Miscommunication in the institutional context of the broadcast news interview

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the pattern and relative success of linguistic interaction in the Broadcast News Interview (BNI). BNI is modelled as a genre of institutional communication. The psychological and functional characteristics of the BNI were examined from the viewpoint of how communicative conventions that normally regulate interview performance may, at times, impede effective communication. The BNI is intended to transfer information from an expert witness to an interested, though relatively uninformed audience. The interviewer is supposed to act as both conduit and catalyst. Pragmatic properties of the interlocutors' speech as they orient themselves towards the context of the conversation was analysed in order to reveal the manner in which prior assumptions or beliefs may lead to faulty inferences. The notion of miscommunication is used to describe and explain the faults associated with processes of representing the illocutionary force of an utterance, rather than deficiencies in pronunciation or auditory sensation and perception. Opting for a qualitative analysis, an attempt was made to ground explanations in relevant theoretical models of interpersonal communication and communication failure. Results indicate that the conventions that distinguish the BNI from more mundane types of interaction impede successful communication. The study highlights that participants who wish to attain their communicative goal must be more aware of the functional procedures of the BNI and anticipate impediments to successful communication.

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CONTENTS

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The term 'miscommunication' has been used in a variety of ways. The differences in definition often relate to whether the miscommunication has a physical property as its origin, for example, mishearing or mispronouncing; or a psychological property as its origin, for example, a faulty inference or prior assumption (Tzanne, 1999). The outcome of the error may also be a defining feature of a miscommunication, for example, a miscommunication may lead to communication breakdown; participant realisation, active error resolution; or may go completely unnoticed by both speaker and hearer. Often, in the case of the final example, many researchers doubt that miscommunication has occurred at all. Certainly for the purposes of understanding how and why miscommunications arise, these situations are difficult to determine. After all, in order to analyses an instance of miscommunication you first need to be able to observe the miscommunication.

People misunderstand each other's words, silences, gestures, or attitudes all the time. The fact that some participants in a conversation realise the communicative problem straight away, while others may remain unaware of it for a long time, and sometimes never know that it ever occurred suggests that misunderstandings do not develop in the same way, but that they can follow different courses of development, and have different outcomes, effects and consequences each time (Tzanne, 1999). These consequences may be trivial or more serious. For example, the Columbia space shuttle disaster may have been caused by miscommunication between engineers. As one group suggested, "Let's wait until the analysis is complete to see whether we need photos," another group interpreted this to mean, "There will be no photos" (Associated Press, 2003).

Communication and miscommunication in mundane conversation has been explored from a variety of theoretical perspectives, with many principles of communication being developed to explain the reasons why speakers may fail to communicate their intended message or why hearers may fail to accurately comprehend the intentionality of a speaker's utterance. Although these explorations often attempt to account for the occurrence of miscommunication through a description of the distinguishing features of the interlocutors, such as gender or race, miscommunication may also be explained as a result of an interaction between the people involved in the

communication and the situational perspectives that are relevant to language production and comprehension. Therefore, an accurate understanding of the context of the communication as well as the participants must play a part in explaining miscommunication.

The effort expanded may be justified by the severity of some instances of miscommunication. The consequences of miscommunication may be especially dire in institutional forms of communication. In the context of the courtroom, an inability to communicate effectively may result in a harsher penalty. In the context of the doctor's examination room an inability to communicate effectively may result in a failed diagnosis. In the context of the BNI, an inability to communicate effectively may result in a failure to perform persuasive, ingratiating, justificatory, or convincing behaviour and so maintain a more positive public image. In many instances this relates to the success or failure of an individual's career.

The question that I will be examining is whether the difference between the origin, progress, and resolution of miscommunication relate, and to what extent, to the context of the BNI interaction. Many who are interviewed on a regular basis are familiar with how TV interviews proceed and may even have undertaken training to help facilitate successful interviews and the projection of a positive public identity. People who are experienced at being interviewed, such as politicians or company representatives, may adopt strategies that enable them to understand and adapt to the context of the interaction and in turn communicate effectively. However, others who are not experienced with the context, such as ordinary people who happen to experience extraordinary events, may experience problems that relate to the effectiveness of the way they communicate, which in turn may lead to miscommunication.

PREFACE

This thesis will begin with a short account of the specific aims of the research and the rationale and assumptions of the theoretic perspective from which the research problem will be addressed. Following this, the core of the introduction will provide background information and examples of previous research on the psychology of comprehension, a description of the various theories of communication, and prior research specifically concerning miscommunication between meaningfully distinct individuals and from the position of interlocutors interacting in a specific context. A brief description will then be provided of three key communicative concepts: context, inferences, and schemata, and how they relate to successful communication and communication research. Following this, a broad outline will be presented regarding the characteristics of institutional discourse and the features that define and distinguish institutional discourse from more mundane, informal forms of communication. Once the general framework of institutional discourse has been provided, a more specific description of the characteristics that define the broadcast news interview and distinguish it from informal communication and other forms of institutional talk will be offered. These will include: turn-taking procedures; institutional roles and their associated rights, privileges, obligations, and commitments; and the features of the institution that work toward the accomplishment of the specific goal for which the institution was created.

The BNI was chosen as the form of institutional discourse for an analysis of miscommunication in context because, although it is very rarely or never experienced directly by the majority of people in the general population, most people experience it indirectly very frequently. Because of its distant, unattainable nature, for the majority of people, the forces that influence, structure, and confine behaviour during the BNI may be difficult to understand. Yet the BNI is a substantial source of information regarding the most influential people in the community and the reasons behind decisions that may dramatically affect the lives of members of the community. For an individual taking part in a BNI with a controversial message to introduce, acceptance or rejection may depend on how well that idea is communicated and justified. An individual's public identity may also depend on how well the individual presents him or herself during the BNI. Success or failure, acceptance or rejection, will depend on an individual's ability to adapt to the

conventions and procedures that organise and regulate behaviour during the BNI. A further feature influencing my decision to examine institutional miscommunication in the context of the BNI was the ease of observation. In the case of the BNI, unobtrusive observation is especially easy as recording devices and participant awareness of external observation are intrinsic features of the context.

The method section will present a description of the interlocutors who participated in the examples of BNI discourse, and a description of the methods employed in the analysis and identification of the intent of each turn at talk. On the assumption that all talk attempts to perform a certain speech act, discourse analytical and pragmatics techniques were used to determine speaker meaning and speaker intent during the instances of miscommunication analysed. The general principle of discourse, "that we can understand the contributions of others only in terms of what we would mean by producing them" (Tannen, 1994, p. 169), was also employed in order to develop possible explanations for a speaker's utterances and subsequent listener interpretations of these utterances. Miscommunication was identified as a discrepancy between the force of an utterance and the subsequent behaviour of the addressee as identified by the force of the response. In order to conserve space, the theory and operation of discourse analytic techniques are not detailed in this thesis. It is assumed that a reader has sufficient background knowledge of the theory behind these analytical tools to allow an understanding of the origin and rationale behind any findings.

The analysis will provide an illustration of and justification for all judgements made regarding speaker meaning and hearer comprehension in the examples of miscommunication during BNI discourse. Each instance of miscommunication will be presented, followed by a detailed account of the force behind each utterance and any possible explanations for misinterpretation of the force of the utterance. Descriptions of the interviewer and interviewee(s) as far as they relate to the outcome of the analysis will be provided at the beginning of each example. In order to substantiate the findings of this research, the decisions made during the analysis regarding the force of each turn at talk were grounded in a range of prior research findings and established principles of communicative behaviour.

The discussion section will consist of concluding remarks in order to summarise the results of the analysis and describe how these findings may correspond with or

contradict previous research. Following the discussion section a further section will be presented in order to describe the implications of the findings of this research, how they may relate to communication during other forms of institutional discourse, and why they matter as far as how observers interact with BNIs and the people that participate in them. The next section will provide an account of the possible flaws in the research method, features of the BNI participants that may cause the results to be unreliable or inappropriate as far as generalising the results to other instances of BNI discourse. The limitations section will follow a natural progression through to a description of ideas regarding possible changes in methodology that could be applied so that these problems might be addressed in future research, and a elucidation of any areas of interest that may have been made manifest by the results of this research.

INTRODUCTION

Research history

"If we acknowledge that speaking occurs (a) under real-time processing constraints and (b) within the lexical and syntactic confines of a particular linguistic code, we must doubt that there are such entities as pure, unsullied, and perfect semantic representations" (Coupland, Wienmann, & Giles, 1991, p. 5). From a variety of foundational perspectives and theories of communication, the nature of communication and the origins of miscommunication have been explored by a number of researchers with this scepticism regarding the purity of communication in mind.

Two of the main vantage points from which to examine the imperfections of conversation are (a) through characteristics of the interlocutors and (b) through characteristics of the situation, otherwise known as context. For example, many studies that use characteristics of the participants as a base for analysis have been concerned with the creation of misunderstandings as they relate to cross-cultural mis/communication (For example, Crago, Eriks-Brophy, Pesco, & McAlpine, 1997; Li, 1999; Jenkins, 2000). As well as focussing on communication between people from different ethnic backgrounds, but also in terms of communication between people from different sub-cultural backgrounds within the same society. The cultural difference perspective has even been applied to people from different age groups, and gender (For example, Mulac, Erlandson, Farrar, Hallett, Molloy, & Prescott, 1998; Tannen, 1994). These approaches take the theory that "any devices can be successful when interlocutors share expectations about their meaning and use, and any devices can cause trouble when such expectations are not shared" (Tannen, 1984, p. 40). The shared understanding of meaning and use in this case refers to an understanding of communicative custom as a function of the cultural background of the individual participants.

From an alternative perspective, however, researchers have questioned whether one's stable personal identity is the only identity an interlocutor can be found to assume in an encounter, and thus whether this identity is always relevant to the interpretation of the interlocutor's goals in all kinds of encounters in which he or she may take part (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Schiffrin, 1994; Thomas, 1995). With this proposition in mind,

theories of communication that utilize characteristics of the environment in which the conversation occurred have been proposed to help explain the occurrence of miscommunication. The context of interaction is now viewed as a major factor influencing communication. In particular, institutional talk, or conversation that takes place within a more strictly defined and controlled environment such as the broadcast news interview, the courtroom, or the doctor's office, has been the focus of attention.

Pragmatic theories

A variety of theories of communication have been enacted to help explain the fundamental rationale behind communication and instances of communication failure. These include Austin's Speech Act theory (Austin, 1962), which describes utterance meaning in terms of pragmatics, or the purpose of the speech act on three progressive levels; *locutionary force*: the actual meaning of the words; *illocutionary force*: the meaning of the words in the context of the situation; and *perlocutionary force*: the effect of the words on the listener's behaviour. Searle's conditions for speech acts (Searle, 1969) attempts to refine Austin's Speech Act Theory by providing preparatory, sincerity, and essential conditions which are required for the proper performance of a variety of speech acts. For example, the rules for the act of promising with the *propositional act:* Speaker (S) predicates a future act (A) of speaker (S), requires the *preparatory condition:* S believes that doing A is in hearer's (H's) bests interest and that S can do A, the *sincerity condition:* S intends to do A, and the *essential condition:* S undertakes an obligation to do A. In order for the act of promising to be properly carried out, these rules must have been obtained.

Goffman's theory of situated roles (Goffman, 1974), which describes communication in terms of the identity of the communicators and the concepts that may be relevant to each person in their particular role, has also been of benefit in the examination of miscommunication. A person's communicative behaviour often reflects that person's communicative goal, and the communicative goal is often directly related to the role that an interlocutor is in at the time of speech (or comprehension). This theory is especially important in the case of institutional talk, as a primary definition of institutional speech is that interlocutors are provided with specific roles prior to commencement of the conversation, for example, doctor- patient and

interviewer-interviewee (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991).

Grice's theory of Conversational Maxims (Grice, 1975), which describes four maxims of utterance design, which, if observed, are advantageous to successful communication, may also be used to help explain miscommunication.

Grice's Conversational Maxims (1975):

Maxim of Quantity: Make your contribution as informative as is required, but not more so, for the current purpose of the exchange.

Maxim of Quality: Do not say anything you believe to be false or for which you lack adequate evidence.

Maxim of Relation: Say only what is relevant for the current purposes of the conversation.

Maxim of Manner: Be brief, but avoid ambiguity and obscurity of expression.

The failure of participants to comply with a maxim as far as it is relevant to the context of the conversation, and the degree to which the circumstance influences the importance of each maxim in the context of the conversation may inhibit successful communication. These conversational maxims are not meant to describe the way things actually happen in the real word but as outlining the ideal conditions of effective meaning production and communication (Cosenza, 2001). In natural discourse these maxims may often be intentionally flouted in order to create certain effects, such as sarcasm or irony. Although flouted in daily life, these maxims are still valuable interpretive tools, as the listener must determine what illocutionary purpose an obvious violation of the maxim serves.

The role of context in an explanation of conversation has also been encouraged by a number of authors. Following a review of the strategic use of words and sentences, Guerin (2003) asserts that in categorising speech according to whether speakers are trying to get the listener to do something, get the listener to say something, keep the listener's attention, or have the listener like them more, a description of the context needs to provide the analytical foundation. More specifically in terms of institutional communication, Sbis (2002) has claimed that even objective context can be negotiated, constructed, and changed, insofar as goals may be negotiated or shifted (even non-verbally) and conventional or institutional states of affairs such as attributions of

rights, obligations, entitlements, and commitments depend on the agreement of the relevant social participants.

Psychological processes

A variety of cognitive theories relating to the production and interpretation of language may help in providing an accurate account of communication and communication failure. These theories relate to such processes as the production of inferences, the effect of prior assumptions, interpretation as a function of interpersonal perspective, and the result of situational context on moderating utterance interpretation and production.

For example, Graumann & Sommer (1988) found that a reader's perspective influences both text comprehension and text production. From this finding it may be possible to gain awareness of the social character of cognition and language. In an instance of communication, an interpretation of speaker meaning will therefore require an understanding of the possible orientation of each participant. Successful communication may also require either mutual perspective or an appreciation for a fellow interlocutors perspective. In instances of communication between people from acutely different backgrounds, where perspectives may vary, fluent discourse may be more difficult to achieve. Interlocutors may encounter a larger number of misunderstandings or, with the realisation of disparate orientations; participants may be burdened by the need to consider alternative interpretations of language based on alternative perspectives. It may be that taking another's perspective in the interpretation or production of an utterance may be a natural part of communication. Hilton (1995) argues that the processes of inference, reasoning, and understanding are systematically shaped by interpersonal assumptions about the source of the utterance. Because a person's perspective usually depends on their category membership, an interlocutor's lack of appreciation for another's perspective may be the result of a misjudgement regarding the category membership of a fellow interlocutor.

