

Question-answer sequences in conciliation hearings and interviews with political candidates

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Abstract

This paper works at the intersection between applied linguistics and ethnomethodological conversation analysis. Applied linguistics has as its central concern the interest in the study of discourse, especially in the professions, and addresses itself to real world problems of language use in interaction. In conversation analysis, social action must be interpreted taking centrally into account participant's conduct in sequences of action in interaction. Combining the two, social meaning is studied from an inherently emic point of view. In this paper we will compare the interactional practice of asking questions in conciliation hearings in consumers' relations and in interviews with political candidates. The following questions have guided our study: 1) What actions are associated with the practice of questioning and answering in these settings? 2) What do they tell us about the institutional mandate of its participants? Results show that the point of convergence

in the two data sets is the conduciveness embedded in the mediator's and the interviewer's questions. Differences are tied to their specific institutional mandates of framing legally the situation and trying to bring disputants to an agreement in the first case, and clarify the public opinion with confrontational questions in the second case, considering the candidates' future government programs and, when this is the case, their previous political career.

Key words: talk-in-interaction, institutional talk, interviews, conciliation hearings.

Resumo

Este artigo sitúase na intersección entre a lingüística aplicada e a análise etnometodolóxica da conversa. A lingüística aplicada ten como preocupación central o estudo do discurso, especialmente no eido das profesións, e aborda problemas do mundo real relativos ó uso interaccional das linguas. Na análise da conversa, a acción social debe interpretarse tendo en conta sobre todo a conduta do participante en secuencias de acción interaccional. Combinando as dúas disciplinas, o significado social estúdase desde un punto de vista inherentemente émico. Neste artigo compararemos a práctica interaccional de facer preguntas en entrevistas con candidatos políticos e en vistas de conciliación de asociacións de consumidores. O noso estudo artellouse a través das preguntas seguintes: 1) Que accións se asocian coa práctica de preguntar e respostar nestes contextos? 2) Que nos din estas sobre o mandato institucional dos seus participantes? Os resultados mostran que o punto de converxencia nos dous conxuntos de datos é a orientación implícita das preguntas de mediador e entrevistador. As diferenzas están ligadas no caso das vistas de conciliación aos seus mandatos institucionais específicos de enmarcar legalmente a situación e tentar que os litigantes cheguen a un acordo; e no caso das entrevistas con candidatos a clarificar a opinión pública con preguntas de confrontación en vista dos futuros programas de goberno dos candidatos e, cando é o caso, da súa carreira política previa.

Palabras clave: fala en interacción, fala institucional, entrevistas, vistas de conciliación.

1. Introduction¹

This paper works at the intersection between two areas of discourse studies: Applied linguistics and ethnomethodological conversation analysis. As an

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autonomous area of research, applied linguistics is seen nowadays as occupied not only with classroom discourse anymore, but has extended its scope to all forms of institutional discourse and therefore focuses on linguistics and the professions. Our perspective of language as action follows ethnomethodological orientation in sociology, particularly, conversation analysis' view that the interpretation of social action must be executed taking centrally into consideration participant's conduct in interaction, in order to address Goffman's question "what is going on here", which has served as a guide for a large body of social research. Social meaning is studied then under a radically, inherently emic view of action.

The research sites of this paper are the interviews with political candidates and mediation in consumers' relations. Both have in common the fact that the professionals involved –the interviewer and the mediator– have as their institutional mandate to mediate, direct or indirectly. The first one mediates indirectly, in the sense that the questions asked to the candidates interviewed reflect not their opinion or interests, but the desires from the larger audience and the population in general, i.e., the interviewers would act as a sort of animator from population's voice. In the mediation hearings, the mediator's function is to act as a third party who intervenes explicitly between the parties in conflict. Another point of contact between the two sites regards the discursive practice used by both to ask questions in order to exercise their profession. In this paper we will examine the interactional practice of asking questions in these two different institutional encounters. We hope to show differences and similarities in these practices, for which the consideration of their institutional goals will play a key role in the framing of discourse. These questions have guided our study: 1) What actions are associated with the practice of questioning and answering in these settings? 2) What do they tell us about the institutional mandate of its participants?

