

Sequencing in Media Dialogical Networks

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Introduction

In this paper we investigate the dialogicity of media texts, one of their characteristics which is often neglected. Lena Jayussi in fact asserted some time ago that “one of the salient features of media texts is that they are addressed, not to a specific person or sets of persons with known properties, relevancies and beliefs, but rather to a ‘public at large’ which could include a general distribution of professional affiliations, political and religious beliefs, skills and ‘knowledge’ of substantive matters, interests, and experiences.” She continued “a second salient feature of media texts is that they are not dialogic: responses, problems, corrections, clarifications cannot be produced spatio-temporally to coincide with the text or with each other as in an ordinary conversation.” (Jayussi, 1991). Spatio-temporally contingent responses to media texts may indeed not be typically possible, but this does not mean that media texts are not dialogical. We want to show here that there indeed are some features of media texts which could be characterised as dialogic. This we expressed previously in our concept of “dialogical network” (Leudar, 1995; Leudar, 1998; Nekvapil and Leudar 1998; Leudar and Nekvapil, 1998; Nekvapil and Leudar, 2002a; Nekvapil and Leudar, 2002b).

This concept “draws our attention to the following observations. Politicians speaking on a theme in the mass media

frequently address other politicians who are not present in the studio, at a news conference or a briefing. The mass media are networked (newspapers report what has been said on the radio or TV and people ‘on the air’ refer to newspaper reports) and both political events and their reports are often loosely duplicated. Political challenges made in the mass media are therefore likely to be heard and responded to (providing, of course, that the opponent has access to the mass media). This means that even opponents who do not wish to be seen meeting face to face can argue in public” (Leudar and Nekvapil, 1998: 44). These comments of course do not define the concept, and so we shall consider more systematically properties of dialogical networks below (see also Nekvapil and Leudar, 2002a; Nekvapil and Leudar, 2002b).

The first thing we want to demonstrate though is that dialogical networks are not inventions of the analysts. They are forms of communication which the participants themselves acknowledge¹. This will be demonstrated at various places in our paper, but consider first the extract (1), which is a fragment of the newspaper article published in the Czech daily *Svobodné Slovo* in 1993. Its topic relates to discussions about the forced evacuation of Germans from the territory of the former Czechoslovakia (“Sudetenland”) during the first two years after WW II, and about its legal consequences for the contemporary Czech Republic.

(1) 'Put stop to Sudetans' (Svobodné Slovo 13.1.1993)

1. Praha (fra) – The chairman of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party L. Dvořák *welcomed the*
2. *statement of the Czech Premier V. Klaus, that his government does not intend to negotiate about*
3. *further restitution demands of Sudetan Germans. He said that the CSP considers the question of*
4. *the removal of Sudetan Germans as solved. He characterized as completely uncivilized*
5. *ruminations about possible terrorist actions in the Borders, which were mentioned in the Sunday*
6. *TV debate by the chairman of the newly established Democratic Party of Sudetenland.*
7. *At yesterday's press conference, also the proposal of the law concerning*
8. *the restitution of the church property was discussed. ... (our italics) ²*

The extract (1) summarizes the network up to the date of its publication, even though the journalist does not actually use our term "network". He does, however, present the happenings as dialogical events using ordinary verbs of communication to represent individual actions, and organises them in pairs (e.g. claim-assessment; demand-rejection). Taking the events in their temporal order, "Sudetan Germans" produced "demands" in the TV debate. Klaus rejected the "demands" and Dvořák welcomed this rejection, characterising the talk about terrorist violence as "uncivilised ruminations". The point is that all these events did not take place in the same setting and at the same time - Dvořák's utterances, for instance were voiced at a press conference, while "the ruminations about possible terrorist actions in the Borders" were "mentioned" in a TV debate. By implication, the other happenings took place

somewhere else, but their actual locale and time specification are not relevant in the article. The journalist brought the actions together as dialogically contingent and he did not do this arbitrarily but because of politicians' own obvious and expressed relevancies - what is relevant to him are mutually relevant dialogical actions (who reacted to whom, how, and why) and it's quite immaterial whether these exchanges were face to face or not. There are two important technical points to note here. One is that the journalist reproduces dialogical events and in doing so he amplifies their reach and effect. By this we mean that this article may have provided the opportunity, for example, for "the chairman of the newly established Democratic Party of Sudetenland" to react to what Dvořák said at the press conference, and to do so publicly. The other point is that the journalist highlights the relevancies between the events and so presents them as coherent social proceedings.

Now let us turn to the extract (2). This is a transcript of a part of an interview broadcast by the British TV station ITV in 1995 under the title *Dimbleby*.