The effect of context of the psychological processes of inferences in comprehension or message production may relate to the existence of schemas. For example, Alba, Alexander, Hasher, & Caniglia (1981) found that the presence of a context-inducing title prior to message input increased comprehension and recall in text. Likewise, Tanenhaus, Spivey-Knowlton, Eberhard, & Sedivy (1995) found that visual

context influenced spoken word recognition and mediated syntactic processing even during the earliest moments of language processing. These finding regarding the effect of situational context on utterance interpretation and production point to the impact of schemata on the regulation of communication. As words, people, environments, etc. activate certain schematic plans, communicators may align their interpretative devices to these plans in order to produce interpretations that conform to the schema and are therefore more likely to conform to the intended force of the message.

Support for the effect of context on interpretation of language is provided by Barsalou (1982) who found that each concept contains both context independent properties (activated no matter what the context), and context dependent properties (activated only in certain contexts). The existence of these properties implies that people may produce alternate interpretations of the same speech depending on the context in which the speech occurs. Barsalou puts forth the idea that the impact of context on the accessibility of properties that may relate to certain interpretations should be considered in accounts of language.

An account of communication must also utilize an understanding of the efforts speakers and hearers go to in order to accurately produce and interpret conversation. Good message production relies on the right amount of disambiguation being applied to an utterance without excessive information and the violation of Grice's maxim of quantity. However, such productions may still be inadvertently biased; as Keysar & Henly (2002) suggest, when speakers monitor their own utterances, they do not act as unbiased observers, instead, they underestimate the ambiguity of their utterances and overestimate the extent to which their disambiguating cues make their intentions transparent. Likewise, the interpretation of ambiguous utterances relies on prior knowledge of the context, that is, prior knowledge of the topic, the speaker, as well as interpretive possibilities in the form of routine proceedings provided by the schemata. However, such interpretations of ambiguous statements may still be faulty, as Keysar, Barr, Balin, & Brauner (2000) suggests, addressees tend to rely on information from their own perspective to resolve ambiguity in conversation, which may be biased according to the specific individual.

Miscommunication research

A number of researchers, including Tzanne (1999), have argued that the occurrence of

misunderstandings in communication can only be accounted for satisfactorily when examined in relation to the dynamics of social interaction. According to Tzanne, miscommunication should be analysed in terms of a process of meaning making and negotiating during the course of an encounter. Conversation develops during an interaction by constructing its own interpretive context turn by turn. This successive structure of discourse means that if frames or roles shift during the course of an encounter the interlocutors' tendency to interpret discourse on the bases of directly preceding discourse may lead to a misunderstanding when the interlocutors fail to realise an intended shift of a co-participants' role or a change in the direction of the activity. Tzanne (1999) also demonstrated in her study of miscommunication during informal discourse, that an instance of miscommunication might result in different combinations of reparative turns at talk. Each turn is constrained by turns taken previously, and at the same time, plays a role in the development of the context on whose basis other turns will be taken.

Miscommunication has been explored in relation to the differences between interlocutors from distinct ethnic backgrounds; between people who differ in meaningful ways within the same ethnic background; and between interlocutors engaged in a variety of institutional talk, where behaviour is constrained or altered by the context of the communication. The findings of studies that examine characteristics of the participants show similarities with studies that examine miscommunication in institutional discourse. In general, these findings relate to the discrepancy in the norms of interpretation and the mutual understanding of the structure of communicative exchange.

Between interlocutors from distinct cultural backgrounds miscommunication may be caused by a difference in the mode of language acquisition during upbringing, which will lead to the development of different interpretive norms. These differences relate to an individual's idea of appropriate participation and the structure of speech exchange during a conversation. For example, Crago, *et al.* (1997), in their study of intercultural communication in classrooms, found that many instances of miscommunication are a function of cultural differences regarding language use. When the communicative competence required for successful participation in the classroom is in disagreement with the norms of interaction that where developed through previous home and educational experiences, miscommunication between teachers and students of distinct ethnic background can occur. Studies have explained these differences in interactional

practices during intercultural communication as reflections of particular societies' cultural values surrounding communication and socialisation (Crago *et al.* 1997).

Miscommunication between cultures may be comparable to miscommunication in institutional context as successful communication in institutional contexts is also a function of the prior knowledge or experience regarding the communicative norms associated with each institution. For example, in both the BNI and intercultural communication one of the areas of discourse where miscommunication may appear is the case of silence. According to Scheu-Lottgen & Hernandez-Campoy (1998), cultures differ with respect to what and when silence is considered as non-communication. Similarly, the conventions associated with the occurrence and use of silence during the BNI is particular to that specific institution and relate to the particular goal of the BNI (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991).

Scheu-Lottgen & Hernandez-Campoy (1998) also state that miscommunication in cross-cultural contact will emerge when two or more participants fail to agree on the initial system of hierarchy or misuse the linguistic markers of politeness in the negotiation of face. Miscommunication may be caused when participants from distinct cultural backgrounds differ in their expectations about aspects of the conversation such as pacing, intonation pausing, or timing, or, as a result of distinct cultural norms, when a listener fails to indicate that he or she is following the message. For example, feedback gestures by the listener, such as *ah-ha*, nods etc., may be used in order to show interest and allow continuation of the turn by the speaker, and particles such as *err* by the speaker may be used to guarantee the continuation of a turn in the turn-taking process (Scheu-Lottgen & Hernandez-Campoy (1998).

The notion that differences in interpretive norms are associated with differences in culture as a result of distinct styles of language acquisition has also been applied to miscommunication between men and women (Tannen, 1994). For example, Mulac *et al.* (1998) found that men and women of similar age and education interpret the use of backchannels such as *"ah-ha"* and *"yeah"* differently. Mulac *et al.* attribute this result to the theory that the difference in sociolinguistic cultures in which men and women grow up establishes a hard boundary between men and women linguistically. Similar studies of miscommunication between subcultures reveal issues regarding a discrepancy in the prior knowledge, opinions, beliefs, or perspectives, between interlocutors, or a bias in the

interpretive style related to the perceived difference between the interlocutors. For example, Coleman & DePaulo (1991) found that the attitudes and stereotypes which able-bodied people hold regarding the disabled lead to misjudgements being made about the appropriateness of language.

Analyses of intercultural miscommunication are also performed within the context of specific, controlled, and defined institutional situations. This context is assumed to influence the participants' behaviour as they orient their interpretive strategies towards the explicit rules and implicit customs of the institution. More closely associated with the effect of institutional context, miscommunication in such instances was found to relate to the power differences between participants, the style and form of discourse, and the discrepancy in prior knowledge and experience of the interlocutors. For example, Cass, Lowell, Christie, Snelling, Flack, Marrnganyin, & Brown (2002) found that the asymmetrical power relation between Aborigine patients and a health provider meant that the issues of who has control of the time, place, participants, purpose, topic structure, and language were out of the hands of the patients. Cass *et al.* also found problems concerning the lack of relationship between patient and provider, the impersonal and relatively offensive question - answer routine that is a part of the institution, and a shared understanding regarding the behaviour expected during the institutional occasion and the topic of discussion. As a shared understanding of many of these concepts does not exist, effective communication is seldom achieved. Interpretation in medical contexts may depend on the listener's frame of reference, either from a medical frame or life-world frame (Mishler, 1984). As will be discussed, these question-answer or turn taking routines are a defining aspect of institutional discourse, these issues may therefore, be especially significant to an analysis of miscommunication in the context of the BNI.

Context

Three levels of context

There are three basic levels of context which are recognised in all major works that attempt to specify context. These are: cultural, situational, and textual, listed from most fundamental to most specific. The contextual feature of the culture and the situation

initially exists extraneous to the text itself; however, upon the expression of an utterance the cultural and situational aspect of the context interact with the utterance in order to aid comprehension (Wilson, 1994). First of all, the most fundamental level of context, that of culture may be described as a large and complex knowledge system spread between the various members of a particular culture. In a given interaction the context of culture is utilized by participants by means of the knowledge system which the various participants bring to bear on the situation. The pertinent knowledge regarding the meaning of an utterance is triggered by aspects of the context of situation upon reception of an utterance. During an interaction, rather than operating as an isolated individual, a listener or speaker operates instead as a social agent, located in a network of social relations, in specific places in a social structure (Kress, 1985).

Fairclough (1989) argues that the 'context of culture', allows for the making and interpreting of meaning. He describes the linguistic process as essentially active. Before a listener can arrive at an interpretation he or she must go through an active process of matching features of the utterance with representations stored in the long-term memory as schematic instructions. These representations may be describes as prototypes for a extremely diverse collection of things, people, and situations. For a particular situation these representations suggest to the interpreter the expected sequence of events in a particular situation type (Fairclough, 1989).

Context as opposed to personal characteristics as an interpretive strategy

Reasoning and judgement may, to a certain extent, depend on the level of an individual's personal capacity with regard to primary mental processes such as attention and memory. However, an emphasis on these personal characteristics may lead to the neglect of other higher-level environmental or situation specific characteristics on regulating processes of reasoning and judgement during language production and interpretation (Hilton, 1995).

The problem with explanations of conversational behaviour based entirely on personal variables such as memory capacity and attention factors, is that; by attributing justification for a pattern of behaviour to a participant's personal characteristics rather than the way that participant's behaviour may be influenced or constrained by the contextual characteristic of the situation, the analyst will expose the explanation of conversational behaviour to the fundamental attribution error (Hilton, 1995). A detailed

description of the social context of an interaction may be necessary to reduce the likelihood of succumbing to this error in the interpretation of communicative behaviour. For any conversation, the most accurate method of analysis may be to gather as much of the features of the context and the participants as possible and begin analysis by looking at what is done with the words (Guerin, 2003). Such a description may aid in determining how a participant comprehends an utterance and in turn explain the logic behind otherwise seemingly illogical inferences that are draw during the course of an encounter.

Definition

Because context is such an abstract concept, a definitive and agreeable definition and description of the term as it stands alone is difficult. Furthermore, constructing a description of a particular context from an observed interaction for the purpose of analysis is equally difficult. Essentially, the context of an interaction functions to activate and draw a participant's attention to applicable knowledge and skills and to provide the participant with an appropriate situated scheme for whatever the activity may be (Blimes, 1991). Context must therefore, in some sense be "available" to participants in these activities, then and there as utterances are being constructed and interpreted (Blimes, 1991).

For an utterance to be accepted as a relevant part of a conversation, a speaker must choose lexical and syntactic forms that accurately represent the intended propositional content of the utterance as well as match the specific contextual demands of the situation (Roth, 1998). This means that the participants in a conversation perpetuate the contextual aspects of the conversation as each utterance displays an understanding of the meaning and direction of any proceeding utterances and how they relate to the contextual character of the situation (Wilson, 1991). Unless there is good reason to assume otherwise, this context renewing character of conversation specifies that the context already established by the preceding utterances should remain the prevalent scheme of utterance interpretation and production (Wilson, 1991). Because of the context conforming nature of conversation, any analysis of an instance of miscommunication must utilize a detailed description of the context of the interaction as an essential analytical resource in order to arrive at an accurate explanation for the miscommunication. However, an explanation of miscommunication may require more than merely a detailed

description of the observed situation.

Context aids interpretation

An accurate rendering of the context of a conversation is an important prerequisite to a thorough interpretation of speaker meaning. An understanding of the situational context can help with understanding speaker intentions and, in turn, the interpretation or misinterpretation of those intentions (Thomas, 1995). The first level of speaker meaning obtained prior to an appreciation of context is that of *abstract meaning*; abstract meaning is concerned with what a word, phrase, sentence, etc. will mean when considered before the situation surrounding the utterance is understood. The abstract meaning of an utterance is also known as its *locutionary force*, that is, the actual words uttered (Austin, 1962).

Once abstract meaning has been realised we move on to *contextual meaning*; that is, the meaning of the word, or utterance in the particular situation in which it is used, also known as the utterance's *illocutionary force* (Austin, 1962). This level of speaker meaning has greater communicative explanatory power in terms of understanding how communicators construct their utterances and interpret their co-communicator's utterance (Thomas, 1995).

Finally, the third abstraction of speaker meaning is the utterance's practical accomplishment, or the actions that the utterance produced in the listener. This level of speaker meaning is known as the *perlocutionary force* (Austin, 1962). For example, the utterance "Were you born in a tent?" has the locutionary force of a question regarding the location of the addressee's birth. However, when spoken to a person who had recently exited or entered a room without closing the door the utterance has a different meaning, that is, the illocutionary force of a command to close the door. The perlocutionary force may be the action of the addressee closing the door, or, if misinterpreted, the addressee informing the speaker of his place of birth, "No I was born in a garage".

To start of with, knowledge of context can help with constructing an understanding of an interaction on the most basic level, for example, *deictic expressions*. These are expressions such as the reference deictic 'this' and 'that' and the place deictic, 'here' 'there' which derive part of their meaning from their context of utterance but do not mean very much in isolation. It is only when the listener knows where the speaker is

standing or what the speaker is indicating that they become truly meaningful (Thomas, 1995).

As well as deictic expressions, the activation of particular properties of each concept may depend on certain contextual features. Context-independent properties are those properties of a concept that are activated by the word for the concept on all occasions independent of context. Context-dependent properties are rarely if ever activated by the word for a concept and are only activated by the relevant context in which the word appears (Barsalou, 1982). A detailed understanding of the context of a conversation may help to shed light on why certain concepts are activated by certain words mentioned during the course of a conversation.

Applying relevant context:

In order to compose an accurate rendering of an instance of miscommunication, the analysis of the conversation in which the miscommunication occurred must be made not just in relation to the obvious or assumed contextual features of the conversation, but rather to those contextual features that are meaningful to the participants involved in the conversation (Schegloff, 1992). One difficulty with this method is that different individuals may use different features of the context in order to interpret the same utterance. Even if communicators do use the same contextual features, the relative amount of significance given to each feature may also vary between participants and, consequently, lead to varying interpretations of the same utterance (Coupland *et al*, 1991).

A description of the context will take an understanding of miscommunication further if the total conversation preceding the miscommunication is taken into account. Participants exhibit a strong tendency to interpret an utterance by relying on discourse elements that were produced directly before the trouble-source-turn as relevant interpretive context. By concentrating exclusively on the structure of the trouble-source-turn, an analyst may fail to realise the effect prior talk and emergent contextual features may have on the occurrence of miscommunication (Tzanne, 1999).

Related to the concept of context, understanding communication also involves understanding the social role that a participant in an interaction may utilize in the construction and interpretation of communication. In institutional discourse, such as the

BNI, the roles enacted by the participants are closely correlated with each participant's communicative behaviour. Goffman's theory of fames and roles (1974) may be employed in order to understand how the behaviour of a participant in a conversation may relate to the participant's negotiation and performance of certain roles in the situation, and how the same participant may continually change roles throughout the course of the same encounter. Goffman's theory also attributes the construction and interpretation of utterances to the perceived relevance of the contextual features of the situation rather than simply the components of the context.