2. Social interaction and conversation analysis

For sure all studies on language a social interaction have as their point of departure, implicitly or explicitly, Goffman's work. In the face to face situation, people are constantly monitoring each other's behavior, so that they can act appropriately as a competent social being. This situation of possible mutual monitoring is what Goffman defined as the *social situation*, for the author a "neglected situation" until recently. Therefore, the *face-to-face encounter* is a privileged locus for the study of social order and meaning (Goffman, 1967).

Talk-in-interaction is the home environment for language use. It is central for the workings of institutions in society. When people meet in informal social

occasions (e.g., at a party), most of their social work of being together as a group is done through talking; in formal occasions, if one needs an information at a service counter, one will get it through talk, and, if one has problems in consume relations, as it is the case here, people will also be most of their time busy in talking to each other in order to get their problems solved. In this way, most of the social work is done through *direct face-to-face verbal interaction*, as it is largely assumed in conversation analysis (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Heritage, 1984; Goodwin & Heritage, 1990, etc.). For this reason, ordinary conversation is considered the *sociological bedrock* in talk-in-interaction, i.e., the matrix genre of talk, from which all other forms, considered institutional, departure (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974).

Heritage proposes “six basic places to probe the ‘institutionality’ of interaction” (1997: 164): 1, turn taking organization; 2, overall structural organization; 3, sequence organization; 4, turn design; 5, lexical choice; 6, epistemological and other forms of asymmetry. Our research on question-answer sequences touches mainly the four first sites.

The hosting space of language use for spoken discourse is the *turn* at talk (Schegloff, 1996; Ford & Thompson, 1996). The turn taking “machinery” is a system composed of two basic components: a *turn constructional component* and a *turn allocation component*. For the construction of turns, four types of units can be employed: 1, one word or lexical units; 2, phrasal units; 3, clausal units; 4, and sentential unit. These units of talk are called *Turn Constructional Units* (from now on TCU). The unit types allow people in interaction to predict roughly what it will take for the unit type under way to be completed, i.e., these units provide talk with the feature of projectability. The allocation of turns can be done by interactants by way of two groups of techniques: 1, current speaker selects next speaker; technique 2, next speaker self-selects (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974).

These units of talk are responsible for the process of speaker’s change in conversation. At the end of each of these units the turn reaches a *possible completion point*, defined by syntactical, intonational (prosodic) and pragmatic completion. Rather than being a conversation analyst’s criterion, completion is ‘emic’: we can see people in conversation orienting to it. Possible completion is what people monitor in the other’s talk in order to start to speak and it is where, therefore, transition between speakers becomes relevant, at a *transition relevance place*.

The adjacency pairs are thought as the fundamental unit of conversational organization, because they are responsible for the local organization of talk-in-interaction. They are paired utterances (e.g. question-answer; offer-acceptance) deeply inter-related with the turn-taking system, due to the fact that they contribute,

among others cues, to the identification of the place where the transition of speakers may occur. According to Schegloff (1996) and Ford & Thompson (1996) adjacency pairs are sequences of two utterances that are: (i) adjacent; (ii) produced by different speakers; (iii) ordered as first pair part and as second part; (iv) type specific, so that a particular first pair part requires a particular second pair part (or range of second parts) –e.g., questions require an answer or reply; invitation, acceptance, etc.

The notion of *conditional relevance* accounts for the fact that, given a first pair part, a second part is immediately relevant and expectable (Schegloff, 1972: 363). So, there is an orientation to the expected appropriated second part even though it may not occur. If such second fails to occur, it is noticeably absent. This notion makes clear that what binds the parts of adjacency pairs together is “the setting up of specific expectations which have to be attended to” (Levinson, 1983: 306). Understood this in this way, the adjacency pair structure forms what Heritage called “the architecture of intersubjectivity” (1984).

The sequential perspective for the organization of talk corresponds ultimately to participant’s orientation to a certain course of action (and cognition) that is displayed publicly to all other participants (and the analyst). So participants of interaction are making their behavior relevant to one another on a turn by turn basis.