(2) McGuinness & Dimbleby (ITV 12.3.1995)

1. Dim: er (..) Mr. McGuinness I want to test (..) your commitment to the peace process (..)
2. before entering direct talks with you (..) *the Secretary of State (..) wants you to make*
3. *clear (.) that you will give him assurances (.) about (.) your commitment (..) to get rid (.)*
4. *of weapons. can you give such assurances? (..)*
5. McG: *well Sinn Fein's position is quite clear and has been clear for some time. (.) our project is*

6. to take the guns all the guns (.) British and Irish (.) out of Irish pro-Irish politics that's
7. what we're about. (.) and what people have to recognise and understand (.) is that Sinn
8. Fein have been involved (..) in this process for quite some time not just since the start of
9. the cease-fire (..) but for many ah years before. (..) (our emphasis)

The extract documents that the two speakers in the TV studio directed their utterances not only to each other, or to the TV audience, but also to the others "outside". So, talking to McGuinness, Dimpleby makes explicit what the Secretary of State wants to know from McGuinness. Moreover, McGuinness does not just answer Dimpleby's question, but also targets the Secretary of State, who is somewhere else altogether, and unreachable. Finally, McGuinness does not speak only for himself but also for a collectivity represented by him in the studio.

So in both types of media, TV and newspapers, there is a clear orientation at what we call "network" – in the studio the participants do not talk just to each other but target others elsewhere, in print the journalist brings the network together in a coherent whole, does this in a public space, and so provides an opportunity for the network to develop.

In (3) and (4), we present headlines of the articles we collected whilst analyzing two networks in Czech mass media.

(3) Sudetan Network, newspaper headlines in the period 6.1.1993 - 13.1.1993

1. 'Democratic Party of Sudetenland wants to cancel Beneš Decrees' (RP 6.1.1993)
2. 'Sudetan Germans demand back their property' (ČMZN 6.1.1993)

3. 'Sudent Germans want property' (MFD 6.1.1993)
4. 'Poll: who is stirring the problem of Sudetenland?' (ČMZN 8.1.1993)
5. 'Debate. From the political scene' (CV1 10.1.1993)
6. 'What to do with criminality, Germans and Moravia' (RP 11.1.1993)
7. 'Debate: impertinence and defence' (LD 11.1.1993)
8. 'A question for Jaroslav Blümel, Chairman of DP of Sudetenland' (LN 11.1.1993)
9. 'Blackmail' (RP 12.1.1993)
10. 'Klaus rejects Sudetan Demands' (RP 12.1.1993)
11. 'Put stop to Sudetans' (SS13.1.1993)

(4) Romany Network, newspaper headlines in the period 6.1.1993 – 16.1.1993

1. 'A huge migration of Roma into Bohemia is being prepared' (RP 16.10.1992)
2. 'The procurator's office proposes an exceptional migration law' (ČMZN 6.1.1993)
3. 'The procurator's proposal. Open racism' (LN 6.1.1993)
4. 'According to Výborný, the procurator proposed a racist law' (MFD 6.1.1993)
5. 'Jiří Šetina defends his law proposal. A well meant provocation' (LN 7.1.1993)
6. Jirkov Notice. Chomutov and Most' (LN 7.1.1993)
7. 'With Jiří Šetina about the extraordinary measure against crime. He rejects the accusations of racism' (RP 8.1.1993)
8. 'The deputy Body demands the resignation of Šetina' (RP 8.1.1993)
9. 'Debate. From the political scene' (ČTV1 10.1.1993)
10. 'ROI threatens (civil) disobedience' (MFD 11.1.1993)

11. 'Roma are demanding the resignation of the General Procurator' (RP 11.1.1993)
12. 'The proposed migration law is harsher than the town notices. The Mayors of 'Jirkov-like' towns react to the proposal of the procurator's office' (MFD 12.1.93)
13. 'The criminality of Roma will be dealt with by the government' (MFD 12.1.1993)

The headlines document relevant moves in the networks as interpreted and formulated by the journalists. These moves are again typically formulated as dialogical actions, but an additional important property of networks is obvious: the dialogical actions in networks can be duplicated. In (4) for instance, the actions presented in headlines 3 and 4 are basically of the same type – a “critical assessment of the proposal”; other duplications are in headlines 5 and 7, and 8 and 11. In (3) the demands of Sudetan Germans (see extract 2) are formulated in three articles (the headlines 1, 2, 3).