Speakers must design their utterances so that they target a specific listener in a specific role. The same is true of listeners, as they must interpret an utterance as a product of a specific speaker in a specific role (Wilson, 1991). Therefore, participants in a conversation construct their utterances in part through their orientations to their relevant biographies and identities, their fellow interlocutor's relevant biographies and identities, as well as to their conception of the character and focus of the present situation and its connections to prior and prospective future occasions. Context, therefore, shapes the character of an interaction and interaction, in turn, shapes the character of the context. This information is especially pertinent to an understanding of the forces that conspire to impede successful communication, as situational characteristics such as social roles and the physical surroundings in which a conversation takes place impact on a participant's comprehension as relevant and effectual variables (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991).

Inferences

An Important consideration in an examination of communication and its failings is the manner in which interlocutors govern their inference making processes. How do listeners get from literal meaning of an utterance to an understanding of its indirect meaning? Inferences made during the course of a conversation directly relate to the successful outcome of that conversation. These inferences that an interlocutor makes are based on prior knowledge as well as the content of the utterance. Therefore, for each participant to produce the same inference on exposure to a certain stimulus prior knowledge must be mutual and each participant must hold or be familiar with the same prior beliefs (Bach &

Harnish, 1979). Because inferences are often based on a general philosophy or world knowledge, they may vary between different classes or cultures (Ochs, 1991). Inferences are also based on the motivation or goal of the interpreter. In this case communication may be more likely to be successful in situations where both participants share an understanding of the purpose of the conversation and the goals, motives, and intentions of their fellow participants (Mortensen, 1997).

Inferences may be quick, sub-conscious processes used to connect a pair of propositions expressed by a pair of clauses with no repeated phrases, or alternatively, may be highly elaborative, such as when they are used to construct a detailed expansion of theories, intentions, consequences, and implications from the limited information given (Hodgetts & Habermann, 1997). Such inferences may not be required for a minimal, acceptable understanding, especially an understanding of an utterance produced in a thoroughly comprehensive conversational context. However, in vague or indeterminate situations elaborative inferences may contribute to coherence. The inference a speaker may expect to be made with the expression of a particular utterance may be systematically different form the inference made by the hearer. In general, speakers perceive their own utterances as more transparent than they actually are (Keysar & Henly, 2002).

When a participant's reaction does not specifically match the illocutionary force of the prior utterance, it may be the result of a discrepancy in the knowledge or prior beliefs on which the inference making processes were based (Fussell & Krauss, 1992). Therefore, an appreciation of the way inference-making processes govern comprehension may be necessary in an analysis of communication. Because inferences can be a function of both linguistic and non-linguistic contextual elements as well as prior knowledge and beliefs (Hodgetts & Habermann, 1997), this appreciation must take specific account of the contextual characteristic of the occasion.

Attributional inferences

Attribution processes refer to the ways in which we draw inferences concerning the causes of behaviour (Clark, 1985). In the case of the BNI, both participants and witnesses use attribution processes to infer the reason a particular individual chose to express thoughts or beliefs in a particular manner or why a particular individual reacted with

anger, resentment, or offence to certain statements or questions. Attribution processes may be described as dispositional, that is, causes of behaviour that are internal to the actor; or situational, causes of behaviour that are external to the actor. For example, if a garbage collector failed to collect a certain bag of garbage an observer might infer that the garbage collector was careless (dispositional) or that the bag was not in an obvious enough position (situational).

Three types of information that are important for determining the causes of actions: Distinctiveness, whether the action occurs when the entity is present versus absent; consistency, the degree to which the action occurs over time and in different situations; and consensus, the degree to which the action is performed towards the entity by others. Differences in the levels of these three characteristics may help an interpreter to judge if the cause of the action was dispositional or situational. For example, if an action has high distinctiveness, high consistency, and high consensus, the interpreter may be more likely to blame the situation for the occurrence of the action. If the action has lo distinctiveness, high consistency, and low consensus, an interpreter may be more likely to blame dispositional factors for the occurrence of the action. Individuals use multiple explanations, both dispositional and situational in explaining behaviour (Clark, 1985).

Schemata

Closely tied to processes of inference production is the notion of schemata. Associated with every activity- including the BNI- is a set of inferential schemata. These schemata are tied to the structural properties of the situation and determine what will count as allowable contributions to the conversation (Levinson, 1992). Schemata are the knowledge structures permanently stored and activated at the occurrence of each concept. Schemata can be defined as a representation of the critical properties of a category, which automatically generate a plan or expectation that is used to selectively organise input, and thereby guide comprehension (Singer, 1990). Once activated by the recognition of certain words, behaviours, or environmental signals, the schema will begin to generate expectations, and focus attention on particular aspects of the occasion (Sperber & Wilson, 1986). When interlocutors have situational expectations, they may be more likely to make

more situational inferences than inferences concerning the disposition of fellow interlocutors as, in this case, making situational inferences is less effortful than making dispositional inferences (Lee & Hallahan, 2001).

Schemata may facilitate fluent or efficient communication in a variety of ways. People may use knowledge structures such as schemata to judge the boundaries of a person's category-related knowledge, in deciding what actions are warranted for a particular occasion, or in the task of drawing inferences regarding the conduct of fellow participants (Markus & Zajonc, 1985). However, schemata may also induce miscommunication as a result of an imbalance or discrepancy in what is mutually known or believed (Fussell & Krauss, 1992). Miscommunication may occur when members of different social groups with differing knowledge schemata concentrate their interpretations on different cues in the text (Graumann & Sommer, 1988).

Miscommunication may also be the product of an interlocutor's desire to minimise workload in processing, which often leads to a reliance on schematic interpretation strategies and the most probable (although perhaps unwarranted) inference outcomes (Hodgetts & Habermann, 1997). An appreciation of the role of schemata in institutional interaction is therefore vital for an understanding of miscommunication.

Institutional Communication

Every instance of communication takes place within a tangible context, the character of which is a function of the variables: when, where, why, who, and how of the conversation. In mundane conversation discourse participants have more freedom to negotiate the context and interpretive norms of their conversation (Connor-Linton, 1999). However, while the performance of everyday "mundane" conversation may occur under unpredictable, volatile, or otherwise indeterminate conditions, other instances of conversation may have a more-or-less pre-defined context. For example: the courtroom, the doctor's office, or, in this case, the BNI. Collectively, these forms of conversation are known as institutional talk.

Comparisons with informal discourse

Findings of conversation analytical research suggests that there are systematic and identifiable means by which participants in a conversation identify a particular conversation as an instance of institutional communication as opposed to an informal, more natural instance of communication (Atkinson, 1982). The most important of these may be for an interlocutor to locate, compare, and contrast the ways in which an institutional form of conversation may noticeably diverge from the intuitive model of everyday communication.

Institutional talk normally involves the participants in specific goal orientated roles, which correspond to their institutionally relevant identities. For example: doctor – patient; judge – lawyer – defendant; interviewer – interviewee; and so on (Drew & Heritage, 1992). The institutional role that each participant occupies places special constraints on what actions the participant may perform. In most institutional settings these constraints revolve around pre-arranged turn-taking conventions, designed to streamline the conversation so that it is more conducive to the achievement of the institutional goal (Drew & Heritage, 1992). These turn-taking conventions, which are often controlled by legal constraints established to regulate efficiency and fairness in accordance with the function of the institution, affect the structure and management of institutional talk in a variety of ways (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991).

Because of the comparatively prearranged nature of institutional talk, the variables that may define the context of a conversation that takes place in an institutional setting may at first appear obvious. However, like all communication, the performance of institutional talk, such as the BNI, requires realisation in the actual conduct of the participants, and not merely predefined institutional settings and declared objectives or pre-set participant roles (Schegloff, 1992). More specifically, the participants must still create context. A functional description of the context must therefore use aspects of the conversation that are relevant and motivational to the participants at the moment in the conversation that is currently under investigation. However, this may be easier said than done.

Although institutional talk may be more strictly defined and controlled than mundane conversation, the relative significance of the different conversational topics and the various professional or personal roles occupied by the participants may still vary

among each participant. That is, a participant involved in an institutional form of communication may inhabit a variety of social identities, whether they be specifically institutional (temporary), such as; doctor, lawyer, interviewer, etc. or more personal (stable), such as; father, husband, male, New Zealander, etc. The specific role enacted by a participant may not always be deducible from the category of institution in progress and will often relate to the relevance of that specific social identity or topic category at the moment of speech (Schegloff, 1991).

A further complicating feature is that each of these categories of institutional communication, the tasks and obligations associated with the different categories of institutional role, and the methods used to perform those tasks, are highly variable (Wilson, 1991). They may vary according to the culture in which they occur; they may vary over time; and they may also be intentionally altered, not just by those involved in the performance of the conversation but also by those involved in the management of the institution (Wilson, 1991). The context of an institutional interaction reflects these variations. In contrast the fundamental mechanisms of communication, the tools member of society use to construct their interaction, while sensitive to context (their specific enactment relates to the context of the interaction in which they occur) are also free of context and so are not products of the interaction in which they occur. They are not socially constructed in the same sense that context is socially constructed. Rather, these devices are universally available mechanisms used by communicative participants in the construction of the social context of their conversation (Wilson, 1991).

For an interaction to be considered institutional, the communicative behaviour of the participants themselves must be meaningfully oriented to the characteristics of the situation that differentiate and distinguish it from other more mundane forms of conversation. This means that in order to justify attributing any conversational inferences drawn during the course of the interaction to the contextual characteristics of the interaction, these contextual characteristics must be shown to be relevant to the participants' utterance production and comprehension schemes (Schegloff, 1991). In essence, the institutional context must be shown to somehow regulate the conversational behaviour of the participants involved.

The degree to which conversational participants regulate their behaviour in order to conform to a particular institutional framework will depend on the restrictive

potential of the institution. A variety of systematic differences between institutional and mundane conversation tend to appear as these restrictions take effect (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991). These constraints on the availability of conversational options, which arise according to the institutional character of the situation, formally relate to the task at hand and influence institutional conversation in ways that the practices making up the essence of mundane conversation do not (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991).

Miscommunication in institutional discourse

The inherent features of institutional forms of conversation can have an effect on the success of communication. That is, the problems that originate in an institutional setting often relate to the differences between institutional talk and more mundane, everyday forms of communication. Compared to the phenomenon of everyday conversation, institutional settings such as the law courts, news interviews, doctor-patient interactions and so on, are relatively recent innovations that have undergone a great deal of change as society itself has changed. Meanwhile, the institution of mundane conversation is experienced prior to institutional interaction, both in the life of the individual participant, and in the life of society as a whole (Drew & Heritage, 1992). In mundane communication speakers must begin the negotiation of the context by interpreting other speakers' utterances egocentrically, through the interpretational heuristic of their own construction of the context (Connor-Linton, 1999). In contrast, in institutional settings such as the BNI, speakers are assigned an interpretational heuristic to a greater extent.

Participants in an institutional setting who are less conversant with the context in question may be more susceptible to miscommunication than they would if they were participating in an ordinary conversation. For these participants, the elements of institutional interaction, which are experienced as unfamiliar, disagreeable, or discomforting are experienced as such in relation to an implicitly assumed background knowledge of the workings of ordinary conversation (Atkinson, 1982). Because of the universal availability of these fundamental mechanisms of interaction, and their habitual service as tools in the construction of everyday conversation, we develop throughout our lives an innate understanding of these rules and procedures as we expand our communicative competence. However, an encounter with a more novel institutional form of conversation, where the same fundamental rules do not necessarily apply, may cause

communicative problems. As each institutional setting possesses a meaningfully distinct character compared to ordinary conversation and other forms of institutional talk, a participant's level of communicative competence in a specific institutional setting will depend on the degree of experience the participant has had with the specialised and re-specified interactional functions of the institution in question (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991).

Turn-taking

Communication in institutional interactions such as BNIs has been shown to exhibit systematically distinctive forms of turn-taking systems which significantly structure many aspects of conduct in these settings (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991). Because of their potential to modify the participants' opportunities for action, and also to recalibrate the interpretation of almost every aspect of the activities that they structure, these special turn-taking systems can be very important in studying institutional interaction (Drew & Heritage, 1992).

First, turn-taking processes are fundamental aspects of the organisation of interaction and have a pervasive effect on a wide variety of conversational processes, whether in mundane or institutional contexts (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991). The characteristic turn-taking structure of an institutional conversation is enacted repeatedly over the course of the interaction, so that the participants organise and present their turns at talk during the conversation in a manner that is distinct from mundane conversation so as to conform to and realise the institutional character of the situation. The contextual relevance of an institutional setting to the participants' utterance comprehension and production is therefore confirmed in compliance with this turn-taking process (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991). Participants in an institutional interaction contribute to the maintenance and perpetuation of the "identifying details" (Garfinkel, Lynch, & Livingston, 1981) of institutional activities as they enact the specialised and re-specified interactional functions of the institution.

The Broadcast News Interview

The fundamental role of the BNI- the purpose for which it was created- is the communication of information from public figures, politicians, government officials, spokespeople, experts, or people of public interest, for the benefit of the viewing audience (Heritage, 1985). The structure of a BNI, the physical setting, procedures, and conventions, are therefore geared towards satisfying this objective. This organised structure is what identifies the news interview as an example of institutional talk.

Role specific conventions

The conventions that constitute the BNI regulate participant behaviour in a variety of ways. For example, within the institution of the BNI there are conventions that dictate the form and function of a speaker's utterance (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991). These conventions are associated with the specific institutional role that the speaker occupies within the conversation and are pre-established prior to the commencement of the interview. In general, speakers who act as interviewers, may not properly engage in actions other than asking questions, while speakers who act as interviewees may not properly engage in actions other than answering the interviewer' questions. While the distinction between a question or statement and an answer or evasion may not always be obvious (Clayman, 2001), the main goal behind this organisation is that those who take part as interviewers should refrain from making overt declarative statements or value judgements, while those who take part as interviewees should refrain from initiating actions, such as unsolicited comments on prior talk, opening or closing the interview, or asking questions to which the interviewer or other interviewees would be obliged to respond (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991).

Other role specific conventions of the BNI related to turn-taking procedures and the question-answer format regulate the expression of disagreement among interviewees. For example, when interviewees wish to make direct comments or express disagreement with a co-interviewee's previous remark, interviewees are normally careful to maintain the interviewer, rather than the co-interviewee, as the direct addressee or their statements (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991). This procedure of third-person reference to a co-interviewee is in direct contrast with disagreements in mundane conversation, and is

the principal means by which an interviewee can depart from the typical turn-taking procedures of the BNI, yet still maintain the institutional functionality and character of an interviewee (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991).