Another important concept for the study of social interaction in conversation analysis is the concept of *preference organization*. The central insight here is that not all potential second pair parts (SPP) have the same value attributed to them. There is a ranking of preferred second pair parts projected in the action accomplished in the first pair part (FPP). For example, self-deprecations prefer as SPPs not agreements, but disagreement. Preferred SPPs are structurally unmarked, i.e., they are delivered on time, with no delays, etc.; dispreferred ones, on the contrary, are marked: they are typically delivered: (a) after some significant delay; (b) with some preface marking their dispreferred status (e.g. ‘well’); (c) with some account of why the preferred SPP cannot be performed. In this sense, preference organization refers to the relationship established between a FPP and a SPP and does not refer to a psychological dimension or individual preference. As a last relevant point, Pomerantz (1978) calls attention to action-chains, for example, an assessment may project a second assessment in the SPP slot.

Following recent theoretical orientation in the humanities, construction of meaning in talk is seen not as a product of a single speaker, responsible for the whole meaning process, but rather as a product of a joint construction of participants in the encounter. Therefore, we adopt here the multidisciplinary concept of *co-construction* to refer to “a joint creation of form, interpretation, position, action, activity, identity, emotion or any other culturally significant reality” (Jacoby & Ochs, 1995: 171).

3. Questions and answers

Questions and answers are a very productive type of conversational structure, which parades many institutional settings. The volume edited by Drew & Heritage (1992) joins important papers on the activity of questioners, of answerers, and the interplay of questions and answers. All the works show the strong sensibility of language to its varied contexts of use and its specificities.

Traditionally, a question has been treated as a form of social action designed to seek for information, accomplished by means of an interrogative syntax.

However this attempt to relate form and function has been contested by those who think that the interrogative form has little to do with the role of questions in the language use in a turn at talk. Schegloff (1984) for example, argues that we must look at the position occupied by them in conversational sequences.

According to Heritage (2002) there are two ways in which the grammar of interrogatives may not map on the social action of questioning in the information seeking sense: (a) the questioning is accomplished by other kinds of sentences (e.g. declarative questions) whose questioning status is achieved by means of a rising intonation contour (Quirk et al., 1985). Another form of questioning occurs through statements that belong to the informational territory of the recipient (Labov & Fanshel, 1977; Heritage & Roth, 1995) and, (b) conversely, there are interrogatively framed turns of talk that don't seek for any information at all, i.e., the interrogative form doesn't function as a question. Here we have interrogatives that are designed to accomplish indirect speech acts (Levinson, 1983; Schegloff, 1988), or are used to express any kind of evaluation/assessment (e.g. to outrage or accuse, e.g. 'How could you', –see Clayman & Heritage, 2002). Its interpretation depends on the sequential context in which they are deployed (Schegloff, 1984).

Another type of interrogative that is not always understood as questioning, in the information seeking sense, is the *negative interrogative form* (e.g. 'Isn't it' or 'Don't you') that are commonly treated as expressing a position or a point of view, because they are *assertive* rather than *questioning*. With this kind of construction we may have what has been called *conduciveness of the questions* –the conveyed predisposition of the speaker to a particular kind of response (Bolinger, 1957: 99; Hudson, 1975). They are equivalent in conduciveness to positive assertions with negative tags.

In the mediation setting, we haven't notice of any study on the interface question-answer and the institutions. In the specific institutional site of the political interviews, we rely mainly on two major contributions: Heritage & Roth (1995) and Clayman & Heritage (2002). Heritage & Roth (1995) make a review of the major classes of questions identified by Quirk et al. (1985) and that according to them may

be found in news interviews. They identify 5 types of questions: (1) Yes/no questions (e.g. ‘Was it intentional not to call you’); (2) tag-questions (e.g. ‘She’s been no pushover, has she?’); (3) declarative-questions (e.g. ‘But the administration doesn’t approve of that?’); (4) Wh-questions (e.g. ‘What’s your overview of the summit from President Bush’s point of view?’); and (5) alternative questions (e.g. ‘Do you believe we’re talking a mater of days or weeks or months for the state of emergency?’).