Note also that the two networks are thematically coherent, with the topics here being “the demands of Sudetan Germans” and “the problems with Roma” respectively. The cohesion of networks in general is thematic and a matter of commonalities of expression and of re-used argumentative structures (see Nekvapil and Leudar 2002a for details). The main glue, however, which holds dialogical networks together are sequential structures. These are most often but not always action pairs (such as claim – counter-claim; accusation – defence; demand – acceptance/rejection; appeal – response/non-response; charge – counter-charge, etc.) It is such sequential structure we turn to now.

Examples of Network Structures

Claim – Denouncement, Dismay

The following two extracts come from two different sources. (5) is a transcript of an

interview with Martin McGuinness on the BBC television 1 *On the Record* broadcast in the autumn of 1994; the other, (6), is an article in the Daily Mirror which appeared on the next day and referred to what McGuinness said. This data is intricate and we will only analyse relevant details.³

(5) McGuinness & Humphrys (BBC1 23.10.1994)

1. JH: you seem to be suggesting in that other answer that er the British Government's (..) private
2. position (..) may perhaps be different from its publicly stated position
3. McG: (..) well I should remind people that in March of last year I did have a meeting with er a
4. representative of the British Government (..) who said to us that the eventual outcome of
5. all that Britain was trying to do (..) would be that that the island would be as one (..) ...

(6) 'Sinn Fein deputy in united Ireland storm' (Daily Mirror 24.10.1994)

1. Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness yesterday sensationally claimed that the government was
2. secretly working for a united Ireland.
3. He said: "In March last year I had a meeting with a representative of the British Government.
4. He said the outcome of all that Britain was trying to do would be that the island would be as
5. one."
6. McGuinness refused to disclose whether his contact was a civil servant or a politician....
7. His claim on BBC TV's *On the Record* programme was denounced as "patent nonsense" by

8. Ulster supreme Sir Patrick Mayhew. He said: “No government representative has ever been or
9. ever will be authorised to say that it supports a united Ireland unless it is by the consent of the
10. people of Northern Ireland”.
11. Even Sinn Fein tacticians were dismayed to hear their deputy leader’s loose talk less than 48
12. hours after the exclusion order that kept him out of Britain was lifted by John Major.

The article in (6) does not simply report what McGuinness had said - it contextualises that in a sequence, which does not refer just to what was said in the studio. In lines 1-2, what McGuinness had said is presented as a claim, and in lines 3-4 it is reported directly. The point about claims is that they are made to someone, and claims on television unavoidably reach the viewing public (that is anybody who has a TV and cares to watch it). In the article, the claim is completed by reporting a reaction to it by a politician who was not present in the studio, Patrick Mayhew (a political opponent of McGuinness). In other words, the journalist presents an adjacency pair, or something which looks very much like it: claim - denouncement.⁴ The denouncement is in fact not the only reaction to the claim the journalist reports. Lines 11-12 formulate another verbal reaction to the claim, as “dismay”, this time by political allies of McGuinness.

So the article presents to a reader a dialogue, which in our terms is distributed in two senses. First, none of the participants were present together in one place at one time. Second, the assessment of the claim is two-fold (i.e. a denouncement and a dismay) and done by two different parties. These two reactions are reported in a particular order, but there is no indication that this corresponds to how they actually happened in time. Moreover, the claim by McGuinness

was reported in a similar fashion in several British national papers and so duplicated.

This brief analysis of the events indicates that they are organised partly in the same way as ordinary conversations. The journalist uses ordinary verbs of communication to describe happenings and orders them in the same kinds of sequences which are found in conversations by conversation analysts.⁵ There are, however, differences which we have already pointed out, and to which we will return – the network sequential structures are distributed and can be duplicated.⁶ The point to deal with first is, in collecting the sequence, did the journalist put his own gloss on the events? In other words, to what extent are the distributed sequences his own construction and no more than that?

The extract (5) is a transcript of what McGuinness actually said in the studio. McGuinness was clearly addressing Humphrys, and in the interview the utterance “I did have a meeting with er a representative of the British Government (..) who said to us that the eventual outcome of all that Britain was trying to do (..) would be that that the island would be as one (..)” works as a backing of his counterargument. Nevertheless, was he talking *just* to Humphrys? In fact, he set up the target of his talk broadly, and begun the turn as follows: “(..) well I should remind people that”, thus pointing his words outside of the interview. In other words, what he said was directed both within and outside of the interview, and so he did not talk just to the interviewer but also to others elsewhere. Now are there any grounds on which we could say that he addressed in particular the persons who responded to him? Did he have Mayhew “in sight” when he said what he did in (5)?