Because interviewee disagreements, in accordance with the institutional conventions of the BNI, are directed towards a third party, these disagreements may be produced in a more blatantly conflicting and less refined manner (Greatbatch, 1992). In mundane conversation such explicit statements of conflict may imply rudeness on the part of the speaker or, understandably, cause offence. However, in the context of the BNI, by virtue of being addressed to a third party, disagreements which are produced as answers to an interviewer's questions are automatically mitigated, in that mediated disagreements are intrinsically weaker than unmitigated ones (Greatbatch, 1992).

Correspondingly, while interviewees may deviate from their role as "answerers" when they wish to disagree with a co-interviewee, they nonetheless sustain a core aspect of their institutionalised identity, and in doing so limit the extent to which their actions undermine both the status of the interaction as a news interview and the role of the interviewer within it (Greatbatch, 1992). By complying with these pre-established conventions, the participants in a BNI – interviewer and interviewee – collaboratively create and perpetuate a definition of their joint circumstances as "an interview" rather than "a discussion" across their various questions and answers – whether hostile or affable (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991).

Viewer audience involvement

The BNI, while comprised of an interviewer and at least one interviewee as the most obvious participants, has, because of its core function, the viewing audience as a third party and its primary beneficiary. The interviewer must therefore use various strategies in his or her utterance design that help to sustain the viewing audience as the principal addressee. One of the most important strategies used by interviewers in this task is to withhold response tokens such as "continuers" or "acknowledgement tokens" (*"ah huh", "really", "did you?"*) (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991).

In everyday conversation the performance of such response tokens signal the listeners decision to pass on the opportunity to speak, this identifies the listener as the primary addressee of the talk, and, in principle, as having the right to respond to the talk

at those points in virtue of the turn-taking procedures for ordinary conversation (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991). However, by withholding such response tokens and declining the role of report recipient, the interviewer rejects the opportunity to identify himself or herself as the primary recipient of the utterance and instead passes this benefit on to the viewing audience. The absence of these response tokens may not appear to be manifestly problematic to successful communication. However, because their occurrence in mundane conversation is often taken for granted, their absence may lead to uncertainty and possible communication problems when inexperienced interviewees are involved.

Participant identity

Because of the largely predefined institutional nature of the BNI, the general topic of conversation, or at least the set of possible topics, is essentially predetermined. While the interviewer directs the course of the conversation, the information and opinions solicited are determined by the particular identity of the interviewee (Roth, 2002). However, each interviewee may occupy a variety of roles and identities in their daily lives, a number of which may be socially relevant and therefore applicable to the conversation. Therefore, although the selection of sources for BNIs is typically thought of as being the result of a recruitment process extraneous to the actual interview, another form of interviewee selection operates within the boundaries of the conversation itself, even after a particular interviewee has been chosen. This secondary selection process occurs as the interviewer constructs questions to target the various aspects of the interviewee's identity (Roth, 2002).

Interviewers select certain aspects of an interviewee's persona for conversation when they describe the interviewee during the interview. By bringing an aspect of the interviewee's identity into prominence during the process of selective description and not attending to others, interviewers establish that specific identity as relevant to the questions that will follow. Interviewers' descriptions of interviewees are a function of the aspects of the described interviewee's persona and the activity context of the interview. Through the design of their turns at talk, interviewers display their understanding of who the interviewee is with regard to the reason he or she is being interviewed, and what the interviewee knows, or should be expected to know based on the interviewee's identity, with regards to what the viewing audience might be interested to

learn from the interviewee (Roth, 2002).

The fact that interviewees are more often than not already aware of the biographical information expressed by the interviewer in their descriptions of the interviewees may appear to indicate that the interviewee descriptions are made for the benefit of the viewing audience, as background information (Roth, 1998). Although it is certainly the case that this biographical data does serve to inform audiences' understandings of the interviewee, these descriptions also have a more important function. Because one way that interviewees respond to such descriptions of themselves is to embrace the descriptions as resources for constructing their responses, the interviewer's descriptions of the interviewees are consequential for news interviews subsequent trajectories. Interviewees therefore orient to how these descriptions facilitate or restrict their possibilities for responding (Roth, 1998). This phenomenon is important in an analysis of speaker meaning as in order to capture the complex and dynamic relationship between the institutional character of the BNI and the participants' conduct, analysis must attend to the participants' orientations of who they are, for one another, on these occasions.

Objectivity

A primary tenet of the BNI is that interviewers are supposed to remain objective in their work. This means, among other things, that they should not allow their personal opinions to enter into the interviewing process and should not overtly affiliate with or disaffiliate from those expressed by interviewees (Clayman, 1992). By confining themselves to asking questions, interviewers avoid the overt expression of opinion; while by confining themselves to responding to the interviewer's questions, interviewees avoid challenging the presuppositions or implications of the questions and therefore promoting a possibly subjective elaboration. Therefore, the question – answer routine, as well as fulfilling the purpose of an information exchange system from interviewee to audience, satisfies the requirement of impartiality which, in most countries, including New Zealand, is a legal requirement that broadcast journalists are obliged to maintain (Greatbatch, 1992). This requirement is laid down in the charters, licenses and broadcasting acts of numerous governments and the various national and international media organisations, e.g. the New Zealand Broadcasting Act, 1989 (Broadcasting Standards Authority, 2001).

The form of turn-type pre-allocation that limits interviewers to asking questions does not mean that interviewers cannot produce statement formatted utterances, such as assertions or assessments, but when they do, they are usually made covertly by being embedded within question turns and are very rarely expressed without mitigating features such as hedges or a shift in footing (Clayman 1992).

Interviewers shift footings during more subjective utterances as a way of placing some degree of distance between themselves and their more overtly opinionated remarks. Evidence that interviewers shift footing during the production of more opinionated remarks as a way of displaying neutrality may be observed in the interviewer's placement and use of such mitigating features. For example, interviewer footing shifts tend to be restricted to relatively controversial opinion statements, footing shifts are renewed during specific controversial words, and interviewers use footing shifts to avoid affiliating with or disaffiliating from the statements they report (Clayman, 1992). An understanding of the strategies that interviewers use in order to remain neutral is important in an analysis of speaker meaning in the BNI as these strategies effect the production of language and how that language should be interpreted.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

This research will examine miscommunication in the context of the BNI. As such, the processes of comprehension, reasoning, and inference making during BNI conversation must be revealed and described. Conversation will be analysed from an intently pragmatic perspective. The meaning of utterances will be described in terms of the actions the speaker is attempting to perform, or the changes in the mind of the addressee a speaker' utterance is intended to achieve. Also helpful in understanding miscommunication, the Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962) will be employed in order to explain the pragmatic nature of utterances and in turn how utterance force may be misinterpreted. As context has been described as the overarching foundation of conversational behaviour and its interpretation (Wilson, 1991), all descriptions will be set among the context of the BNI. Therefore, the distinctive nature of institutional talk as opposed to more mundane conversations will be detailed, with focus placed on the physical and psychological characteristics that define the BNI and set it aside from other forms of conversation.

In terms of a working definition of miscommunication, my research will analyse examples that have a variety of origins and outcomes. These will include faulty inference making, faulty reference selection, and the asymmetrical nature and application of prior knowledge or experience. However, while the psychological features of the origin of miscommunication may be variable, the physical characteristics of miscommunication will be held constant. That is, where communication errors occur although the words are pronounced audibly and the gramma correct. In this case, miscommunication for the purpose of this research will be defined as "a mismatch between the speaker's intended meaning and the hearer's understanding of this meaning in the particular context of interaction" (Tzanne, 1999, Pp. 34).

All examples of miscommunication will therefore have as their foundation, faults associated with internal processes of representation of the illocutionary force of a statement rather than external faults of word production or clarity such as mispronunciation or problems with auditory reception. These errors will be analysed with reference to the context by taking into account the character of situated activity types and participant's roles and power relations in the production and comprehension of talk during the interaction. In the context of the BNI, the underlying interest will be on the

psychological factors that contribute to miscommunication during the interview.

This project will investigate how the unique context of the television interview as a form of institutional communication effects communication and precipitates miscommunication. I will describe the context, being novel to many people and comprised of various rules, some formal others informal, some explicit others implicit, some known only by the interviewers themselves and the most experienced interviewees, and how it may impede successful communication. My aim will be to show that many instances of miscommunication that occur during BNIs share in common an origin that in some way relates to the context in which the conversation takes place; that is, they will in some way have the context of the BNI as their cause.

From more of a sociological perspective, the general principles of institutional conversation will be described, as well as the conventions more specific to the BNI. This description will take the form of participants that are involved in an instance of the BNI; conventions that regulate the performance of the BNI, such as sequential organisation, turn taking, turn allocation, direction of speech; the functional natural of institutional talk, the goal oriented characteristics of the BNI, and asymmetries of power, knowledge, and experience; institutional roles and their corresponding rights, motives, tasks, and obligations; conversational organisation, signposting, and topic arrangement.

This research was based on several important theoretical propositions concerning language and communication. First of all, the principle of an initial indeterminacy of language, where discourse is inherently ambiguous and the meaning of an utterance must be deduced from the context of the occasion. That is, each utterance may contain an illocutionary force not recognisable from the locutionary force without reference to the context of the occasion or prior knowledge and experiences. This is an important concept, as miscommunication is the result of a listener's selection of the wrong meaning on which to act. A further important proposition guiding this research concerns the goal-oriented nature of language, where each utterance is designed to achieve a purpose according to its illocutionary force. As each utterance attempts to perform an act, the intended act may be identified and compared to the effect the utterance actually had on the listener, i.e. the subsequent act of the listener.

METHOD

The data

The corpus for this research consists of 6 news interviews, 2 from BBC World's *Hardtalk* with interviewer Tim Sebastian, and 4 from TV 0NE's *Face-to-Face* with interviewer Kim Hill.

BNI: Although the participants in the role of interviewer and interviewee varied, the context was held constant. The study utilized miscommunication that took place in an interview context in which the administration of the interview conversation and topic organisation was adaptable, where the interviewee did not know exactly what the interviewer was about to ask and the interviewer did not know how the interviewee was going to answer. The conversation was, therefore, more spontaneous. The type of environment in which the interviews took place was also held constant (in television studio, under standard television interview conditions). Each BNI was composed of 2-3 participants, 1 interviewer and 1 or 2 interviewees.

Analysis

An instance of miscommunication was identified as an utterance (trouble-source-turn) that generated a subsequent reply that did not accomplish the intended goal of the original utterance. The failure of an utterance to accomplish its intended goal was observed in the requirement of a follow up statement that was an alteration or clarification of the trouble-source-turn. To achieve this, the illocutionary force of trouble-source-turn was identified in order to determine the desired outcome of the utterance; this was then contrasted with the actual effect of the trouble-source-turn on the behaviour of the addressee. To achieve this, the illocutionary force of the subsequent utterance was also analysed in order to observe how this differentiated from the perlocutionary force of the trouble-source-turn. Initially an instance of miscommunication needed to be identified by an obvious break in the fluency of the conversation during the interview. This most often takes the form of repair words such as "No I don't mean…", "Sorry…", or "My point

is..." From here speaker meaning and intention were identified through conversation analysis.

The instances of miscommunication that were selected for analysis came from two separate sources, one from the New Zealand media, and the other from the British media. For the sake of analysis, the talk surrounding the trouble-source-turn was transcribed into a low detail format with pauses, overlapping, and interruptions indicated. The speech proceeding and following the trouble-source-turn was analysed for any identifiable features that may have played a part in the miscommunication. A general description of the participants and the topic of the interview are provided at the beginning of each of the 6 instances of miscommunication in the analysis section.

Because of the qualitative nature of the analysis method, it was necessary to guard against contrived results that affirmed the hypothesis without sufficient theoretical underpinnings. Therefore, as both objectivity and sensitivity are important qualities in qualitative research, the transcribed data was analysed and reanalysed in order to uncover all possible interpretations of the illocutionary force of each utterance and explanations for the miscommunication. A vicarious view of each utterance was taken in order to arrive at the most accurate possible interpretation in conjunction with a detailed description of the BNI as an institutional form of communication, with emphasis on the features of the BNI that distinguish it from informal conversation, as well as other forms of institutional talk.

As it is the participants' own understandings of their conduct that are consequential for the way the interaction actually develops, consistent with the Conversation Analytic tradition that informs this research, here the participants' perspective was treated as of primary importance in the analysis of speech. Thus, every effort was made to ground analysis in the understandings and orientations of interviewers and interviewees as these become manifest in the interaction itself. Well-grounded analytic judgements must draw not only on resources internal to the particular instances under examination, but also on patterns of conduct that cut across numerous cases (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Theories of communication were used in order to ground the analysis in established principles. For example, Austin's speech act theory, which was utilized in order to discover the pragmatic origin of each word and each turn at talk; Searle's preparatory conditions for speech act, which was used in order to observe how an

utterance may be contextually unsuitable; and Grice's conversational maxims, which were used in order to recognize an utterance's possible violation of a maxim that may have lead to the miscommunication or the intended effect of the intentional flouting of a maxim.

ANALYSIS

Preface

The analysis section is composed of 6 examples of miscommunication. An analysis and discussion of the origin, causes, and outcomes of each example is provided in succession. A variety of research findings have been used to support the statements made regarding the communicative behaviour of the participants and the force of each utterance. The source of the miscommunication and descriptions of the interviewer and interviewee(s) as far as they relate to the outcome of the analysis are provided at the beginning of each example along with a transcript of the discourse.

Key

.... = Small pause, 0.5+ seconds
[ ] = Both participants speaking at the same time
Italic = emphasised word
TST = Trouble-Source-Turn
MU = Mismatched Utterance
RA = Repair Attempt

MC – 1:

Hardtalk: Thursday, 10th July 2003, BBC World.

Interviewer (IR): Tim Sebastian

Interviewee 1 (IE1): Reverend David Halloway: Founding Member- Reform.

Interviewee 2 (IE2): Reverend Colin Coward: Director- Changing Attitudes.

Two interviewees are being interviewed on the topic of 'homosexuals as ministers in the Anglican Church'. IE1 is unequivocally against and IE2 is unequivocally in favour of accepting homosexual priests in the Church. The interview has already been going for a significant length of time, both interviewees have stated their opinions and given their arguments several times.

1- IE1: His teaching is is is wrong.

2- IE2: OK, you're saying this about me as well I'm sitting here in the studio with you.

3- IE1: Yeah... Well I have to say, gently, that... umm, I happen to think you're wrong.

4- IE2: Yes I know you do, I hear [you, I listen]

5- IE1: [Yeah I know, but]... sorry, Timmy just wanted me to... ahh... Yeah.

TST= 3
MU= 4
RA= 5

Introduction

Although the occurrence of a miscommunication in a conversation can be described in terms of specific turns (turns which include the misinterpreted utterance), their cause can only be explained properly when analysed in relation to the conversation in which they occur (Tzanne, 1999). Consequently, a reason for the misunderstanding may be found by looking at the illocutionary force of the initial statement in turn 3 and at how this statement relates to prior talk, then at how the next statement from IE2 in turn 4 may be an artefact of the misunderstanding of the previous statement.