The interviewers turns of talk, used to accomplished the pragmatic force of questioning, may not include necessarily only the interrogative form. So, according to the authors, when we look at the talk produced at news interviews’ settings, we must look beyond the grammatical form. For instance, we must have the use of directives as questions substitutes (e.g. the interviewer says to the interviewee: “tell us about that”). The use of declaratives, termed by Labov & Fanshel (1977: 100) ‘B-event’ statements, are declarative utterances formulated by the interviewer but that belong to the informational territory of the interviewee (sentiments, knowledge or expertise, opinion, experience, and intentions). In this way it minimally requires the recipient’s confirmation or denial. Another important aspect of Heritage and Roth’s work (1995) is to treat questioning as part of a wider range of interactional conduct in the news interview. They explore the convergence between questioning and other interviewers’ activities such as the production of: (i) increments; (ii) third-party attributed statements; (iii) non attributed statements, and (iv) time and speaker management (p. 25-29).

Finally they discuss the fact that the interviewers produce, besides the questioning TCU itself, a multiunit turn termed –the question delivery structure (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991: 117). They found four Interviewers’ (IR) turns formats, specified in activity terms: (a) background + question; (b) relevance + question; (c) counter + question, and (d) contrast structure + question. This shows us that news interview questioning is a complex, multifaceted activity.

Clayman and Heritage (2002) develop a new system for analyzing questions in news interviews and press conference. They focus on the phenomenon of *adversarialness* in question designs, considering 4 basic dimensions of *adversarialness*: (a) initiative; (b) directness; (c) assertiveness, and, (d) hostility. Comparing forms of questioning that characterized the press conference of Eisenhower and Ronal Reagan, they have found some historical changes, such as the fact that journalists have become much less deferential and more aggressive in their treatment of U.S. president.

Clayman (1988, 1992), on the contrary, discuss in these works the strategies used by the interviewers to display a *neutralistic* stance in television news interview. One important strategy is to treat problematic or controvert information as “third-party

attributed statements”. This projected conduct is also treated by the interviewees as the point of view or opinion of another person or as having a different source.

Another side of this problem is the possible *conduciveness* of questioning, when the speaker shows predisposition to a particular kind of response (Heritage, 2002: 1429). The question is formulated as to convey an expectation for a positive or negative response. Some questions formats like negative interrogative and tag questions have been examined to show their *conduciveness* (Bolinger, 1957; Hudson, 1975). Heritage (2002) goes a step further when he shows that the boundary between questions and assertions can be very subtle. The analyst must have in mind the participants’ goals and the setting restrictions that operate on the question activity in different contexts.

4. On data and research methodology

In this study we are working with two different corpora. One comprises 4 interviews with political candidates for Brazilian’s presidential election 2002 undertaken by Globo channel in their program *Jornal Nacional*². They were recorded on video and the one with the actual president Lula was chosen for analysis here. For this corpus we only rely on the audiovisual materials.

The other data set was generated at PROCON –a Brazilian’s product safety commission– in a city of the state of Minas Gerais, in the scope of the project “Talk in interaction: Theoretical and methodological issues”. Our object of research are the Conciliation Hearings in which consumers and respondents discuss problem in consume relations.

Research methodology is qualitative, in many respects. The main source out of which we will gain knowledge on the interaction and institutional practices is discourse. Data collection was followed an ethnographic approach (for the PROCON’s materials), using audio-tape material in natural occurring scenes of social conduct. Field notes and interviews with participants to gain more accurate insight on the ‘foreign field’ were also used.

Analysis will concentrate vertically on a single episode in each encounter, although we rely on a larger corpus (20 hearings at PROCON). Transcription conventions follow conversation analysis’ method, developed by Gail Jefferson (see Appendix). We offer readers a transcript in Portuguese and another one with a functional translation in English, on which analysis will be based. Transcription was made with the font courier new 10, which allows better space adjustments.

² See Capellani (2004) for a complete study on the question-answer sequences in interviews with political candidates in Brazil.

