adjacent lines of co-occurent speech,indicate the onset and end of a spate of overlapping talk. Single square brackets indicate just the onset of overlapping speech.
.hh	A dot before an "h" indicates speaker - in - breath. the more h's the longer the breath.
:	colons indicate that the speaker has stretched the preceding sound or letter. The more the colons the greater the extent of stretching.
!	Exclamation marks are used to indicate an animated or emphatic tone.
( )	empty parentheses indicate the presence of an unclear fragment on the tape.
(guess)	The words within a single bracket indicate thetranscriber's best guess at an unclear utterance.
.	A full stop indicates a stopping fall in the tone. It doesnot necessarily indicate the end of a sentence
,	A comma indicates a continuing intonation.
?	A question mark indicates a rising inflection. It does not necessarily indicate a question.

[10]In the case of conversations, speakers' need to feel that what they have to say is of interest to others, and listeners' need to be actively involved in the conversation by displaying active listenership.

[11]For a discussion on a cross cultural perspective on politeness in Greece and England see Sifianou (1999).

Under	Underlined fragments indicate speaker emphasis
CAPITALS	Words in capitals mark a section of speech noticeably louder than that surrounding it.
°°	Degree signs are used to indicate that the talk they encompass is spoken noticeably quieter that the surrounding talk.
><	"More than" and "less than" signs indicate that the talk they encompass was produced noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk
→	An "arrow" indicates a point in the transcript that is of particular interest and it is analysed.

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