Encapsulating statement

In the third turn, IE1 made a clear and definite statement regarding his position on the subject in question. He believes IE2 is wrong and that homosexuals should not be allowed to become ministers in the church. Of course IE2 was already acutely aware of this view (they were introduced by the IR according to their position on the topic of the interview) and probably did not need to be told again (as can be seen from his statement in the 4th turn). However, IE1's utterance may be explained by IE1's claim that several turns earlier, the IR asked IE1 to make a definitive statement as to the level of his disagreement with IE2's position (although such a request was not obvious in the proceeding talk). Thus the utterance in turn 3 made by IE1 may have been a reply to the request made by the IR earlier to provide an encapsulating statement regarding IE1's position. However, either because of its remote or indistinct manner, this request by the IR may have no longer been part of IE2's inference processing apparatus. Therefore, IE2 may not have referred to the request made by the IR when comprehending the encapsulating statement made by IE1.

Without knowing that the IR had previously asked IE1 for an encapsulating

statement, the force of the utterance may be less identifiable. While the third utterance in context performed the illocutionary act of a definitive assertion, in isolation it can be shown to have broken a variety of conversational rules. For example, Searle's preparatory condition for an assertion, statement, or affirmation states that it must not be obvious to both speaker and hearer that the hearer knows or does not need to be reminded of the proposition (Searle, 1969). Also, Grice's maxim of quantity appears to have been violated with unnecessary information (Grice, 1975). Although violation of these conventions may not be uncommon in communication, they usually impose a specific force upon the utterance, which in this case, may not be obvious to IE2 or may have been applied incorrectly in the context of the conversation. Because of this, the statement in turn 3 directed at IE2 ("I happen to think you're wrong") may not have carried the same illocutionary force as may be deduced from the locutionary force.

Encapsulating statement in the BNI

The locutionary force of turn 3 was to inform the IE2 that: "I think you are wrong, I think homosexuals should not be allowed to become ministers in the Anglican Church". However, the locutionary force and the intended perlocutionary force may be less recognisable than what is immediately clear and may have something to do with the context of the conversation.

The utterance may be described as a combination of an *expressive* and a *representative* (Bach & Harnish, 1979). First of all, the speaker was revealing his psychological state in regard to the hearer's opinion ("I think you are wrong"), and second, the speaker was asserting a fact and conveying his confidence in his own perspective ("You are wrong). From IE1's statement in the 5th turn it appears that the initial assertion was designed to 'sum up' IE1's basic position as a form of closure to the debate. Summing up statements are important tools which interviewers often use to encapsulate alternative positions, help the audience keep track of the conversation, or to end discussions in a more conclusive and less unresolved manner. However, encapsulating statements are normally initiated by the interviewer towards the end of the interview (Greatbatch, 1992). Yet, in this example IE1 summed up his argument towards the middle of the interview, and without explicitly being asked to do so by the IR.

As a consequence of IE1's error, IE2 misunderstood the force of IE1's

statement. Instead of taking it as a 'sum up' of his general argument he may have understood it as part of IE1's argument, of which he is intently and obviously aware. In which case IE2 may have perceived the statement as palpably clear and intrinsically superfluous. Thus IE2 felt it necessary to express the obvious flaw in IE1's utterance with the statement in turn 4.

One important aspect of the BNI is that feedback from the interviewer is greatly reduced as a consequence of the institutional requirement that the viewing audience remain the principal addressee (Fussell, & Krauss, 1992). In this situation, the IEs must rely on their own judgement regarding the necessity of information in order to create messages that follow the principle of audience design. In turn 3, IE1 was making a judgement regarding the informational necessity of the audience rather than that of IE2, that is, the statement was made for the sake of the viewing audience rather than specifically for either IE2 or the IR. However, because the statement was directed towards IE2 rather than the IR, IE2 understandably took the utterance from IE1 at face value.

Encapsulating statements are used in a variety of contexts including the BNI, although their use usually performs tasks such as the emphasis of the main points of a lecture where the listeners are being informed for the first time. The error in the use of the encapsulating statement in turn 3 may have been due to the fact that, in this case, the addressee of IE1's statement was not the viewing audience. This contextual feature of the BNI may have therefore played a part in the miscommunication.

Politeness in the adversarial BNI context

During a conversation, especially in the case of the BNI, interlocutors may encounter a number of issues about which they may express an opinion, interpretation or perspective. However, rather than straightforwardly committing themselves to a particular statement, participants may choose to be more cautious of prudent; for example, by producing them as comparatively modest statements of experience rather than strong declarations of fact, speakers can exercise varying degrees of caution when expressing their opinions (Clayman, 1992). These processes serve a social purpose as they enable the speaker to avoid, or at least reduce the likelihood of conflict between participants and reduce the effect of critical or accusatory actions (Riley, 1993), while at the same time increasing the

level of accord between communicative partners (Maynard, 1992).

In regards to the performance of informal, everyday conversation, it has been argued that many, if not the majority of serious conversations (death, health, politics, and religion) that are analysed in terms of the interlocutors' true beliefs and attitudes are really about maintaining friendships, and that neither party is really trying to convince the other (Guerin, 2003). However, because the same may not be true in the more purposefully confrontational environment of the BNI, if this feature is in fact an intuitional aspect of informal conversation, any comprehension or productive processes associated with this feature may encounter difficulties. In this case IE1's politeness strategies may have been at odds with the confrontational character of the BNI context.

IE1's choice of words in turn 3 was designed to exhibit a considerable amount of politeness in the rejection of IE2's position. "I *have* to say" portrays the performance of the rejecting statement as regrettable and against the wishes of the speaker ('I don't want to tell you that I think you are wrong, the interviewer is making me'). However, this method may also display arrogance or condescension. As IE1 portrays his statement to be one with which he could live without making, this in-turn may expose IE1's belief that IE2's opinion and argument are so deficient that it is not worth the effort to put forth a counter-argument.

The use of the word "*gently*" is obvious in its intended action. It may be used to prepare the addressee for a negative statement and so palliate the negative force of the subsequently statement. The word 'gently' may display a desire for IE1 to appear regretful that he has to assert his disagreement with IE2, or, alternatively and less affable, that IE1 has to declare IE2's faulty belief in front of the viewing audience and assert IE2's ignorance regarding the matter. Also, the phrase "I *happen* to *think* you're wrong" may initially appear submissive and apologetic in its approach – the statement is merely a trivial 'thought' – only one man's opinion – which IE1 just 'happens' to think.

While these features may appear to have been used in an attempt to mitigate any hostile implications, the force achieved may be the opposite of the force intended. The phrase, "I *happen* to think" has an arrogant undertone of an expression of superiority as the phrase may convey the alternate illocutionary force; 'because I *think* you're wrong you *must* be wrong'. The use of the word 'happen' implies that the entire argument of the addressee could be denigrated with a single 'happening' of the speaker. In this case the

achieved perlocutionary force of the utterance may have been against the intended scheme of the speaker. Therefore, there may be an alternative explanation for the miscommunication. IE1's statement may have implied a power asymmetry between IE1 and IE2, as such hedging and indirectness (eg. "gently", "I happen to think") are often used to mask such power differentials (Ferris, 1997). In this case, the miscommunication may have been the result of IE2 misinterpreting IE1's attempt at mitigating his negative statement for an implied yet arrogant expression of his perceived dominance over IE2.

If this process is assumed to be in effect, the statement by IE2 in the 5th turn may have therefore, been insincere. IE2 may have been aware of the intended illocutionary force of the initial statement (that it was meant only as a broad 'sum up' of IE1's position). However, the fact that IE1 made such an obvious and blatantly unnecessary remark, a remark that taken out of context may seem offensive or belittling, and because IE2 was aware of the huge audience that may be watching on their televisions, IE2 may have used the statement in turn 3 to cause IE1 to appear foolish in the eyes of the viewers.

IE1's reaction in turn 5 to IE2's statement in turn 4 shows that IE1 may have interpreted IE2's statement: "Yes I know you do, I hear you, I listen" as sincere whether it was meant to be or not. Feeling foolish, IE1, in turn 5, attempted to explain his perceived faux pas by beginning to refer to a distant request made by the interviewer to summarize IE1's opinion: "Timmy just wanted me to..." However, possibly realising the illocutionary force of IE2's statement in turn 4 as a form of mockery, the attempt to justify IE1's faux par was abandoned before completion. This effectively put an end to IE1's embarrassing situation.

Shift in footing

Each participant is aware, to some degree, of the unique organisational features of the BNI. However, the degree to which an interviewer or interviewee uses or conforms to any particular feature will depend on how relevant that feature is to that participant at that specific point in the conversation (Tzanne, 1999). In this case, the unique contextual components of the BNI must be analysed in terms of their perceived relevance to both interviewees as they negotiate meaning during the conversation. This negotiation is expressed in the form of the participants' shift in topic or footing during the conversation.

As a result, certain miscommunications may be explained as the result of a participant's sudden and unannounced shift in the direction of a conversation or change of topic or footing.

Misunderstandings are created as a result of a listener's tendency to assume that the speaker continues to speak topically, that is, in relation to the existing topic framework, when the speaker is actually attempting to introduce a new topic or enact a separate conversational action such as the encapsulating statement. In the case of the above miscommunication, it may be argued that in turn 3 IE1 performed a shift in footing whereby the nature of the conversation suddenly changed direction from a more specific conversation about definite concepts to a single, broad, all-encompassing, statement. IE2 may have failed to realise IE1's shift in footing and, assuming that IE1's utterance was still following the current direction of the conversation, misinterpreted IE1's utterance in turn 3. Therefore, the miscommunication may have been the result of IE2's misinterpretation of the force of turn 3 as it was intended by IE1.

This shift in footing may also be explained in terms of the particular role each participant inhabits, and the relevance of that role to discourse at particular times during the interview. Each participant in this conversation inhabits a number of roles. The two main roles that the interviewees are involved in are that of interviewee and Clergyman. The role of 'interviewee' is temporary, while 'Clergyman' can be thought of as a more stable role. Each role will generate specific inferences and effect the production and interpretation of each interviewee's utterances in specific ways (Tzanne, 1999). This will depend on which role is most relevant for each participant at a particular point in time, and which role each participant believes the other to be currently enacting. In adopting the role of the interviewer and making an encapsulating statement regarding his opinion, IE1 was enacting a particular aspect of the BNI as the relevance of that aspect became more pronounced and more necessary. Miscommunication can be created when the listener fails to realise that the speaker has moved from one role to another in the course of the same conversation. In this example, IE2 may have failed to realise that IE1 had moved from the role of Clergyman making statements about his beliefs to the role of interviewee performing a function of the BNI.

Concluding remarks

In this example, the mental processes of both IE1 and IE2 were governed by assumptions and misassumptions regarding the context of the conversation (Hilton, 1995). The memories searched and the inferences drawn were a product of the BNI context. More specifically, the functional structure of the BNI, as well as the presence of a fourth party (the audience), may have played a part in the resulting miscommunication. Consequently, the processes of conversational inference that shaped this miscommunication may not necessarily have been aimless or defective in some way but rather a reflection of the goal-oriented nature of the interview, where speakers must compromise between following mundane conversational conventions and specific contextual conventions (Hilton, 1995). In this case a trade off may have been made between abiding by Searle's preparatory condition for a statement (Searle, 1969) or Grice's Maxim of quantity (Grice, 1975), and the inherent contextual features of the BNI that may invalidate these conversational principles, such as the repetitive nature of opinion statements or the informational needs of the viewing audience.

An interviewee who is not aligned to these seemingly contradictory conversational principles of the BNI context may assume that all the information given must be relevant. In the case of IE1, the miscommunication may not have been the result of a failure to apply customary rules to the information expressed, but to the overly enthusiastic application of the distinct rules of the context in which IE1 was speaking. The seemingly irrational nature of IE1's remark may be considered rational after taking these assumptions regarding the context of the conversation and prior processes of conversational inference into account.

MC-2:

Face-to-Face: 9:30pm Thursday, 11th Sep 2003, TV ONE.

Interviewer (IR): Kim Hill

Interviewee (IE): Nandor Tanczos- New Zealand Green Party Member of Parliament, dread locked Rastafarian, and campaigner for cannabis law reform.

This miscommunication occurred after an add break. The previous 6 interviewer turns were on the topic of Tanczos' hair, the religion to which Tanczos belongs, and the role of cannabis within that religion.

1- IR: All right… If cannabis… is sufficiently prosecuted for you to want to decriminalise it… why haven't *you* been busted?

2- IE: Umm… that's just the way it's been… I guess…

3- IR: And… my point is that the police aren't *actually* implementing the *law*…so why not worry about something else?

TST= 1
MU= 2
RA= 3

Unjustified conditional

The original statement by the IR contained a condition followed by a rhetorical question designed to falsify the condition. This was a falsification of the *'if'*-clause: "If cannabis… is sufficiently prosecuted for you to want to decriminalise it… why haven't you been busted?" This can be transcribed into algebraic form as: [If A is B then why is C not D?] A=cannabis B=significantly prosecuted for you to want to decriminalise it, C=you, D=been busted. However, the resulting perlocutionary force of this utterance did not evince its illocutionary force. The intended perlocutionary force of the statement was not simply the IE answering the question: "Why haven't you been busted?" (Why is C not D?) Or the illocutionary force: 'I request a reason to explain why you have not been

busted because by your belief you should have been'. The intended illocutionary force of the utterance was a lot more abstract and needed extra mental processing in addition to that which was required in order to answer the simple question part of the initial utterance.

From the original counterfactual conditional statement we need to infer the IR's implied meaning or illocutionary force: 'If cannabis were significantly prosecuted for you to want to decriminalise it (Q)...then... you would have been busted (P)' [If Q then P]. Unlike real conditionals, counterfactual conditionals presuppose that propositions mentioned in the '*if*'-clause did not occur and propositions denied in the '*if*'-clause did occur (Grundy, 1995). That is, not Q (A is not B). The proposition P (C is D) is entailed by the proposition Q (A is B), as whenever Q is true, P is also true. The truth of Q presupposes the truth of P.

The IR may have assumed this presupposition to be an indisputable fact ('if cannabis is significantly prosecuted for you to want to decriminalise it, you would have been busted'). Then, from this statement of the assumed fact, we go to: 'You have not been busted... therefore cannabis is not significantly prosecuted for you to want to decriminalise it' [not P therefore not Q] OR [C is not D therefore A is not B]. Thus the intended illocutionary force of the utterance may be to make more apparent to the IE the fact that cannabis is not prosecuted to high enough degree to justify his desire to want it decriminalised. If all conditions hold true then it stands to reason that the IE is behaving illogically.