5. Question-answer sequence in the political interview with Lula

Each interview with a political candidate has as its main goal to check the candidate's ability to be the future president of the country. In this sense, all of them were questioned and tested in their weaknesses, which were normally talked by the press. During Lula's campaign, an image of little political ability was imputed to him, based on his historical background of poverty, simpleness and little school education. In the excerpt below the interviewer's question under analysis are marked with the arrows:

01:08 - 01:18

- 08 William: o senhor já criticou a assinatura do tratado
eh de não
- 09 proliferação de armas nucleares pelo brasil.
essa semana
- 10 o senhor diz que o brasil não é uma
republicueta qualquer,
- 11 não é uma argentina. eleito presidente, o
senhor não acha
- 12 que declarações dessa natureza podem
provocar embaraços
- 13 diplomáticos?,
- 14 Lula: não, veja duas coisas são bastante
distintas. primeira eu
- 15 não critiquei o a assinatura do: tratado de
não
- 16 proliferação de armas .hhh o que eu disse
claramente é que
- 17 os estados unidos não estão cumprindo aquilo
que assinou
- 18 junto conosco porque quem não tinha assumiu
o compromisso
-
- 08 William: You have already critisized the signature of
the pact of
- 09 no proliferation of nuclear weapon by Brazil
this week.
- 10 You say that Brazil is not an insignificant
republic,
- 11 is not an Argentina.((If you were)) elected
President, don't you think that
- 12 statements of this nature can cause
diplomatic

- 13 embarrassments?
 14 Lula: no, listen two things are very diferent:
 first of all,
 15 I didn't criticize the signature of the pact
 of no proliferation
 16 of nuclear weapon, hhh what I said clearly is
 that
 17 the United States are not fulfilling what
 was signed
 18 with us because who didn't have, took over
 the compromise

The interviewer, before formulating his question, makes use of a preface which has the goal of presenting the candidate's previous declarations about nuclear weapon proliferation and also his alleged negative evaluation of Argentina in a public event. The question is formulated in a negative interrogative syntax "Don't you think that?" (line 11) encapsulates actually an assessment. The question presupposes this background information on Lula's disability and addresses it. Indirectly one can infer that Lula's ability to govern the country is been called into question.

If one looks at the candidate's response –"no"–, (line 14), right at the beginning of the interviewee's turn, one can notice that the interviewer's question does not seek for information, but has built in it an assessment, which is refused by the candidate. In this case, the preferred response, in this language game, is not to agree with the interviewer, which would have meant: "I am not able to govern the country", but, instead, to disagree with him. This is why the candidate's response is a "no", a blunt disagreement.

Another instance of this kind of questioning can be seen in the following excerpt, where the interviewer uses another kind of negative form to ask a question:

01:20 - 02:07

- 20 Fátima: =agora, candidato, será que não são assim
 comentários
 → 21 espontâneos, declarações, a questão дума
 vírgula que
 → 22 alimentariam até críticas dos seus
 adversários de que o
 → 23 senhor tá sendo ajudado muito pela sua
 equipe de
 → 24 marketing?=
 → 24

- 25 Lula: =>>ora bem<< deixa eu dizer uma coisa eu acho que todos
- 26 nós que falamos em comício, que falamos em entrevista nós
- 27 poderemos cometer um erro aqui ou ali e isso tem que ser
-
- 20 Fátima: Now, candidate, wouldn't it be the case that spontaneous
- 21 comments like this, statements, details like a coma,
- 22 that would feed even criticisms of your opponents in which
- 23 they say that you have been helped a lot by
- 24 your marketing team?
- 25 Lula: oh well, let me tell you one thing I think that all of us
- 26 that speak at a rally, ,in interviews, we
- 27 Can commit a mistake here or there and this has to be.

We can notice in the interviewer's talk, that the question turn is not used to seek for information, but to make an assessment. The assessment is signaled by the following structures: first, the verbal phrase "wouldn't it be the case that", which has built in it as a central part the negative form; then the hedging expression "like this"; the verbal expression in the conditional format "would feed". What makes explicit that it is an opinion is the fact that the interviewer in the next move changes footing to attribute the responsibility of what she is asserting to Lula's "opponents": "you have been helped a lot by your marketing team".