There is no doubt an element of strategic indeterminacy involved here, but a relevant consideration is as follows: who does he and Humphrys speak for in the interview? Just for themselves? Or do they act as proxies for wider collectivities? Throughout the interview, Humphrys challenges McGuinness not in terms of what he himself believes, but in terms of beliefs and propensities of relevant participants, who happen to include the Unionists, Sinn Fein and the “British establishment”. Moreover, McGuinness does not simply speak for himself – he is in the studio as a representative of the Sinn Fein and what he says can be taken as representing their position. Our argument is then that, even though strictly speaking all the viewers at large are addressed by McGuinness, Mayhew, being the Secretary of State, responsible for Northern Ireland is a prominent target. But what about the reaction of the “Sinn Fein tacticians” (extract 6, line 11) - by our argument they were not a target of McGuinness’s remarks, and indeed their reaction is reported as being to the *manner* in which the claim has been made. (A political representative seems to be obliged to *represent* his collective, and do so in a diplomatic manner).

So to return to where we started this argument, the dialogical sequence claim-denouncement is clearly not an arbitrary construction of the journalist. Both the interviewer and the interviewee directed what they said out of the studio, and, in McGuinness’s case with the relevant political opponents as targets. We are of course not saying that Mayhew actually watched the television (he may have done) or picked up his phone and berated McGuinness directly (very unlikely). More probable is that his civil servants brought the claim to his attention, and he responded by means of a press release to journalists. (We shall analyse this type of mediation in some detail below in another case). The first conclusion though is that there is indeed a

sequential structure here akin to what we see in conversation but the connection between the activities of claiming and denouncing is mediated by media technology and personnel (for more detailed analysis of these texts see Leudar, 1998). The point is though that this sequence also only becomes apparent through the work of the journalist.

Demand – Rejection

Now let us look at the following extract containing a sequential structure even in the title of the newspaper article.

(7) ‘Klaus rejects Sudetan demands’
(Rudé Právo 12.1.1993)

1. Prague - **On Monday Premier Klaus described as unacceptable for the Czech Government**
2. **the demand to cancel the so-called Beneš decrees, on the basis of which after the war**
3. **Sudetan Germans lost their property and had to leave Czech territory, as well as the**
4. **demand to compensate them.**
5. “The starting point of the government is that the conditions which were created after the war in
6. agreement with the victorious powers and strengthened over almost fifty subsequent years
7. cannot be changed without disturbing the basic rights of the current citizens of Czech Republic,
8. without shaking legal certainties, and as a result of this seriously destabilizing the political
9. situation in Czech Republic,” said Prime Minister Klaus in a reply provided for ČTK to the
10. question regarding the demand of the chairman of the preparatory committee of the Democratic

11. Party of Sudetenland J. Blümel. “The government is obliged by valid legal norms, including
 12. in the first place the restitution laws and by its own decree of June of last year, in which it
 13. undertook to prevent any change in the legally set limits on restitutions. The creation of the
 14. region ‘Sudetenland’ would in present conditions be completely not organic.
 - 15. The opinions of the chairman of the preparatory committee of the Democratic Party of**
 - 16. Sudetenland Mr Jaroslav Blümel are for the Government of Czech Republic**
 - 17. unacceptable,” states the Prime Minister.**
- (emphasis in the original)

The problem which concerns us here is how this seemingly simple exchange demand – rejection was accomplished. The first point is that there was not just one demand, made at one time and in one place. Blümel voiced the demand on several occasions. In Nekvapil and Leudar (1998) and Leudar and Nekvapil (1998), we dealt with two which were the most visible – a press conference of the Democratic Party of Sudetenland (DPS) and the TV debate which took place five days later. The “demands” made on these occasions were duplicated many times in media, even though the duplicates were never quite verbatim copies of each other. In our terms, the “demand” directed to Klaus was distributed. The title of the article presented in (7) provides us with Klaus’s reaction – a rejection. This rejection was, however, also not singular but duplicated – it was done in a statement issued by the Czech Press Agency and, mediated through this Agency, it appeared in Czech national newspapers. So it turns out that the network contains a distributed demand – rejection sequence, whose parts are duplicated and separated in time (by several days) and space, that is, uttered in different places (at a press conference, in a TV studio, and

printed in *Rudé Právo*). There is, however, one important problem in this analysis. Whom exactly does Klaus react to and whom does he speak to? The article in (7) documents that Klaus in fact does not react directly to Blümel and DPS. According to *Rudé Právo*, Klaus provided a statement to the ČTK (see line 9), that is the Czech Press Agency. But at whose instigation? This is clarified in the news agency text presented in the extract (8).