As well as explicit questions, an interviewer will often make statements during an interview that contain allegations and expect the interviewee to defend or explain these allegations or comment on the statements (Clayman, 1992). Therefore, in the context of the conversation the perlocutionary force of the utterance may be to get the IE to comment on why he appears to be acting illogically. That is, why, even though cannabis is not sufficiently prosecuted, he insists there is a problem with the level of prosecution of cannabis users. However, because individuals focus on the antecedent possibilities of conditionals, certain inferences are difficult (Johnson-Laird & Byrne, 2002). Thus the IE may have had difficulty interpreting the purpose of the second clause of the conditional statement because he was momentarily distracted by the first clause.

The question in the 3rd turn took the form of an impositive (to establish as

something to be obeyed or complied with) with the direct force of a question, and the indirect force of a suggestion ("...So why not worry about something else"). The repair utterance also contained an initial statement in the first part of the utterance, similar in form to that of the trouble source turn, that was used to invalidate the IE's argument. The phrase "the police aren't *actually* implementing the law..." was a clarification of the intended force of the initial question. Although the repair utterance in the 3rd turn was posed in a similar form to that of the trouble source turn, it was more apparent than the initial statement, and left less to be inferred by the IE: the expression of the force of the utterance went from '*If* A is B....' in turn 1, to '*Because* A is not B...' in turn 3. However, it was not the reason why the IE does not worry about something else (why) or the subject of the impositive (something else) that is contentious. "...So why not worry about something else" has the illocutionary force: "Why worry about this?"

Mutual beliefs

The intended illocutionary force of the utterance was: 'Cannabis is not significantly prosecuted for you to want to decriminalise it, so why do you think it is worth spending time on the issue?' Although the locutionary force of the initial utterance described a question directive ("why haven't you been busted?"), with a precondition appearing in the same sentence but separated by a short pause, the IE replied to the utterance only in relation to the question "...why haven't you been busted" and not the precondition "If cannabis... is sufficiently prosecuted for you to want to decriminalise it...".

Perhaps the reason for this is that it was not a mutually held belief that P will happen if Q is true. It may be that only the IR regarded this as a fact. In other words; only the IR has a simplified view of the issue in which; if the police prosecute drug users, anyone who uses drugs will be prosecuted. While the IE held the belief that the likelihood of a certain person being prosecuted for drug use does not depend simply on whether or not the police prosecute drug users, but instead on other factors such as the race or economic status of the drug user. In this case Q did not presuppose P ('Even if cannabis is sufficiently prosecuted for you to want to decriminalise it, you still may not get busted' [The fact that A is B does not necessarily mean that C will be D]. In this case, the IE may have applied a different schematic and general knowledge, in his interpretation of the premises, to imagine the possibilities under consideration (Johnson-Laird & Byrne, 2002).

In some cases, alternate interpretations may be justifiable in the face of an ambiguous utterance, while in others the propensity of participants to comprehend an utterance according to their perception of the topic may be at the expense of making good sense (Tzanne, 1999).

The inability of each participants to accurately consider the viewpoint of the other may be attributed to the *false consensus* effect (Ross, Greene, & House, 1977). If the IR believed the IE to have the same or similar knowledge structure as herself, the IR might have automatically assumed that the IE would have gone through the same deductive reasoning process and, in turn, construed the same illocutionary force as herself (C is not D, well that must mean A is not B). In general, it has been found that people are fairly good at making judgements about others' knowledge and beliefs; however, these perceptions may still be biased by what the perceiver believes (Fussell, & Krauss, 1992). Research has also suggested that when speakers monitor their own utterances they do not act as unbiased observers, instead they may be likely to underestimate the ambiguity of their own utterances, and overestimate the effectiveness of any intended disambiguating features of their utterance (Keysar & Henley, 2002).

Frame of reference

An examination of the nature of the conversation leading up to the trouble-source-turn may help to uncover a reason for the miscommunication. At the end of the session just prior to that containing the trouble-source-turn, immediately before going to an add break, the forthcoming segment was introduced in advance with the 'teaser'; "After the break... Will Nandor ever get his hair cut? And what's he doing in Babylon anyway?" When interviewers describe interviewees in this way, they select certain features of the interviewee's public identity, bringing these into prominence, and necessarily not attending to others. Through these selective descriptions, interviewers formulate the features of an interviewee's identity that matter for a particular part of the interview and justify any forthcoming questions (Roth, 1998).

Because the topic of the conversation based on these descriptions plays a large part in regulating the information that the IE may use when comprehending each statement (Tzanne, 1999), the IE may have altered his conversational schemata according to the change in topic as signalled by the IR in the introduction to the new segment or

description of the IE. Therefore, the pre-introduction to the next interview session prior to the ad-break in the above example had the effect of outlining the basic topic of the upcoming conversation and therefore the concepts and ideas that may be explored and the intention of any questions posed by the IR. In this case the teaser had the effect of outlining a conversation regarding the IE's personal life.

Following the break, as indicated by the IR's pre-introduction, the next 6 IR turns were on the topic of the IE's personal life, i.e., his hairstyle, his drug habit, and how they relate to his religion. Although all IR turns prior to the ad-break were on the topic of the legalisation of cannabis, the ad-break had fulfilled its task as a natural signal of the progression from one topic to another. The conversational schema was firmly fixed on a more personal topic.

The creation of certain misunderstandings in discourse relates to the participants' failure to follow the way discourse proceeds as a succession of topics (or topic frameworks) or conversely, a participants' inability to adequately mark a change in topic (Tzanne, 1999). That is, the IE's ability (or inability) to adequately manage the change in topics from "the IE's personal life" back to "the legalisation of cannabis", or the IR's success (or failure) at adequately signalling the various sequential changes in the topic during the interview.

After 6 IR turns on the personal topic there was an attempt made by the IR to signal an intended departure from the more personal conversational topic currently in effect to a new topic ("All right…", turn 1). By starting the utterance with the word 'all right' the IR may have intended to signal the deferral of any unresolved issues regarding the previous discourse and her intent to begin a new topic. As well as the word 'all right', the small pauses on either side of the words "…if cannabis…" may have been intended to isolate and so highlight the topic of the utterance as 'cannabis' instead of a more personal topic. However, as can be seen in the IE's reply in the second utterance, this did not accomplish its intended function. Perhaps because listeners exhibit a strong tendency to make sense of an utterance by selecting any discourse element (word, phrase utterance) that was produced directly before the utterance in question as relevant interpretative context (Tzanne, 1999), the IE remained in a personal conversational frame of mind and hence used a personal questioning schema as a basis for comprehension of the IR's utterance in the 2nd turn.

Topics may shift throughout the course of a conversation without always being clearly marked (Tzanne, 1999). An important aspect of communicator competence is being able to identify these shifts from the various cues in the preceding discourse. Nevertheless, because this conversation occurred in the atypical context of the BNI, where topics are normally more rigidly defined and organised because of the presence of the viewing audience who may not always be attentive (Yorke, 1997), this misunderstandings may have been created because of the relative obscurity of the topic shift signal given by the IR, and the interviewee's propensity to assume that the interviewer continued to speak topically, that is, in relation to the existing topic framework, when the interviewer was in fact attempting to introduce a new framework. A contributing factor to this particular miscommunication may have been the IR's lack of appreciation for the difficulty the IE may have had in recognising the topic shift. The miscommunication may have been created when the IR erroneously assumed coherence among elements which were viewed as unrelated by the IE. Alternatively, the IR, even in relation to normal BNI conventions and especially so when compared to mundane conversation, may have genuinely inadequately marked the topic shift.

Misinterpreted signals

The question was very abstract in any context. The desired illocutionary force as explained in the 3rd utterance, was not obvious from the locutionary force of the question. Because human processes of comprehension are designed to achieve the greatest possible cognitive effect for the smallest possible processing effort (Sperber, & Wilson, 1986), the simplest interpretation of the IR's utterance may have been the first to register; that is, in terms of the final question part of the turn and the communicative goal of the IE. Although the small pause between the clause: "... is sufficiently prosecuted for you to want to decriminalise it..." and "...why haven't you been busted?" may have been included as space to allow for the IE to process the first item of information before the item of information that it entailed was included, this did not succeed in its intended effect. The IE may have also placed emphasis on the word "you" in the IR's question, "...why haven't you been busted?" because he interpreted the question from a personal perspective. The interpreted illocutionary force may then have been in the nature of: 'Is it possible that *you* may be receiving special treatment by the police because of your

position as a member of parliament?' or 'What tactics do *you* use to avoid being caught by the police?'

Also, between a conditional clause and its ensuing question there is usually placed a word, such as '...then...' which can function as a connector between the two clauses. However, in this case such a word was absent. The absence of this word may have had a negative effect on the ease with which the IE could integrate the two clauses and comprehend the force of the conditional and the proposition it entailed. Conversation analysts may argue that because an utterance relies upon existing context for its production and interpretation while at the same time reshaping the context for the utterance that will follow, it is imperative that an addressee accurately comprehend the connection between the interpreted utterance and the utterances on which it was based (Heritage, 1984). The double clause nature of the IR's utterance was performed so that the first part (the conditional) would establish the relevant interpretive schemata for the second question part of the utterance. The IE's failure to comprehend the goal of the first, and the connection between the two may have played a part in the miscommunication.

The IR's choice of words in turn 1 may have been a contributing factor in the production of this particular miscommunication. The IR used separate words to refer to the verb of the conditional clause ("prosecuted") and the question clause ("busted"). This may have had an effect on the IE's willingness to comprehend the two different words as contributing to the same illocutionary force. Although the IR may have intended one word to be synonymous of the other, the two words are in fact distinct in meaning. While prosecuted means to bring a criminal action against, busted simply means to raid, search, or arrest (Collins Concise Dictionary, 1988) and does not invoke the same degree of seriousness. However, the difference in meaning may affect the validity of the conditional clause and its connection to the subsequent question.

Similarly, a shift in speech style from the more formal "prosecuted", to the more casual "busted" may be attributed to convergence, whereby the IR adapts her speech style to become more like her perceived image of the IE (Giles, & Smith, 1979; McAllister & Keisler, 1975). The reason for this phenomenon has been described as a speaker's desire to encourage further interaction and decrease the perceived differences between interlocutors. In the context of the BNI, this desire would appear especially justified. Also, as Nandor Tanczos is indisputably a distinctive character, the likelihood of

an interviewer having a similar personality would appear small. The extra effort expended by the IR in an attempt to encourage a stronger perception of similarity may have had the unfortunate consequence of obscuring the intended force of her utterance.

MC – 3:

Hardtalk: Thursday, 10th July 2003, BBC World.

Interviewer (IR): Tim Sebastian

Interviewee 1 (IE1): Reverend David Halloway: Founding Member- Reform

Interviewee 2 (IE2): Reverend Colin Coward: Director- Changing Attitude

IE1 is strongly against allowing homosexual clergymen in the Anglican Church. IE2 is strongly in favour of allowing homosexual clergymen in the Anglican Church.

1- IE1: "Not everything, every behaviour is compatible with being a Christian. I mean, greed is incompatible, theft is incompatible, murder is incompatible, and certain sexual behaviours are incompatible".

2- IR: "Maybe a few greedy clergymen are tolerated aren't they? Wouldn't you say?"

3- IE1: "Yes, but if you, the point is not if you, if you do something wrong and then repent, the point is, if you teach that something is wrong…"

4- (IR cuts in with new topic)

No. 1	No. 2
TST= 1	TST=1
MU= 2	MU= 3
RA= 3	RA=No attempt

IE1's subversive tactic

In turn 1, IE1 made the point that living a Christian life automatically disqualifies a person from committing certain acts. Greed, theft, and murder were used as examples of the types of behaviour that are incompatible with Christian life. Included alongside greed, theft, and murder; was the vaguely defined category: "certain sexual behaviours". The certain sexual practice implicitly referred to as incompatible with a Christian life, was, of course, homosexuality.

By including homosexuality in the same group as Murder and theft, IE1 made

the statement that homosexuality is a sin on the same standing as murder and theft in terms of the degree to which it should be rejected and denounced by the Anglican Church, if the decision were made based on the principles established by the Bible. Although in turn 1, IE1 did not use the term 'homosexuality' directly; we automatically infer that this is what he was referring to. This tactic may have had the effect (intentional or inadvertent) of derogating homosexuality, as, by not referring to homosexuality directly, IE1 could have implied that the word 'homosexuality' was too offensive for him to mention. Or, perhaps by not giving the word 'homosexuality' the space or effort IE2 more than likely thinks it deserves, and instead discarding of it into the broad category of "certain sexual practices", IE1's utterance had the effect of diminishing the reality of the concept 'homosexuality' as a distinct and tangible phenomenon. Also, by referring to homosexuality as "certain sexual behaviours", homosexuality was encapsulated in a broader category, which is likely to include deviant or harmful types of sexual behaviour such as child abuse.

By including homosexuality in a list of other much more profoundly incompatible behaviours (i.e., murder), IE1's utterance had the effect of enclosing the one behaviour that could be disputed in a layer of other behaviours, the incompatibility of which no one would debate. The opinion that homosexuality is incompatible with Christian life was therefore shielded from debate. More specifically, the utterance institutes an implied presupposition which states: 'If you agree that none of the previously mentioned behaviours are compatible with Christian life, then you must also agree that homosexuality is not compatible with Christian life'. Because of this, the negation of one type of behaviour will cause the negation of all the others. Therefore, the illocutionary force of the utterance may be described as: 'If you think that homosexuality is an acceptable type of behaviour for a Christian then you would probably also consider acts such as murder and theft to be reasonable types of behaviour'. The utterance also has a sarcastic quality in that it implies the notion: 'Because I have to tell you otherwise, you (a person who believes that homosexuality is acceptable) must believe that Christian life will allow murder and theft'.

IR's subversive tactic

The IR designed his utterance in turn 2: "Maybe a few greedy clergymen are tolerated,

"Aren't they? Wouldn't you say?" as a *Tag question:* This has the indirect force of a reported assumption plus a question or a request for confirmation. The question tags: "aren't they?" ("Aren't they!") and "Wouldn't you say?" are used to coerce a positive reply from IE1 by insinuating that IE's agreement with the proceeding statement should essentially be automatic. By doubling the number of tag questions that follow the statement, the pressure on IE1 to concur with the statement may have been amplified and the likelihood of dissent may have been minimized.

The extra tag-question "Wouldn't you say" may have been added by the IR in order to safeguard against a possible ambiguity in the previous tag-question which could have been interpreted as "Aren't they?" with the force of a reported assumption plus a question or "Aren't they!" with the force of a statement plus a request for conformation (Bach & Harnish, 1979). As will be mentioned later, this distinction relates to the role of the tag-question as a neutrality preservation device. The IR's use of the word: "Maybe" at the beginning of turn 2 may relate to a reduction in the significance of the utterance and, therefore, to less chance of being chastised for being wrong. In this case, the word "Maybe" hints at the IR's uncertainty about the legitimacy of his statement.

