

Personal Interlocution in Telecollaboration

Cultural Discourse Analysis of a German-Israeli Virtual Exchange among future EFL teachers

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1. Introduction

Over the last decades and especially through the COVID-19 pandemic, digital collaborations and networking have become a very important aspect of everyday life; even in teaching and learning digitalization cannot be excluded. Nevertheless, teachers from different parts of the world still hardly exchange their expertise with one and another, even if learning about different cultures and beliefs are parts of the intercultural communicative competence which is an essential constituent in many curriculums (Kilian, 2016; Byram, 1997)

Through projects, such as the DAAD¹-funded program Digital and International Virtual Academic Cooperation (DIVA) from 2021, students have the opportunity to interact with other student teachers and cooperate in telecollaborative projects.

In previous German-Israeli virtual exchanges conducted in the last few years (Waldman, Harel, & Schwab, 2016, 2019), the students engaged in personal conversations which were not necessarily part of the given assignments and therefore the question arose how and in which form individuals display their personal narratives and beliefs in these digital meetings. This article will take a phenomenological approach to analyze an excerpt of one recorded session between a group of German and Israeli students who participated in the DIVA project in the winter term of 2020/2021. The analysis will be an example of an individual narrative and how it is presented in the discourse. Similar

1 DAAD stands for *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst*, i.e. the German Academic Exchange Service.

to Salonen's (2018) study, the focus will lie on the self-disclosure represented in the interlocutors' dialogue with an intention on language use. Further, the multimodal observations will be discussed on the basis of Carbaugh's (2007) cultural discourse analysis (CuDA). Findings and areas for discussion will be linked to the theoretical background of CuDA and narrative inquiries which are fundamental components of expression and performance of an individual. I will place my conclusions on the findings of the presented extract in the conclusion.

2. Theoretical Background

Cultural Discourse Analysis

In the last decades globalization has not only formed economy and technology, but also education which calls for transformation in schooling and teachers to adapt to a rapidly changing landscape of mobility and migration (Savva, 2017). These changes also evoke the need for discourse analysis to include the more culturally diverse constituents and take into consideration that intercultural communication plays an essential role in the understanding of effective communication with appropriate awareness and pragmatics across cultural differences (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Byram, 1997, 2009).

These expectations can be met by an interpretive stance, such as the *Cultural Discourse Analysis (CuDA)*, a concept coined by Carbaugh (2007). The author defines communication as a practice which goes hand in hand with culture and includes: 1. How is communication shaped as a cultural process? and 2. What system of symbolic meanings or what culturally commentary is imminent in practices of communication? Therefore, Carbaugh questions how one presents one's (a) *being*, namely own personhood, explicitly and implicitly as well as the (b) *relationships* that are presumed and engaged between the individuals. Further, he states that (c) how one acts (*acting*) and (d) expresses their *feelings* in communication, displays their cultural background and stand which is shaped by the (e) place and environment of one's upbringing and living, specifically their *dwelling*. The following extract, which was taken from one of the meetings between students discussed here, will demonstrate the ideas of Carbaugh's five principles:

Conversation Extract 1

I3: no like ((looking up)) uhm in tel aviv it's okay but we have jaffa, you know, jaffa is uhm next to tel aviv ((clapping her hands together, S2 nodding)) is like in tel aviv. and jaffa all these years we live okay arabs and eh jews together NEIGHbors. but no:w (.) uhm in the streets also in jaffa and also in akko and it it's near the sea uh they're friends ((moving her head towards the screen)) there arabs and jews and no:w ((looking to the left)) they're like uhm
(---)

G3: =divided?

I3: everything is FIRE (,) fire on the street and

This conversation, between a German (G3) and an Israeli (I3) student, took place whilst Israel was being threatened by bombs and missiles (and the Israeli counter attacks towards the Gaza strip) during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in May 2021. It demonstrates how the listener can understand that I3 is an Israeli student living in Tel Aviv and growing up in a society where neighbors recently began fighting each other. Further, G3 is following along in the conversation and is the listener which leads back to the relationship both have. I3 also tells something about her feelings in the way she is describing the shootings as »fire«. In addition, her gestures, such as looking up whilst talking or clapping her hands, also present her form of acting. Even though this is only a small extract of a longer conversation, it gives the reader a lot of information about the cultural background, when following Carbaugh's CuDA.