(8) The Czech Press Agency (ČTK)
(11.1.1993, 22.06)

1. “...” said Prime Minister Klaus in a written reply to Czech and Moravian-Silesian Agricultural
2. News in response to a question regarding the demands of the Democratic Party of Sudetenland.
3. The premier also made the reply available to ČTK.

So Klaus reacts in fact to the question put to him by another newspaper, the daily *Czech and Moravian-Silesian Agricultural News*. But, it is not necessarily the case that he reacts *just* to this newspaper (it is not an important national paper). As we see in both the extracts (7) and (8) he also made his response available to the Czech Press Agency. In this way, the representative of the Czech government rejected the “opinions” of the DPS but without being drawn into a direct dialogical engagement. Klaus did not talk to the DPS, he commented on their “opinions”. Blümel and the DPS had to read the comments reported in national papers like most other people. If Klaus had received the DPS for face-to-face talks he would have thereby ratified their political status. The result was that the DPS was not treated as an acceptable dialogical partner.

To conclude, the interaction between the DPS and the Czech government was then

intricately mediated. The intervening participants included *Czech and Moravian-Silesian Agricultural News*, the Czech Press Agency, and *Rudé Právo* (and other national newspapers which made use of the Czech Press Agency press release). However, what was relevant in the network was exactly what was formulated as the demand – rejection sequence in the brief title “Klaus rejects Sudetan demands” in *Rudé Právo*.

Summons (for support) - Response

The extracts (9) and (10) document a sequence which can be denoted as “summons (for support) - response”. (9) is a transcript of a part of a debate broadcast by the Czech TV1, (10) presents a newspaper article published in the Czech daily *Mladá Fronta Dnes* two days after the debate.

(9) ‘Debate. From the political scene’ (CTV1 10.1.1993)

1. Pat: I think and I start from the fact that the top experts took part in it ((elaborating the proposed
2. law)) ... it ((the proposed law)) needn't be appropriated by a particular group of deputies,
3. it is enough if simply they take it as a new proposal, we simply want it to be looked at.
4. *the towns will certainly agree with us about this.* (our emphasis)

(10) ‘The proposed migration law is harsher than the town notices. The Mayors of ‘Jirkov-like’ towns react to the proposal of the procurator’s office’ (*Mladá Fronta Dnes* 12.1.1993)

1. Following Jirkov and Ústí nad Labem the representatives of Most implemented ‘Jirkov’ notice.
2. At the same time, in front of the Czech Parliament lies a proposal of a ‘migration law’ of the

3. General Procurator Jiří Šetina. He rejected the town notices as illegal. *What do the Mayors of*
4. *these towns think of the proposed law?*
5. The Mayor of Ústí nad Labem Lukáš Mašín: ‘[...]’
6. The Mayor of Jirkov Filip Škapa: ‘[...]’
7. The Mayor of Most Bořek Valvoda: ‘[...]’
8. Despite some reservations, all three Mayors would welcome it if the proposed law was
9. accepted. ...Some deputies of the Czech Parliament branded the law proposal and the exposé as
10. racist. ‘I invite the deputies to come and visit us next Monday, to get to know the situation here,
11. about which they are going to be deciding’ said the Mayor of Jirkov Filip Škapa. (our italics)

In the extract (9), the Deputy Procurator of the Czech Republic J. Patočka defends the migration law proposed by the General Procurator’s Office. The implicit purpose of this law was to regulate migration in the North Bohemian towns and especially migration of Roma from Slovakia. This is why this proposal became controversial – was it racist or not? (for more detail see Nekvapil and Leudar, 2002a).

The line 4 in (9) transcribes Patočka’s indirect call for support while pushing the law through the Parliament, and as obvious from lines 5-9 in (10), such support is provided. The mediated connection of both parts of this sequence is worth noting, even though in the media it remains hidden like the clockwork behind the face of a watch. Of course, we cannot be sure, simply on the basis of reading the article (10) (of which we reproduce just about a third), how the sequence was mediated. The role of the

journalists in keeping the dialogical networks going is, however, again obvious and essential. The author of this article presumably contacted and spoke to the three town representatives - he quotes from their answers. This again illustrates that journalists can initiate and co-produce the development of dialogical networks. "The towns" may have always agreed with the General Procurator, but this agreement became effective by being made public by the journalist.

Note also that the reaction of the town Jirkov is contextualised in the dialogical network as it had developed up to that point. The "space" or the "slot" for the town representative's reaction follows from the logic of the actions presented in the media to date. The General Procurator rejected the town notices, and instead proposed the migration law, so it is logical to ask what the towns have to say about the change.