In turn 2 the IR disputes the point made by IE1, that greed is not compatible with life as a Christian, by claiming that greedy clergymen are tolerated. Therefore, if one type of behaviour can be proven false, others may also be proven false. The utterance in turn 2 was probably designed to limit the effectiveness of IE1's proceeding utterance and encourage debate by introducing the idea that greed and therefore homosexuality may not be incompatible with Christian life. Although the IR disputed the least immoral behaviour from the examples given by IE1, the IR may have realised that this statement was inaccurate (therefore the "Maybe"). However, it was designed in a way that would help to limit the likelihood of disagreement and encourage acceptance as a justifiable argument. And this is the effect is had.

In the 3rd turn IE1 attempted an expositive; that is, the clarification of reason or an argument (Bach & Harnish, 1979), by disputing the difference between the terms "compatible" and "tolerated". However, by the time IE1 managed to compose and execute the rectifying words, the damage had already been done. Initially IE1 submitted to the IR's tag questions and began his utterance with "Yes, but if you..." Before IE1 could solidify his argument, the IR took the opportunity to close the debate by

interrupting with another point. In this way, the IR's utterance achieved its desired outcome of throwing doubt on IE1's proceeding statement. This situation is demonstrative of how the functional conventions and restrictions regarding the right to ask questions, the obligation to answer questions, and also the methods that are employed to manage topic maintenance and shift can result in the institutional setting of the BNI departing sharply from ordinary conversation (Greatbatch, 1986).

The BNI turn-taking system has the potential to alter the participants' opportunities for action, and to rework the interpretation of almost every aspect of the point that is made (Drew, & Heritage, 1992). In the above example, the prerogative of the interviewer to begin a new topic at his discretion, even during an interviewees' turn, facilitated the IR in the realization of the perlocutionary force of turn 2. In mundane forms of conversation, one participant may not be entitled to end another's argument by spontaneously moving onto the next topic while the participant currently speaking is in the middle of a vindicating explanation. However, this entitlement may be assigned to the interviewer as part of his role description. In BNIs, the interviewer will normally use this manoeuvre of moving on to the next question or an entirely new subject without evaluating or commenting on the interviewee's answer to the previous question as a routine act in order to express a neutral position (Ekstrom, 2001).

While the IR attempted to reignite the controversy surrounding the issue of whether homosexual behaviour is compatible with being a Christian, at the same time, IE1 attempted to control his self-presentation and maintain the illocutionary force he had intended. Although in turn 3, IE1 struggled to specify his exact meaning, there is an identifiable message in his utterance, a meaning that will substantiate his claim, and a meaning that was already evident in his initial statement. There is a difference between tolerating a type of behaviour ("to treat with indulgence or forbearance" (Collin Concise Dictionary, 1988)) and accepting that the behaviour is compatible ("able to exist together harmoniously" (Collin Concise Dictionary, 1988)). If IE1's point was to be disputed, the debate should have focused on the original word: "incompatible" rather than the novel word "tolerated". If this were the case, IE1's point could not be so easily refuted. Because the opposite of incompatible is compatible, or able to exist together harmoniously, it could easily be argued that neither greed, murder, nor theft are compatible with the Christian Church.

Although the statement-question posed by the IR in turn 2 missed the point that IE1 was trying to make in turn 1 (misinterpreted the term "incompatible" to suit his own needs), this may have been a deliberate manoeuvre rather than an actual misunderstanding - although IE1 did not recognise it as such. Therefore, it may be argued that the miscommunication was due to the fact that turn 2 flouts Grice's maxim of relevance (Grice, 1975), yet did not perform a particular conversational act usually associated with an obvious flout of a maxim. As well as uttering the words of the tag-question, in order for an utterance to justify its illocutionary force, it must have a number of other attributes that qualify it for its task (Austin, 1962). "There must exist an accepted conventional procedure, having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words, by certain person, in certain circumstances" (Bach & Harnish, 1979, p. 176). Conventionally, if a participant in a conversation is to disagree with a statement made by another participant, the disagreement must be made according to the deficiency in the original statement. However, in the above example, the question of whether greedy clergymen are tolerated in the Anglican Church has nothing to do with the issue of whether greedy behaviour is compatible with the vocation of Anglican clergyman.

It is obvious that murder, theft, and greed are not exactly the virtuous forms of behaviour expected from an Anglican clergyman. The fact that the statement, according to its locutionary force, was already obvious to the person who was making the statement and the addressees of the statement may imply that, in this case, the point that the IR was debating was not IE1's original point, but instead a slightly different point. Also, because the locutionary force of IE1's statement was beyond all but the most unreasonable refutation, at least while using IE1's own words, if the IR was to challenge the point, maintain the controversy, and prolong the interview, he needed to create an alternate angle; hence "tolerated" rather than "compatible". Therefore, while IE1 meant: "You can't be a clergyman and be greedy, a thief, or a murderer". The IR downgraded this "can't" down to "probably shouldn't". Although this was done in a clandestine manner in a way that may not have been noticed by IE1.

Impact of BNI regulations

In the course of an interview, interviewers encounter a variety of disputable issues, issues

about which they may express an alternative opinion, interpretation, perspective, or complete disagreement (Clayman, 1992). For example, in order to expose a more complete or unbiased explication of an issue, an interviewer may wish to express doubt regarding an interviewees' statement. However, this disagreement will normally need to be substantiated by a possible alternative opinion. Rather than simply committing him or herself to a particular perspective, the interviewer may choose to be more cautious of discrete with the expression of this alternate opinion; for example, by delaying the statements in various ways (Maynard, 1991), or by designing their statements so that they appear to reflect personal experience as opposed to definite facts (Pomerantz, 1984b, as cited in Clayman, 1992). By using such moderating devices speakers can exercise varying degrees of caution when expressing their opinions. In the process, they can achieve a variety of practical ends, such as minimising interpersonal disagreement and moderating critical, accusatory and other sensitive activities (Clayman, 1992), while maximising agreement (Maynard, 1991).

This opinion moderating process is also an active part of one of the most important aspects of the interviewer's professional commitment. Like other journalists, news interviewers are supposed to remain objective in their work. This means, among other things, that they should not allow their personal opinions to affect the interviewing process; to the best of their ability, they are supposed to remain neutral as they interact with public figures (Greatbatch, 1992). This requirement necessitates the need for communicative procedures that can function to display this neutrality while still allowing room for the interviewer to pursue an interviewee for information, information that may, at times, be both contentious and incriminating.

This need for neutrality does not mean that interviewers cannot produce statement formatted utterances, such as assertions; however when they do, they usually embed them within questioning turns (Clayman, 1992). Also, interviewers commonly shift footings during their production, thereby placing some degree of distance between themselves and more overtly opinionated remarks (Clayman, 1992). Part of the evidence for this theory that Interviewers shift footings at specific junctures as a way of adopting a neutral stance stems from the fact that interviewers frequently take measures when making assertions or expressing opinions of interviewee statements such as shifting their footing during relatively controversial opinion statements (such as in this case where the

IE is claiming that greedy clergymen are tolerated in the Anglican Church-and thereby claiming that homosexual clergymen should also be tolerated), and renewing their footing shifts during specific controversial words ("Maybe" in close proximity to "Greedy", and "Aren't they?" in close proximity to "tolerated"). Interviewers may also avoid affiliating with or disaffiliating from the statements they report (Clayman, 1992). In this case, the clause "Wouldn't you say" shifts responsibility for the IR's statement from the IR to IE1.

MC – 4:

Face-to-Face: 9:30pm Thursday, 18th Sep 2003, TV ONE.

Interviewer (IR): Kim Hill

Interviewee (IE): Dr Tony Conner: Crop and Food Researcher.

The subject of the interview is the lifting of the moratorium on the culture of Genetically Engineered organisms.

1- IE: The way any gene works is not so much dependent on where it comes from as what it does in the plant… So for example…

2- IR: Alright

3- IE: plant breeders have been breeding for pest disease resistance for *decades*… and we understand a lot about that… and these genes will just do the sa have the same *effect* on the crop.

4- IR: But faster.

5- IE: …*Producing* them will be faster…

6- IR: …Right.

7- IE: Yeah, but not necessarily the crops will grow [fa]

8- IR: [No no] no no no… but I mean it's a fast track to get to your saying where we would have got any way forty years down the track.

9- IE: The the procedures of G.M. will allow things to be achieved more efficiently and faster yes.

TST= 4
MU= 7
RA= 8

Conversational topic

This miscommunication was the result of a disparity in the level of expertise between the communicative partners relative to the subject of the interview. On one side was a crop and food researcher who has a doctorate in the subject being discussed. On the other side was a professional broadcast news interviewer who, while experienced in terms of the *context* of the conversation, had no obvious technical expertise, apart from that which was relative to her job, in terms of the *topic* of the conversation, that is: genetic engineering (G.E.).

Both parties in the conversation were well aware of the controversial nature of the interview topic. Because a large number of people in the community are passionate about the subject, it is important for those who speak either in favour of or against genetic engineering that they portray their position in a manner that will best help their cause. For the IE this means portraying G.E. in the most favourable light, for the IR this means striving to portray a neutral stance, that is: neither in favour of nor against G.E. Therefore, when formulating a statement (whether in the form of a question or a reply) the speaker (whether the IR or the IE) needs to take into account the impression each statement will make on the viewing audience as well as the immediate addressee. However, one characteristic that contributes to the controversy of the topic is that G.E. is a highly technical subject. Often when highly technical subjects are discussed with the use of non-technical language or when they are simplified for the sake of listeners who are less conversant in the area in question, the same point may be easily manipulated in order to project onto it a more positive or negative frame of light.

The statement made by the IE in turn 3 was composed in a manner so as to simplify an otherwise complicated process and at the same time place it in a positive frame of light. The IE made the point that plant breeders have been manipulating plant genes for decades and in turn implied that this manipulation has resulted in no negative consequences. This was done in order to equate contemporary G.E., which generally has an ominous image, with historical selective breeding, which generally has an innocuous image.

The statement however, had no part contained which explained why G.E. was more advantageous than selective breeding, only why it was no more harmful. For the sake of the viewing audience and any opinions regarding the benefits of G.E they may at

that moment be forming, such a statement would seem necessary. Perhaps with this fact in mind, the IR added this detail extemporaneously and in a manner that made it appear to have been made on behalf of the IE once the IE had completed the point he had intended.

Misinterpreted ambiguous word

The IR may not have added the words "But faster" if it were not for the implicit presence of the viewing audience, and her perception of their needs at the time. The statement made by the IR in turn 4 was, in effect, analogous to: 'Genetic engineering is much the same as selective breeding, but genetic engineering is a much faster process than selective breeding'. The fact that such a complex statement was compacted into only two words may suggest that the IR's utterance in turn 4 can be said to have violated Grice's *Maxim of Manner* (Grice, 1975): 'Be brief, but avoid ambiguity and obscurity of expression'. Although the utterance was brief, it was also very obscure and contained a sufficient amount of ambiguity to lead to a miscommunication.

The problem arose when the IE, upon hearing the IR's supplemental information in turn 4, misjudged the IR's level of understanding of his initial statement. 'The effect will be faster'. What is the effect, a disease resistant *variety* of plant or plants with disease resistance? From the repair that was made by the IR in turn 8, the IE appears to have misinterpreted the word 'faster' in turn 4 as referring to the speed of growth of an individual plant when in fact the IR was referring to the speed with which a plant *variety* will go from being non-resistant to resistant.

The word *faster* is a deictic regarding speed. That is, the word 'faster' describes a judgement relative to the original speed, and the possible eventual degree of speed is dependent on the context in which it is spoken. However, in this case 'faster' may imply a phenomenon observable to the naked eye. Therefore, the word 'faster' may be more commonly associated with the growth of an actual plant rather than the process of manipulating genes and changing a genotype in the space of a single generation.

The misinterpretation may be due to the IE's preconceived belief that the public have a dramatically bizarre view of the consequences of genetic engineering (not discouraged by billboards showing doctored photos of a woman with 4 breasts connected to a milking machine) and may believe in plants that can grow super fast like a strangling vine from a horror movie after their genes have been artificially altered. After realising

the possibility of misinterpretation on the part of the viewing public, the IE quickly quashed any chance the audience had of validating such ideas by immediately correcting even the smallest possibility of a misunderstanding.

Preserving face

The IR's point in turn 4 was presented in a fashion that would cause any disagreement with the IE to have dire consequences. Turn 4 was not made in the manner of a question, even in terms of the usual open-ended statement-type questions often used by IRs. It was committed to its immediate acceptance and agreement as it was made to appear as part of the IE's preceding statement and therefore not up for debate. An unfortunate effect of the IE's correction of the IR's supplemental point in turn 4 was that, even though the IE may not have been suggesting that the IR misunderstood his exact point in turns 1 and 3, rather, that the viewing audience may have misunderstood the IR's point in turn 4, the IE nevertheless appeared to be making a judgement concerning the adequacy of the IR's general knowledge regarding G.E. This was done in an obvious fashion that was likely to result in the IR's loss of face in front of the viewing public.

The tentative nature of the repair attempt was indicative of the fact that the IE was not certain that the IR had misunderstood his statement, or at least was not eager to correct it, possibly because of the negative impression it might apply to the IR's general knowledge or possibly because the IE may cause himself to appear less astute for not being able to understand the point of the IR's turn. The IE made two attempts to clarify the words in turn 4 in an attempt to prevent either party from losing face. The first attempt in turn 5 received agreement from the IR ("Right"), however, this agreement did not signal any realisation on the part of the IR of any uncertainty on the part of the IE regarding the IR's words in turn 4 and the possible miscomprehension of these words by the viewing audience. Perhaps because of this, the IE opted to make the clarification absolutely certain by adding turn 7.

When the IR realised that the IE had misunderstood her words in turn 4, she quickly and unequivocally expressed her rejection of the IE's alternate interpretation of her words (IR turn 8: "No no no no no") almost as if she had taken exception to the IE's suggestion that she did not understand the IE's point. This was done in order to dissuade any possible ideas among the listeners that she did not understand the IE's initial

statement in turn 3 and prevent any loss of respectability.

Disagreement over relevance

The processes of conversational inference made by the IR and IE were a reflection of the rationality of normal social interaction and communication, where trade-offs have to be made, for example, between explicitness and economy in communication (Hilton, 1995) ("But faster", rather than a more definitive statement). However, because of the atypical context of the conversation, the processes regulating these operations may have had a negative effect on coherence. Each participant expressed in words what they thought was relevant and necessary at that particular time for that particular purpose. Consequently, as in everyday communication, the IR and IE transformed the information given explicitly by their communicative partner by adding information they assumed to be relevant but omitted by a speaker who assumed that such information was implicitly shared, not relevant to the goal of the utterance, or a logical inference that listeners would be able to deduce from the information given.