For that reason, the chosen data of narratives will be discussed on the base of Cultural Discourse Analysis which takes the aspects of »being, relating, acting, feeling and dwelling« (Carbaugh, 2007, p. 174) into account.

Narratives & Personal Interlocutions

Various disciplines and corresponding definitions make it difficult to narrow down the concept of identity. The term identity is often used when describing someone's character und behavior, based on their home culture, surrounding and upbringing (Gee, 2015; Butler, 2006). In the field of TESOL and Applied Linguistics scholars assume that everyone has multiple identities and that these

identities change depending on context and time (e.g. Butler, 2006; Gee, 2015; Norton, 2000). Norton (2000) for example states that SLA theorists have not yet been able to define a convincing concept of identity that includes the language learner and the context in which language learning takes place. Nevertheless, there is a growing interest in researching identity construction of teachers in the classroom (Li Li, 2020; Chinokul, 2021). For the course of this article a brief overview and localization of the term *identity* is needed to understand the importance and use of narratives in the digital age.

Teachers' identity is often a combination of their professional and personal identity (Salinas & Ayala, 2017). According to Salinas and Ayala (2017), personal components, such as the individual biography, gender, age and culture are used to shape a teacher's identity. Further, influential components are emotions and language. Taking scholars like Vygotsky (1978) into consideration, language is an important part of identity construction, since identity can be narrated through language, besides language helps in understanding a person. Other scholars, such as Kleinke, Hernández & Bös (2018), divide identity into three parts: personal, group and collective. Whereas the first is the »bundle of traits that we believe makes us unique« (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 298) and the second refers to the membership of an individual in a group, such as class or gender. The concept of collective identity is represented through similar beliefs and knowledge but is also, as well as group identity, defined by macro-categories, such as political affiliation or ethnicity (Kleinke, Hernández & Bös, 2018). For authors, such as Butler (2006) and Baumann (2000) identity is presented in performance. Baumann (2000) for example describes how the individual needs a performative act for individualization:

[...] »individualization« consists of transforming human »identity« from a »given« into a »task« and charging the actors with the responsibility for performing that task and for the consequences (also the side-effects) of their performance (Baumann, 2000, p. 31–32).

Depending on the research perspective, different components are relevant in defining identity. From a linguistic and language learning perspective, the use of language and the discourse in which language is used, is the desirable focus. In line with Salinas and Ayala (2017) citation that »stories are conceived to express and construct identity through discourse« (Salinas & Ayala, 2017, p. 36), this article will use *self-disclosure* as a way to understand the concept of personal identities expressed in discourse. Self-disclosure is defined as the »process of

revealing personal information relating to oneself« (Salonen, 2018, p. 58). An indicator for investigating these examples is the use of self-reference, such as I-statements, e.g. »I think it's something for me that that came with age« or »we in Germany believe that students need to learn at least one foreign language in school«.

For more than thirty years, researchers use stories and narratives as an essential part of investigation (see for example Clandinin et al., 2007; Amott, 2018, 2021) and a growing number of such research has focused on student teachers and teacher novices. Studies, such as the case study conducted by Salinas and Ayala (2018), in which they explored how EFL teachers formed their identity throughout their teaching program, share the interest in using narratives in student teacher research. They concluded that teachers' identity construction is »complex, and teachers must negotiate and reshape their identities through social interactions and experiences« (Salinas & Ayala, 2018, p. 45). Chinokul (2021) mentions that the »knowledge of self is seen as an essential aspect for being a teacher« (p. 430) and that in the process of becoming a teacher »teacher identity—what beginning teachers believe about teaching and learning as self-as-teacher—is of vital concern to teacher education« (Bullough, 1997 as cited in Salinas & Ayala, 2018, 34). Further, Richards (2006) points out that there is also a »default« (p. 60) identity which is presented in the context of discourse and therefore relevant in teacher-student interactions, since these are dependent on the expectations that derive from a classroom setting. In this context, the teacher is the one asking questions, guiding the students in their learning process, imparting knowledge, whereas the student is the person who is answering the given questions, receiving learning advice and knowledge.