There is another point about the extract (10). An invitation to visit (see lines 10, 11) is a first part in a sequence, which may be followed by an acceptance or a rejection. The media did not report whether the deputies accepted the invitation. This means that whatever happened, the invitation issued by Škapa did not contribute to the development of the mass media dialogical network. This shows that such networks do not develop in all possible directions, but they also have local endings. We now turn to this particular issue.

Appeal - Response or No response

In our materials, we have found many instances of the appeal-response sequence. One of them is presented in the extracts (11) and (12), the first one being a transcript of a part of a TV debate, the second one a newspaper article published two days after the debate.

(11) 'Debate. From the political scene' (CTV1 10.1.1993)

1. Mod: so Mr Šuman, where do you see the fault.....
2. Šum: ... there aren't – there are no simple and quick solutions of this problem. But on the other
3. hand I say that this situation as they describe it and as we know it from Northern Bohemia
4. must be resolved very fast, and in my view, *it is necessary to appeal to the government* in
5. the direction I suggested already. ... (our emphasis)

(12) 'The criminality of Roma will be dealt with by the government' (Mladá Fronta Dnes 12.1.1993)

1. Praha (jem) – The possibility that the government will give attention to the increased criminality
2. in the north of the Czech Republic, was yesterday admitted by the director of the legislative
3. office of the government Milena Poláková. ... According to her, the solution will probably
4. require cooperation of the ministries of justice, interior and economy. ...
5. Meanwhile, the minister of the interior J. Ruml said yesterday that if the government will not be
6. able to deal with the situation he will take the initiative himself.

In the excerpt 11 (line 4) Šuman clearly appeals to the Government, even though, as he puts it having to appeal is forced on him. The excerpt (12) contains the reaction of the government to the appeal. On what grounds can we claim that the government is reacting to Šuman? The point is that Šuman was at the time the Chairman of the "Legal and Defence

Committee” of the Czech Parliament and that he spoke in a TV debate attended by several important politicians. The TV debate was one in a series of debates which were treated as significant political events, and so what the participants said was likely to be noted by other politicians who were not present in the studio. This means that Šuman was a right sort of a person speaking on a right sort of an occasion for his appeal to be noted and reacted to. We are not saying of course that the government reacted directly and only to the words in (11). Šuman himself issued the appeal on several occasions in the debate, and similar appeals came from other political actors. His appeal was one of several but likely to have been a prominent one, because both of his political position and the occasion on which he spoke.

So far we have been dealing mainly with sequential structures as a means of keeping dialogical networks going. However, some expansions of dialogical networks are limited, and of course no network lasts for ever. One of the ways in which networks come to terminate locally is that no response follows the first part of a sequential structure. This implies that there were participants who could have joined the dialogical network, but did not. What data could support a claim such as this? How can we possibly know who could have joined the network and who could not? The point is that some absences seem noticeable to participants, or at least to some of them. Let us turn to the extract (13), which is a fragment of a newspaper article.

(13) ‘Roma are demanding the resignation of the General Procurator’ (Rudé Právo 11.1.1993)

...

1. ((K. Samková)) also spoke about negotiations with Václav Klaus in late September and early

2. October. According to her the Czech premier did not fulfil even one of the promises ((he made))
3. in it ... ‘We consider today’s meeting with the journalists, and our declaration to be also the last
4. appeal to Mr Klaus’ stated K. Samková.

This text presents an appeal to the Czech Premier Klaus by the Roma Civic Initiative (*ROI*), made at a press conference through its representative K. Samková. As is obvious from lines 2-4, this is not a first such appeal, and moreover the representatives of the ROI accuse the Czech premier of not fulfilling his promises.

This appeal constitutes the first part of an adjacency pair. In ordinary conversation, one would expect the second part, and its absence may be heard as a refusal to respond. Klaus never reacted publicly to the call by the ROI representative. Can he then be said to have refused to join the network? The problem is that, even though the sequentiality in conversations and in dialogical networks may apparently involve the same structures, it is not clear that the same normative expectations operate in both of them. We have already seen that some sequences in networks are mediated by journalists even though their work is hidden from the casual reader. Moreover, in the networks we analysed to date, it was not unusual for the first parts of adjacency pairs to be “heard” only when they were multiplied - “voiced” many times and usually by different participants (as in the case of the appeal transcribed in (11)). So, although Klaus (and his government) noticeably never responded directly to the ROI representatives, in the end they had to react to the multiplied appeal, never however recognizing publicly the ROI as a communicative partners. Similarly, in

another dialogical network we analysed (dealing with “the demands by Sudetan Germans” - see the extracts 3 and 7), the network participants themselves took the “silence” of Václav Klaus to reflect his decision that the Democratic Party of Sudetenland was not a proper negotiating partner for the Czech government.