The candidate chooses to respond with a kind of account, which, according to Scott and Lyman (1968), produces a "justification" to minimize the responsibility for any problematic behavior that might be imputed to him.

6. Question-answer sequence in a conciliation hearing

In this interaction participants were José (complainant), Lucas (respondent), and Marta and Ana (mediators). The issue in the meeting concerns the guarantee term for a second hand car bought by José that has showed many problems right after the purchase. In the excerpt below we concentrate on the mediators' contribution to the solution of the problem at hand.

32 (9.0)
 33 ((Med está analisando as notas de orçamento de peças))
 34 Ana tecnocarro é (por conta) do vencedor, não é? a loja é -ok!
 35 automóveis, é estacionamento?
 36 Lucas =é estacionamento.
 37 Ana (e) o senhor vende carro lá dentro?
 38 Lucas vende,/carro também/. porque lá pode fazer tudo.
 39 (1.5)
 40 Lucas o contrato social, não é?
 41 Ana então não é só estacionamento?=
 42 Lucas =não é só estaciona[mento.]
 43 Ana é [uma concessionária de vender carro]
 44 Lucas [pode vender carro também isso que eu tô] falando
 45 Ana então tem que emitir nota fiscal dos carros que você vender.
 46 Lucas algumas coisas.
 47 Ana por quê algumas?
 48 Lucas porque esse carro é de terceiro, isso não é meu.
 49 Ana ah! você vai me desculpar ma:s, tem coisa errada aí, né?
 50 José aqui
 51 Ana se você vendeu lá dentro do seu:: do:: da do da:: sua loja,
 52 no seu contrato social, está como vendedor de carro,
 53 você vai me desculpar mas você tem que dar uma nota
 fiscal. (6.0)
 54 Ana o quê que nós vamos fazer aí pra resolver isso é:: lucas?
 55 Lucas deixa eu ver. Oh! essa bomba aqui eu pago toda. pronto,
 56 pra não ter conversa pra não ter pra não te::r essa
 bomba (elétrica)

32 (9.0)
 33 mediator is analyzing the budget note for the car pieces.
 34 Ana tecnocarro is () the seller, isn't it? The car sales shop is -OK
 35 cars is it' a parking lot?
 36 Lucas =It's a parking lot
 37 Ana (and) do you sell car inside there?
 38 Lucas I do, I sell car too, because you can do everything there there
 39 (1.5)
 40 Lucas the social contract, isn't it?
 41 Ana so, it's not only a parking lot?=
 42 Lucas =Isn't only a parking slot.
 43 Ana =It's [a car. sales shop]
 44 Lucas [you can sell car too that's what i am] saying
 45 Ana so you have to issue a receipt/note for the cars you sell
 46 Lucas some things.

- 47 Ana why something?
 48 Lucas because this car is from someone else, this is not mine.
 49 Ana oh, excuse me but there is something wrong there, isn't so?
 50 José look
 51 Ana if you sold in there in your in in the in the in the your store
 52 in your social contract, it's as a car seller,
 53 excuse me, but you must issue a receipt/note. (6.0)
 54 Ana what are we going to do to work this out, Lucas?
 55 Lucas let me see, oh, this bomb here, I pay it all,
 56 ok, so there is no talk, so there is no, so

Ana, the PROCON's lawyer, examines the legal aspects of the car's sale. She starts a number of questions in order to clarify the problem. The first one focuses on the kind of social contract Lucas has –a parking lot or a car store? She initially asks him if the place where he sells his cars is a parking lot (line 35). After Lucas confirmation, Ana (line 41) begins her question with “so” (so, it's not only a parking lot?=). This discursive marker summarizes the implicit belief that a parking car is not the appropriate place to sell them. If we look at the sequencing context where this utterance is located, we can see that her question isn't a canonic one, but an assertion mitigated by a syntactic structure (Heritage, 2002), that would be seen as a variation of the logical relation, if p, (so) q.