Qualitative research, especially narrative inquiries, has explored how teachers articulate their self »through talk, social interaction, and self presentation« (Zembylas, 2003, p. 215) in situated contexts, such as the classroom. By taking a performative view of narrative discourse, »it is in [the] narrative that we construct identities« (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Besides, Benwell and Stokoe state that »[n]arrative theorists claim that lives are made coherent and meaningful through the ›biographical‹ work that people do« (p. 130). For this reason, narratives can be used to voice the understanding of self which is visible in one's performance. However, these stories then need to be viewed under two aspects which were defined by Amott (2021, p. 3) as:

- (1) socially constructed and therefore nuanced according to the audience and
- (2) multiple, meaning that a person might construct their identities differently for different audiences and purposes.

Another component which is relevant for the purpose of this study is the digital age and the individual performance in online settings. Being online does not only determine everyone's life, but there is also a constant fluid switch between being online and offline as well as having private or public conversations. Baumann (2000), who did not refer to internet communication, states that

[t]he disintegration of the social network, the falling apart of effective agencies of collective action is often noted with a good deal of anxiety and bewailed as the unanticipated ›side effect‹ of the new lightness and fluidity of the increasingly mobile, slippery, shifty, evasive and fugitive power. But social disintegration is as much a condition as it is the outcome of the new technique of power, using disengagement and the art of escape as its major tools (p. 14).

According to him »liquid modernity« (Baumann, 2000) leads to the »loss of stability and certainty as to who we can be and what we can do and say« (Edermann & Caldas-Coulthard, 2008 as cited in Kleinke, Hernández & Bös, 2018, p. 2), making it a challenge to determine oneself in relation to others in the physical and digital world.

For the purpose of this paper the concept of personal narratives was not explicitly chosen when data was collected, yet it has turned-out to provide meaningful access to the data since it gives insights into the individuals' experiences which then can be used to draw a conclusion of their understanding of culture and language. The following representation of the data collection and methodology will serve as a framework for the analysis and discussion.

3. Data & Methodology

The data was collected in the summer semester 2021 and was part of the DIVA project which was conducted with the University of Education, Ludwigsburg (Germany) and the Kibbutzim College of Education, Technology and the Arts in Tel Aviv (Israel) as well as the Charles Darwin University in Darwin (Australia), however, the latter was not considered in the following data. 43 teacher

students, 10 males and 33 females, participated in the project. There is an age difference between the students from Israel and Germany, because the German students are still in their master (age 21 to 27) and the Israeli students all have work experience which is now extended through a teaching degree. Over a period of four weeks the students worked together in synchronous Zoom meetings and discussed pedagogical relevant take-aways from the COVID-19 era. Their findings were collected in digital presentations, such as Microsoft PowerPoint.

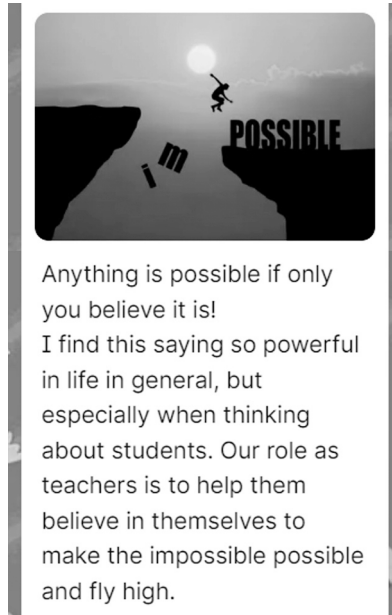
In the first two sessions the students got to know each other through Padlets. The first Padlet, which was used in the initial session, was a map of Germany and Israel with set pins to show the others where each group member was from. Students then talked about the surrounding area and recognized things they knew about the other country. The second activity, which was also used in the first meeting, was a personal artifact which the students had uploaded to the Padlet prior to the meeting. The given instruction was to bring an artifact that represents the student's personal identity. Students engaged with each other about the different artifacts of their group members and found similarities, for example in hobbies or interests or they expressed their dislikes. At the end of the session all students met with their professors in the main meeting room and reported back their experience in the group and received the assignment to upload a professional artifact, which represented their teaching personality, to a third Padlet and also to explain why they chose this artifact. This Padlet was the content of the second session. Some students used visuals which included pictures from students or teaching materials, whereas others chose personal artifacts that influence their teaching professionalism. After the group session, the students shared their thoughts on things that surprised them or discussed which differences they recognized in their professional identities.

For this paper a video sequence (0:09:17-0:14:26) from the second meeting was selected and transcribed in TRANSANA according to the GAT 2 conventions (Selting et al., 1998). The sequence was chosen because of the way in which the interlocutors communicated and not communicated with each other. The data was then coded in MAXQDA.