A related problem is, how do participants in dialogical networks know that their reaction is expected and relevant when they have not been *addressed*, or selected for turn as in everyday conversations or in public face-to-face political debates? Even though they are not physically co-present, the potential participants in a dialogical network can be *targeted* by particular utterances. Such targeting can be explicit (when the target is named) but it may become less and less direct.⁷ (when, for instance a membership category is used instead of a name – see the extract 9, line 4). In fact, targeting of physically absent parties can be done with a variety of conversational resources. We presented in some detail one instance of this happening when analysing McGuinness’ talk in the extracts (5) and (6). There we saw that the relationship between a category and its “predicates” was used as resource - McGuinness touched on the activities which belonged to Mayhew’s ministerial responsibilities (for more detail see Leudar and Nekvapil, 2000).

Finally we turn to repair sequences.

Repairs

The extract (14) contains a fragment of a debate that took place on the Czech TV 1. The debate was broadcast at a time of political instability - at the very beginning of 1993, when Czechoslovakia was being split into the Czechia and Slovakia, and it was at this point that the Democratic Party of Sudetenland (DPS) voiced the “demands” of the people displaced from the Czech border to Germany after WW II, that is from the territory once called Sudetenland.

(14) ‘Debate. From the political scene’ CTVI 10.1.1993)

1. Blüh: our programme. (.) first of all. is to bring health into what was once territory of
2. Sudetenland, *we know that it was not a land as such, that it is only. (.) a name of this part*
3. *of Czech Republic*, but er there is simply concentrated the highest incidence of criminality
4. the highest ill health, these are problems which burn us always, there we want to focus on
5. that territory, and there we want to really (.) achieve something, somehow er to get the
6. people active, so they really do something for that land.
(our emphasis)

In (14) the chairman of the DPS, J. Blühmel, is explaining its programme. In the second line, for the first time in the debate, he used the word “Sudetenland”. Once the word “Sudetenland” is used, Blühmel immediately follows with a formulation which has the characteristic of conversational repair (lines 2, 3). Nobody in the studio, however, challenged his term “Sudetenland”, at that point or before. So where does the incentive for the self-repair come from? It could be the expectation that a local challenge is forthcoming. What is, though, remarkable is that the incentive for what, in the context of the Debate, is “self-initiated self-repair” is possibly to be found not in the studio at all. The DPS, which Blühmel speaks for at this point in the debate (as evidenced by his use of the pronoun “our”) had already been challenged about the use of the word “Sudetenland” two days before the TV debate. This is documented in the extract (15) presenting a fragment of a newspaper article.

(15) 'Poll: who is stirring the problem of Sudetenland?' (ČMZN 8.1.1993)

1. The reporters of ČMZN asked several representatives in Czech political life, what they think
2. about the demand of Democratic Party of Sudetenland concerning the cancellation of validity of
3. Beneš decrees, and reviving the historical name Sudetenland and the cessation of sales of
4. "Sudetan" property ...

We are not saying that Blühmel was reacting directly and specifically to this particular article, especially since similar challenges were made by others in other publications. The point is that in presenting his party in the debate, Blühmel is displaying sensitivity to multiple reactions to DPS which were available before the *Debate* – and the concerns might well be replicated there. This means that his repair is locally a self-initiated-self-repair, but in the network it is other-initiated-self-repair. This again documents that the participants in the studio are involved in two interactions - with those who are present "in" the studio and with those "outside". An additional question involves the mediation in this repair – did Blühmel himself read the reactions in the papers to the use of the word, or was this pointed out to him by other party members (for instance)? The same analytic concern then arises here as it did in the case of claim-denouncement sequence – structurally there is conversational sequence but the connection may be mediated. The difference is that the event outside of the studio enters local conversation and affects it.

Let us proceed to another repair sequence, in the extract (16), which happened later in the same dialogical network, a day after the TV debate. This is a brief newspaper interview (just one question and one answer)

published in the Czech daily *Lidové noviny* under the title "A question for Jaroslav Blühmel, Chairman of DP of Sudetenland".