Afterwards, Ana proposes to reframe the parking as a car sales shop, but Lucas refuses this reframe, insisting to argue that his parking lot is allowed to sell cars (line 44, [you can sell car too that's what I am]saying). She apparently doesn't take notice of his point of view and chooses as her next move to ask for the car's receipt, using again the discourse marker “so”, but now within an assertive utterance “so you have to issue a receipt/note for the cars you sell” (line 45).

It seems that Lucas ignores again the assertiveness of Ana's assessments, chosen to rebut with “some things” (line 46). This kind of answers gives Ana the evidence of Lucas's sale illegality when she says “Oh, excuse me but there is something wrong there, isn't so?” (line, 49). Interestingly, her next move is to ask Lucas to assume some responsibility for the problems caused to Jose –the complainer (what are we going to do to work this out, Lucas?) (line 54). This attempt to solve the problem, immediately after this negative evaluation, may be seen as a kind of negotiation move.

7. Concluding discussion

What seems to be the point of convergence in the two data sets is the conduciveness perpetrated by the two social actors –the interviewer and the mediator. But by virtue of the specific institutional mandates and goals of each social event they have different functions. In the political interviews the conduciveness of the questions works for the definition of the candidate’s profile for the larger public, who is watching TV and will (or will not) pick him as a candidate. The interviewers’ mandate is to clarify the public’s opinion.

Research results show that questioners make assessments and frame legally the case at hand in the conciliation hearings; and pursue a response, provoke, and test candidate’s moral and interactional abilities in the interviews. Answerers are thus confronted with quite different tasks: construct their identities of a good provider of services and goods or a complainant who is in his right, and a reliable candidate. The comparison of the same linguistic device in two different institutional settings shows as a fruitful way of studying the intersection of language and society and the actions of its members. Future studies need to deepen the understanding of the interplay between questions and answers and the institutions.

Appendix: Transcription symbols

[A left-hand bracket bridging two lines indicates overlap onset.
]	A right-hand bracket bridging two lines indicates end of overlap.
(.)	A dot in parentheses indicates a micro pause of less then 2/10 of a second, hearable, but not readily measurable.
(0.8)	Numbers in parentheses indicate time, measured in tenths of a second. In the example here, the pause was of 8/10 of a second.
=	Equal signs bridging the talk from two different speakers indicate no hearable silence in the boundary of their talks. If in the talk from the same speaker, it indicates a rush-through between two turn constructional units or words.
.	Period indicates falling intonation contour, not necessarily the end of the sentence.
?	Question mark is used for rising intonation, not necessarily a question.
,	Comma indicates continuing intonation, not necessarily a clause boundary.
?,	A combination of a question mark and a comma indicates a rise stronger than a comma but weaker than a question mark.
Word:	Underlined colon indicates inflected rising intonation.
Word:	Letter underlined preceding a colon means inflected falling intonation.
	Arrow pointing upwards marks sharper rise in pitch.

	Arrow pointing downwards marks sharper falls in pitch. : Colons signal stretching of a sound.
-	A hyphen after a word indicates a cut-off or self-interruption.
<u>Underlining</u>	Underlining stresses emphasis.
UPPER CASE	Speech in upper case indicates stronger emphasis.
°words	Degree sign to the right indicates quieter beginning of speech.
°words°	Words between degree signs indicate quieter speech all through.
>words<	The combination “more than” “less than” indicates compressed talk in between.
<words>	The combination “less than” “more than” indicates compressed talk in between.
>words	Talk after “more than” sign means it starts with a rush.
H	Letter
‘h’	marks hearable aspiration (breathing, laughter, etc.).
w(h)o(h)r(h)d(h)s	Letter ‘h’ in parentheses means there is an aspiration during the uttering of the word.
.h	A dot before the letter
‘h’	means inhalation.
((cough))	Transcriber’s comments on the transcript/interaction.
(doubt)	Transcript doubt.
()	Transcript impossible.
(try 1)	
/(try 2)	In case of transcription doubt, two tries can be put side by side. Th Tong snap

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