The six teacher students, three Israelis (female) and three Germans (one male and two females), uploaded their teaching/professional artifact ahead of time in a Padlet and then took turns in presenting and talking about their choice. These »ice breakers« then partially led to extended, sometimes even controversial discussions.

4. Data Analysis

Padlet Artifact 1



The analyzed sequence is predominantly a monologue of one Israeli student (I2) whose artifact is a picture of herself as a yoga teacher. Prior, another Israeli student (I1) talks about passing on the belief of things being possible: »anything is possible if you believe it is« which is her interpretation of the photography of someone who is jumping over a cliff (Padlet Artifact 1) with the letters »impossible« falling apart. She explains that this is a maxim which refers to every part in life and not necessarily only to teaching.

Her mentioning of the principle initializes the conversation about believing and making things in life possible which then leads to the following sequences.

Conversation Extract 2

80 I2: (-- do you do you guys mind if i go next
cause it's
81 kind of to do with this as well
82 G1: yeah that's okay
83 G2: go ahead
84 I2: o mine i'm just gonna go up it's just a little bit
85 up for me i just wrote- where is it uh it's on the
86 right wait(.)
87 I3: this is a beautiful picture
88 I2: thanks yeah this was a proper photography with light-
89 ing and make-up
90 I1: [oh
91 I2: [just i don't wake up like this
92 I1: ((laughs))

I2 asks the others if she is allowed to go next, since her artifact and the corresponding explanation is linked to the prior presentation. Everyone agrees and her presentation begins with a focus on her picture and the others complementing her (line 88). Further, I2 states that »[she doesn't] wake up like this« (line 91) and I1's laughs. I2 demonstrates that she has humor and by I1's laughing she connects with her on the level of relationship. Using compliments or humor can be a way of building a relationship between the interlocutors.

In line 96, I1 links back to her own presentation about things being »(im)possible« (as shown in the picture above) by stating that I1 made it possible when screensharing the Padlet, so that everyone can see her picture. This is another form of showing the relationship between I2 and I1 and it also is a compliment for I2 and acknowledging her efforts.

Conversation Extract 3

93 I2: can you guys see it [though
94 I1: [we see it see it's possible ((laughs))
95 I2: [it's possible
96 I1: [you made it possible ((laughs))
97 I2: exactly totally possible uh wait i'm gonna take it up take
98 it up for me it's just your you guys your [camera
99 I3: [is that you o.
100 I2: yeah it is

The conversation then leads into I2's monologue in which she talks about herself being a yoga teacher and that she practices meditation. She says that she »sees« the difference between times in which she practices meditation and in which she does not. In spite of that, I2 does not interact directly with the other interlocutors, nor wait for their reactions, she continues talking and presenting herself by linking one thought to the next like an ongoing thread. This form of disclosure tells the others that this is an important part of her life:

Conversation Extract 4

105 I2: [...]get's down to the to the real basis of a lot of
 106 the fears and i think that when we take that away and
 107 i obviously i don't mean fear of like uh let's do
 108 something dangerous nothing will ever happen to me
 109 i'm not scared not that kind of fear cause that's a
 110 good fear uhm but i think it's really all about
 111 narratives and it's a lot of the stories you tell
 112 yourself and and for me practicing meditation really
 113 helps me to get in touch with the essence of myself
 114 which is always a loving being and i think that of
 115 all humans, yeah it's not just me and and that's very
 116 helpful to

She also expresses her feelings about fears and how her performance as yoga teacher helps her cope and deal with the essence of life and herself and how this affects her place in society and interacting with others. The way in which I2 keeps the connection to the other interlocutors and upholds the relationship, is by relating back to I1's earlier statement without actively engaging the others in the conversation (line 116) and by looking into the camera whilst speaking. I2 picks up the topic of things being »(im)possible« and says that nothing is impossible. She reinforces her belief by sharing her personal experience of her not being able to get pregnant. For her being pregnant was not possible and a struggle with many negative emotions, such as anger, disappointment and heartache in the last years (line 117–119). However, she now has found a way to have a baby through surrogacy (line 120) which is possible in Israel, but illegal in Germany. This chance has changed her attitude to positive emotions, such as happiness (line 125–126). However, I2 also admits that surrogacy caused fear of what others might think of her (line 122–123). I2 reveals something about her self at this point because she points out that she cares about what others think of her.