(16) 'A question for Jaroslav Blühmel, Chairman of DP of Sudetenland' (LN 11.1.1993)

1. - In the yesterday's program you said that if the Czech state will not compensate displaced
2. Sudetan Germans, it could happen that in our border region telegraph posts would be blown up
3. as in southern Tyrols. *Is this just your speculation or do you know some concrete facts?*
4. - This is just a thought of mine, which follows from what is happening in Northern Italy. I do
5. not think that the situation in our place would ever get that far, I was just talking about a
6. possibility. The situation is different for instance in Poland which has excellent relations with
7. Germany, much better than us. The question of transfer in our place is more painful ... If this
8. matter will not be dealt with at the level of government, the result will be in my view similar to
9. violent acts as in Northern Italy.

(our italics)

This article illustrates a three-part repair sequence. The structural properties of such sequences are as follows: the first part is a source of potential misunderstanding, the second part is a reformulation of the problem, and an initiation of repair, and the third part is the repair itself.⁸ The source of the potential problem here is what Blühmel said in the TV debate. The journalist reports this problematic talk to Blühmel (lines 1-3), and he also initiates the repair (line 3). The rest of the article reports directly Blühmel's actual repair (lines 4-9).

How do we know that a repair (sequence) is involved at all? Surely, the journalist simply asked Blühmel a question, which the latter answered. The point is that the journalist does not ask Blühmel to expand on what he said in the studio, but his question concerned the epistemic status of what Blühmel said. This was not clear to the journalist – was it a speculation?, or a statement based on facts? In this sense it is a repair. Blühmel's repair indeed consists in downgrading the force of what he said in the studio from being a warranted prediction to being a mere speculation on a possibility (lines 4-6).

This repair sequence is then structurally like repairs in conversations, but it is distributed. It happened in three places – the studio, where the claim was made, the place in which the journalist put the question to Blühmel (this may have been by phone or in a face-to-face meeting, we do not know and we need not know), and finally the newspaper in which the journalist reports his question-answer exchange with Blühmel. The three parts of the sequence do not only take place in different places but also in different media (newspapers, TV etc). It should be noted that the possibility of this distribution depends on mediation - Blühmel's repair relates to something he said elsewhere in the network and one gets from one to the other because of the mediation of the journalist.⁹

Conclusions

This paper concerned sequential structures in communications, which we refer to as dialogical networks (Leudar 1998; Leudar and Nekvapil, 1998; Nekvapil and Leudar 1998; Nekvapil and Leudar, 2002a). By dialogical networks we understand communications which typically occur in mass media and the most important of their characteristics is that contributions of individual actors are distributed in time and space and are possibly duplicated.¹⁰

Networks such as these are thematically coherent but the main glue is sequential structures. In terms of types, those we observed in the networks were the same as one finds in face-to-face conversations. We have found, however, the following distinctive features: (i) several actors often react to the first part of a sequence, (ii) the second part in a sequence is often a reaction to a distributed first part. In other words, it is typical of the network structures that some slots in sequences can be filled by several contributions. (These could be by several unconnected participants, and mutually contradictory.) The third distinctive feature was (iii) the connection between the parts of sequences was often mediated by journalists.

The obligation to react in the dialogical networks seems to be weaker than in ordinary conversation. This is partly because the connections are not immediate but mediated by others; moreover it is not unusual in the networks for the first parts of an adjacency pairs to be "heard" only when they are voiced several times and by different participants. We saw, however, that participants formulate the happenings in the network in terms of sequential structures and ignore the fact that the connection between their parts are often intricately mediated. This is simply irrelevant to the participants' concerns.

Endnotes

^{1.} In the networks we have analysed so far the participants were journalists, politicians, and sometimes members of pressure groups – see Leudar and Thomas (2000, Ch. 8).

^{2.} We present all the Czech texts only in English wording. They have been translated into English by the authors. The analysis though was based on the originals. On the general situation of the Czech newspapers see Nekvapil (1996).

^{3.} See Leudar (1998) for a detailed analysis.

- ⁴ On the concept of adjacency pair see Schegloff and Sacks (1973) or Heritage (1984) who presents a useful summary of the concept.
- ⁵ For a summary exposition see, for example, ten Have (1999).
- ⁶ The logic of these two terms is as follows: the sequential structure can be distributed without any of its parts being duplicated. If a structure or one of its parts is duplicated then it is also distributed.
- ⁷ See Levinson (1988) on the indirect target in ordinary conversation.
- ⁸ For a summary exposition see, for example, ten Have (1999).
- ⁹ Note by the way that Blühmel used this occasion again to try to get the Czech government to act, and the journalist reported this (lines 7-9).
- ¹⁰ Could what we represent as a “dialogical network” be viewed simply as “public debate”? Not in our view. The concept of debate focuses on arguments and counter-arguments, whereas what we cover with the concept of dialogical network are interactional phenomena that are not constitutive of debates.

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