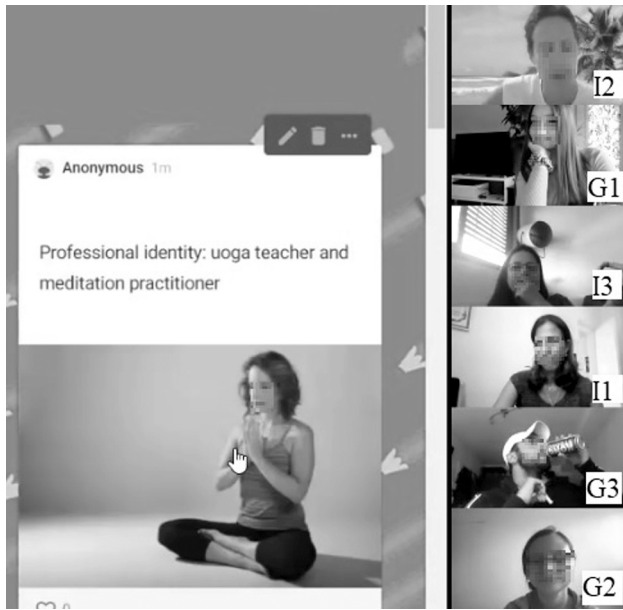
Conversation Extract 5

116 I2: [...] to uhm to me and i wanted to say also about
 117 what k. what k. uh said that nothing is
 118 impossible's that i've been trying to get pregnant
 119 for four years and after four years and a lot of
 120 disappointment a lot of heartache a lot of tears
 121 a lot of anger like so much bad stuff we made the
 122 decision to try surrogacy and it's working and
 123 she's week twenty-three and i'm so happy and there
 124 was so much fear so much fear of what will people
 125 say and how will it look to the outside and i'm
 126 just so happy that even though i was scared i
 127 still did it because i really like think that it's
 128 mainly in the head cause everyone's, like so happy
 129 for me nobody {cares
 130 I1: [its in their head
 131 I2: [people said to me you're an insp
 132 ration which it thought was hilarious because i
 133 was thinking what will people say i didn't i would
 134 be an inspiration and so uhm

I1 tries to finish I2's sentence and adds »it's mainly in the head« (line 128), though, I2 ignores the interruption and continues with her story. By stating »people said to me you're an inspiration which i thought was hilarious because i was thinking what will people say i didn't i would be an inspiration«. I2 demonstrates how her personal situation of a surrogacy also hides the fact that she is insecure and unsure about what others might think. This intimacy is an example of showing »feelings« (Carbaugh, 2007).

I2 keeps the floor in the conversation and is still presenting her artifact through screen sharing. Yet the others engage and demonstrate relationship and their feelings towards I2 through gesture and mimicry, such as nodding as an act of affirmation or as described in the following:

Screenshot of Group Meeting



While I2 is talking about her surrogacy, one German student is smiling (G1) and the two other Israeli students (I1 & I3) are nodding their heads. Yet, the male student, who is from Germany, (G3) does not seem to be participating in the conversation because he takes his can to drink something and therefore does not seem to show any form of empathy. G3's behavior is also a good example of avoiding to show feelings as it is an intimate female topic which he may not be able to cope with openly. This behavior may suggest that his »dwelling« is different and so he cannot relate to what I2 is saying. On the one hand, G3's reaction could be because he is not interested in the topic, maybe due to his gender or age. On the other hand, the term »surrogacy« is a very specific terminology which may not be part of his vocabulary and consequently he does not react because he simply does not understand the term or even asks about it. I2 then picks up on the fact that there is an age difference between the Israeli and the German students which makes the two female Germans smile:

Conversation Extract 6

134 I2: i know you guys are still young so it
 135 maybe sounds weird to you but if you're
 136 an older woman it's really tough sometimes so and
 137 also just when you can't when you try to get
 138 pregnant and you can't it's such a miserable
 139 experience because you think wow what's wrong with
 140 me and and the truth is that it just sometimes
 141 happens i'm not the first woman it's happened to
 142 i mean it's i mean it should theoretically go(es)
 143 quite easy but for some women it doesn't anyway
 144 my point is that i'm so happy that i thought out
 145 of the box and i let go of trying to fight it and
 146 i just let go and it worked out {hopefully}

I1 wants to show her sympathy (line 147–152) and tries to pick up the conversation by giving her opinion. However, I2 interrupts her with »but« (line 153) which gives the impression that she does not agree with I1. I2 wants to make clear that she was afraid of what others would think about her (line 154) and even worse if others would feel sorry for her and her situation (line 159). I1 tries to understand her (line 160), but I2 still feels the need to emphasize that she does not want to come across as someone who is weak and who has problems (line 161–163). It seems as if I2 feels satisfaction of bringing her message across when I1 says »this is just noise« (line 168–169), meaning that I2 does not have to listen to others and even repeats herself to make this point clear.

Conversation Extract 7

147 I1: [amazing amazing i think it's about what
 148 you focus on you focused when you focused on
 149 what people would say what would they think this
 150 is not the main and the most important thing to
 151 focus on this is just a side we need to focus on
 152 the essence like you said [so
 153 I2: [but i think that that
 154 the uhm the what will people say thing for me
 155 i'm sure i'm sure other people too but it's like
 156 you realize when you really look into yourself
 157 it's such a big thing because it it's not uh
 158 like (--) on of things i was scared about is
 159 that people would feel sorry for [me
 160 I1: [mhm
 161 I2: [that's what i
 162 mean it's not what will people say like oh she
 163 did so and [so
 164 I1: [mhm
 165 I2: [it's that they would be like ohh
 166 poor woman i would be so embarrassed [to be in
 167 that situation
 168 I1: [this is
 169 just noise
 170 I2: [yeah
 171 I1: [this is
 172 noise that you have [to

The conversation takes a new direction when I3 participates as well. She is also from Israel and shares the same story (line 173). This directly builds a connection between the two which is followed by emotions and verbalizing verbs of action (»No way, I'm crying«, line 175) and even codeswitching into their mother tongue Hebrew (line 179 and 183).

Conversation Extract 8

173	I3:	[o. i also i also did this uh my son is now six
174		years old
175	I2:	no way i'm [crying
176	I3:	[so i'll talk to you [later
177	I2:	[oh my god
178	I1:	amazing
179	I2:	(speaks Hebrew) ((laughs))
180	I3:	yeah yeah, so we'll talk
181	I2:	i just wanna say the waiting is insane
182	I3:	insane
183	I2:	(speaks Hebrew)
184	I3:	so good luck ((giggles))
185	I2:	thank you
186	I1:	i'm so happy for you
187	I3:	((giggles))
188	I2:	thank you wow
189	I3:	((laughs))

The conversation suddenly becomes very personal and emotional, without including the other interlocutors. Both even decide to follow up with their conversation at a later point (»so i'll talk to you later« and »so we'll talk«) (line 176). Since I3 knows what I2 is going through, she repeats the feeling that the waiting is »insane« (line 181–182). She also wishes her »good luck« (line 184). I1 tries to participate in the conversation then by expressing how happy she is (line 178 and 186), I3 just giggles as a response whereas I2 thanks her (line 185). It is interesting that the whole conversation only takes part between the three Israeli students and is mainly led by I2.

In the following discussion the article will lead back to the two initial questions posed by Carbaugh (2002) and the concept of the CuDA.

5. Findings & Discussion

In this section the findings demonstrated above in the analysis will be discussed by relating back to the five principles: being, relating, acting, feeling, and dwelling. Since the focus is on the interlocutor talking about her surro-

gacy and how nothing is impossible, the main focus of the discussion will lay on her as an example of personal interlocution.

being

The interlocutor I2 starts with a short description about herself, her social identity, meaning one position in society, (»I'm a yoga teacher and I also practice meditation«). Even though this meeting is about professional identity, she lays her focus on these two personal aspects. The question is: what characteristics come along with someone who identifies themselves as a yoga teacher? She describes practicing meditation as being able to come to the basics of her fears and also focusing on herself. Moreover, she sees herself as a loving being which she thinks of all people. Further she believes that nothing is impossible and explicitly says that she is happy since she has been trying to get pregnant and had the courage to try surrogacy. Implicitly she also expresses who she is by not letting anyone else interfere or interrupt her presentation. In addition, she turns compliments into humor, for example when I3 compliments her picture and I2 then says: »just don't wake up like this«.

relating

As stated above the question about relationships and relating to one another in discourse is also a question as to how relationships are presumed and engaged in communication practices (Carbaugh, 2002). Throughout the extract some forms of relating are explicit, for example when I2 is linking back to I1's statement or when I1 agrees with I2 by saying »exactly its in their head«. I1 also shows agreement with »like you said«. Another explicit form of relating is presented when I3 tells I2 that she has also experienced surrogacy and both interlocutors talk about their experience. There are also implicit actions of proving relation, such as using compliments. One example is when I1 tells I2 that it is »amazing« for her that I2 is fighting for letting go and experiencing this form of becoming a mother (line 147–152). Another example is when I2 shows her emotions »no way, I'm crying« (line 175), after A says that her son who came from a surrogate mother is now six years old.

acting

The principle of acting refers to things that are done whilst talking and these are then explicitly explained (see also Baumann, 2000 on performance). One example can be found at the beginning of the chosen discourse when I2 is looking for her picture in the Padlet and she comments her search: »where is it <p>uh it's up on the right wait« (line 85). I2 also comments the placement of the camera and how she needs to change it so that she can see everyone (»uh wait i'm gonna take it up take it up for me it's just your you guys your camera«, line 98–99). However, since this is an online session, not much action can be seen explicitly.

feeling

As stated above, interacting in the online world changes the perspective of how we present ourselves and how intimate we may get in conversations. According to Carbaugh (2002), the principle »feeling« also includes questioning what affection is appropriate and to which degree.

Talking about not being able to get pregnant and the chance of surrogacy, which is legally not possible in Germany, shows how personal a cross-cultural conversation, especially in an online setting, may get. Furthermore, not demonstrating actions or taking part in a conversation also leads to conclusions of someone's stance towards a topic, for example that none of the German students is actively engaging in the conversation. Nevertheless, not everyone shares this insight and approach, especially when the personal environment is different. This can be seen in how the female German students do not respond to the conversation and only smile when I2 talks about it. It could even be that their knowledge of language does not include the term »surrogacy« because this is not part of their daily life and experience. Further, the way the male student is reacting to the conversation also demonstrates some form of affect because he does not seem to participate at all at this point, but looks the other way or even drinks, whilst others are actively listening. This may not only be a cultural issue, but also linked to the gender differences.

dwelling

People from different cultures and places in the world have a different sense of their environment and where they are located. Depending on the topic this can

be an issue for the interlocutors. However, in the analyzed example the interlocutors do not explicitly refer to their place or environment. This is only done implicitly through the conversation about surrogacy which is, as stated before, not possible in Germany. It is interesting to see that the German students do not engage in further discourse at this point, nor is there any explanation or room for the others, since the conversation's emphasis is on the dwelling of the Israelis only.

This section demonstrated how the theoretical concepts of CuDA were taken to understand the personal interlocutions in an exemplary sequence. A conclusion will be drawn in the following section.

6. Conclusion

The discussed findings demonstrate how personal narratives can provide insight into individual experiences and also tell us something about the cultural background.

In addition, it is important to know that digital discourse reduces certain aspects of a conversation, such as *acting*, which are, according to authors of CuDA, relevant for understanding. Also, the principle of *dwelling* depends on the conversation topic and cannot be generally used. As in the case of the example used in this article, the environment and location of the people played a role in the sense that surrogacy is legally impossible in Germany.

However, other principles, such as *feelings* and *being*, become more important in online settings. As Polletta & Jasper (2001) have pointed out, online conversations ask for more intimacy and individuals trying to find their place in the digital world. Furthermore, to some extent personal interlocutions are expressed a lot quicker in digital discourse, such as telecollaborative projects, in which time is often limited and less outer distractions occur, such as finding groups and physically working on a project with someone, for example looking for writing material.

Yet, this example also demonstrates limitations because only one perspective is being viewed due to the amount of speech time given to the Israeli student. In addition, the topic of surrogacy also limits the interaction with others, since this is a very specific thematic field which is on the one hand not yet relevant to the German students and on the other hand it is not an issue in Germany because it is illegal.

Due to these limitations, future studies in this field need to analyze and discuss a broader thematical field and also a more intense conversation between the majority of interlocutors.

Nevertheless, having access to personal narratives can be a way to understand different discourses with a focus on culture and language, especially in telecollaborations of teachers in training, since this field is still relatively new and teachers' perception of the world will also be carried on to the students' world view.

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