The IE may have omitted explicitly expressing the fact that genetic engineering is a faster process than selective breeding because of a belief that it was already mutually shared knowledge; that it did not effect the point he was attempting to make and was not even considered; or because the fact that G.E. is faster should be able to be deduced from the information given. While the IR may have included the point "But faster" because she believed the information was not mutually shared by the listeners; necessary for the realisation of the goal of the speaker; or not logically inferable from the information given. The IR may have omitted the fact that by 'faster' she meant 'faster process' rather than 'faster plant growth' because she assumed that this was also mutually understood or able to be inferred from the information given. Or, perhaps because of her experience in the context of the conversation, the IR was able to give more credit to the viewing audience and trust that they will understand the meaning of her utterance.

Difficulty finding common ground

Situational factors like the participants' social identities; e.g., scientist or concerned citizen, or their institutional roles; e.g., interviewee, interviewer, or viewing audience, played an important part in the comprehension and production of speech during the above miscommunication. The effect these factors had on communication was a function of

each individual's perception of these elements and how they may relate to the situation (Hodgetts, & Habermann, 1997). The IR and IE may have used prior assumptions regarding the social identity or roles of their fellow interlocutor and the audience in order to predict what they were likely to know, or how they were likely to interpret the utterance (Fussell, & Krauss, 1992).

By remaining conscious of the fact that an utterance is designed for particular addressees speakers and hearers will be better prepared to deal with their own and each other's action as coherent and rational (Wilson, 1991). Because every individual is a member of a number of social categories, both temporary institutional categories and more stable categories, knowing that a person belongs to a particular category can allow one to predict some of the things that that person is likely to know. The IE may be categorised institutionally as an interviewer (chosen as a speaking representative), or more permanently as a Food and Crop scientist, New Zealander, adult, male. The IR may be considered institutionally although more permanently as an interviewer, New Zealander, adult, female. The viewing audience: a broad and unspecified variety of people, however, because of the nature of the conversation, may be assumed to consist of mostly mature New Zealanders who are concerned with genetic engineering.

When reasoning about what each category of participants may be likely to know, interlocutors may rely on a variety of inference heuristics and simplifying knowledge structures, such as schemata and stereotypes (Markus & Zajonc, 1985). These schemata and stereotypes may assist the task of drawing inferences but may also cause problems as biases lead to misjudgements about what a certain category of people may be expected to know or even errors in assigning participants to categories (Kahneman, Slovic & Tversky, 1982, as cited in Wilson, 1991). From the IE's point of view, anyone who is not an expert in the subject area may fall into the same group, perhaps designated as 'the uninformed public'.

This keenly perceived difference in technical expertise between the IE and all other participants (but more specifically on the part of the IE) may imply an inability on the part of each participant to reach the same interpretation regarding the meaning of ambiguous or unspecified words (Hodgetts, & Habermann, 1997). Graumann's 'divergence hypothesis' states that participants who are unable to share the same perspective tend to interpret the same utterance differently. In this case,

miscommunication may have occurred because the participants had widely disparate amounts of knowledge and expertise and were discussing a highly technical subject (Graumann & Sommer, 1988).

As well as difficulty with finding common ground regarding the level of complexity, participants often find it difficult to manage and control the production of misleading or defective inference and implication in situations where reliable agreements cannot be made about the various motives, intentions, and interpretations of one another's actions (Mortensen, 1997). The fact that the IE was not immediately aware of the task that the IR's utterance "But faster" in turn 4 was attempting to perform on behalf of the IE, the IE's tentative correction of the perceived error, and the IR's failure to immediately register the IE's uncertainty regarding this task as expressed in turn 5 were manifestations of this lack of mutual agreement.

MC – 5:

Face-to-Face: 9:30pm Thursday, 11th Sep 2003, TV ONE.

Interviewer (IR): Kim Hill

Interviewee (IE): Nandor Tanczos- New Zealand Green Party Member of Parliament, dread locked Rastafarian, and campaigner for cannabis law reform.

1- IR: Why do we need another drug? I mean we are phenomenally bad already with dealing with the ones we've got alcohol, food, cigarettes, we need another one?

2- IE: Well, I think the false assumption in that question is that it is '*another drug*'. Cannabis is already here, it's widespread, it's the third most popular drug in the country

3- IR: Another legal drug.

4- IE: Well, the point is that cannabis is widely available, it is as available as it can get, and in fact, for young people; cannabis is more available than alcohol.

TST= 1
MU= 2
RA= 3

Misinterpreted force

This miscommunication appears straightforward and self-explanatory in terms of what went wrong. That is, the IE's interpretation of the illocutionary force of, and consequential reply to the initial utterance seems to be in disagreement with the IR's intended perlocutionary force of her utterance. However, the underlying forces that prompted the miscommunication may be more complex. These forces may be shown to relate to the predetermined opinions and beliefs of the participants and how they effect each participant's interpretations of the other's utterances.

The miscommunication may have been due to a mismatch between the intended force of the question and the IE's understanding of this force. The question: "Why do we

need another drug?" could have been interpreted as: 'Why do we need to legalise another drug?' or 'Why do we need to introduce another drug?' In turn 2 it appears that the IE raised objections to the legitimacy of the question on the basis of the current availability of cannabis. Therefore, the IE can be shown to have understood the question as; 'Why do we need to introduce another drug?' As the IE points out, this would be a faulty question due to the fact that cannabis is not a new drug. However, in the 3rd turn the IR clarifies the intended force of the question to mean; 'why do we need another *legal* drug?'

There are a variety of factors that may have caused the possible disparity in interpretations of the initial utterance. First of all, the exact nature of the verb: "need" from the question "Why do we need another drug?" is abstract and may range in meaning from need (why is another drug necessary) to want. The word "need" could also refer to the need to legalise or the need to introduce. As well as this, the term "another drug" is indeterminate and could refer specifically to cannabis or drugs in general. However, it may be argued that the word "need" more specifically relates to "introduce" as opposed to "legalise", as the word "introduce" has a stronger innate relationship with the word "need" than does the word "legalise" and would more likely be the verb activated by the word "need". The new drug (introduced or legalised) may more likely refer to cannabis than a non-specific drug that is currently yet to be introduced or legalised, as the topic of the interview was 'the decriminalisation of cannabis' not the 'decriminalisation of another drug'. Consequently, if an understanding of the topic of the interview formed the foundation of the interpretive schema in use at the time of the first utterance, the word "need" would be more likely to be interpreted as 'introduce' (because of the reason explained above), and the word "drug" would be more likely to be interpreted as 'cannabis'.

The fact that cannabis is already pervasive in New Zealand society should have been well known by both participants, as this is the main reason for the interview. Also, both participants should have been justified in assuming that the other was well aware of the current state of cannabis in New Zealand. Because of this, it could be argued that the IR may have formed the belief that the IE would realise that she was not talking about the introduction of cannabis. As the trouble-source-turn occurred at the beginning of the interview, the question may have therefore been loosely based on the topic of the interview, and intended as background information and insight into why Nandor Tanczos

might want to decriminalise cannabis. The IR was currently attuned to this wider speech act schema of establishment of the broad topic prior to a more localised focus on the specific issue, although the IE may not have been. For the IR, her intended topic may have been more salient due to the fact that she was the one who was asking the questions and was also a lot more experienced in the context of the BNI. For the IE, while aware of the various topics that may be discussed during the interview, at the moment in time in which the miscommunication occurred, the possible tactics that may be involved in an examination of the topic might not have been equally as salient (e.g., start of with discussing broad philosophical theories).

Prearranged theory

By looking at the content of the interview, it appears that the fact that cannabis use is already widespread in New Zealand was one of the most important elements of the IE's argument regarding the decriminalisation of cannabis. More specifically, the IE's opinion was that police resources are currently being wasted trying to prevent a drug that, according to the World Health Organisation, is less harmful than cigarettes and alcohol, and that in its current legal state is providing an income for criminals and a stepping-stone for cannabis users onto other more dangerous drugs. This opinion is displayed in the following IE statements: *"Prohibition as a policy is just ineffective. It doesn't stop people using cannabis, it doesn't limit availability"; "Look, at the moment, people go and - and I'm hearing this all the time - people go to a tinny house, to buy cannabis, they're being told – we actually don't have any cannabis today, have some of this;" "Cannabis use is very widespread"*. In this example, the resulting mental representation of the IR's initial question-statement as expressed in turn 2 may be a reflection of the way the IE allowed his interpretive practices to be governed by his prior assumptions or beliefs rather than by propositions intended and expressed by the IR (Hodgetts & Habermann, 1997).

Because of the IE's prearranged theory of why cannabis should be decriminalised, the IE may have mistakenly recognised the initial question by the IR as an opportunity to introduce this particular line of justification for his opinion. In more mundane contexts, communicators often try to determine the relevance of an utterance with respect to their behavioural goals during the earliest moments of linguistic processing (Tanenhaus *et al.* 1995). If this routine phenomenon is applied to the above

example in the context of a BNI it may suggest that the IE interpreted the IR's utterance with respect to his own goal of convincing the viewing audience that cannabis should be decriminalised. That is, if the IR exhibited an ignorance of the current state of cannabis use in New Zealand at the beginning of the interview, the IE would have had the perfect chance to explain and make salient the fact that the drug is in fact already common in society. This would then provide the IE with the opportunity to highlight his theory that legalisation would not make a difference to the level of cannabis use, only to the level of profit which criminals gain from selling cannabis, and the amount of relatively innocent people who receive the liability of a criminal record as a consequence of using cannabis.

As with most forms of conversation, the IR and IE must rely on their prior assumptions regarding the nature and extent of each other's knowledge when constructing and interpreting an utterance. These assumptions will often be based on stereotypes and schemata regarding the social category or categories of the individual (Fussell, & Krauss, 1992). The use of specific categories will generally depend on which are relevant in the context of the discourse, for example, interviewer, interviewee, or politician. However, certain stereotypes will be employed that relate to the most prominent social identities of the participants, for example, Rastafarian, cannabis smoker. Unfortunately, misjudgements may be more likely to occur in situations where the interlocutors are part of distinctly different social categories. Although, in the above example both the IR and IE may be competent and perceptive individuals, in certain ways they do belong to distinctly different social categories (young, male, Rastafarian, cannabis smoker and older, female, professional broadcast news interviewer). Therefore, it may be the case that the IE holds the prior assumption that because the IR is not 'part of the scene' she will not understand the problem with cannabis and may ask a statement-question based on a faulty assumption such as that observed in turn 1.

Misinterpreted motive

A possible alternate interpretation of this miscommunication may be that the IR misinterpreted the motive behind the IE's utterance in turn 2 rather than the IE misinterpreted the IR's utterance in turn 1.

There are all sorts of ideas implied in the opening utterance. The added statement after the initial question in turn 1 implied that New Zealand is not already

phenomenally bad at dealing with cannabis in its current legal state, that it is not already available, and that cannabis will only become a problem if it becomes a legal or semilegal drug. This proposition may have been what the IE was objecting to when he mentioned "another drug" in turn 2. Therefore, the IE may have been well aware that the IR was referring to cannabis (or an unspecified illegal drug) becoming another 'legal' drug and may have been commenting on a similar but not completely pertinent point in terms of the actual intended illocutionary force of the IR's utterance in turn 1. In this case, the IR may have underestimated the IE's ability to comprehend the initial question. This may have had something to do with the IR's perception of the IE's category membership based on the IE's youth, relative lack of experience, public image, or appearance.

Perhaps because the IR, upon realising the possibility of misinterpretation of her opening question as another totally new drug rather than another legal drug, added the statement containing references (a list) to only legal drugs. The IR may therefore have been expecting the miscomprehension on the part of the IE, and, when the IE's initial statement did not completely vindicate him of this she immediately assumed miscomprehension. The IR may have added the statement "I mean we are phenomenally bad already with dealing with the ones we've got alcohol, food, cigarettes..." to the question "Why do we need another drug?" to enhance the legalisation aspect of the initial question and reduce the chance that the IE will interpret the question as referring to the introduction of a new drug.

The use of the word "drug" may be used to reinforce the negative aspects of cannabis, as "drug" often refers to illicit narcotics. Broadly speaking, the term "drug" may also refer to food ("A substance one takes, esp. as a habit, for pleasure or excitement." Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1991), though food and, to a certain extent alcohol, are not traditionally thought of as drugs. They may have been included as examples of legal drugs because the IR could not think of any other examples of drugs that fit the legality criteria. Mentioning only cigarettes and alcohol may not have sufficiently proven the point, as while 3 items are considered a list, 2 items are simply a pair. On the other hand, the inclusion of food as an example of a legal drug may have been designed to prove to the IE that the IR was knowledgeable enough about drugs and all that the concept may entail to feel comfortable mentioning an item not traditionally included but technically able to be justifiably included under the category 'drugs'.

Alternatively, the word "drug" may have simply been used as a euphemism for an addictive and largely adverse activity or substance on which a person may become dependent and not actually intended to refer to 'drug' as the precise technical definition appears in the dictionary. In this case, the question may have violated Grice's Maxim of relevance (Grice, 1975), as the most obvious reason for the IE's attendance at the interview, and the purpose of the interview itself- which was a function of the identity of the IE- was not to debate the practicable nature of 'drugs' (in the euphemistic sense of the word) in society, or the philosophical need of society for more drugs, but rather the place of drugs such as cannabis that are already present.

Communicative goal

The communicative goal of the IE, as a function of his role in the context of the BNI, and his assumptions regarding the social context of the conversation, may have had a selective effect on which of the details of the concept 'cannabis' the IE determined to be relevant, and, in turn, on which of the details the IE would most likely focus (Hilton, 1995). This, in turn, may have influenced the kinds of inference the IE constructed regarding the illocutionary force of the IR's question-statement. The IE's interpretation of the IR's question-statement may have therefore been an artefact of the context in which the communication took place. An interpretive strategy that involves comprehension according to the communicative goal of the listener or the more innate interpretation of an utterance might require minimal cognitive effort because it uses the most accessible information regarding the topic of the conversation and does not take into account alternative perspectives, which might involve further mental processing (Keysar *et al.* 2000).

Participants in a constrained and purposeful context such as the BNI often find it easier to control the production of false or faulty inferences in circumstances where mutual understanding can be reached regarding the various motives and intentions behind the interviewer's questions and the various interpretations of the interviewees' replies (Mortensen, 1997). However, in the above example the IR and IE failed to reach such an agreement. Instead the IR and IE constructed disparate interpretations of the force behind each other's statements, which inevitably resulted in miscommunication.

MC – 6:

Face-to-Face: 9th July 2003, 9:35pm. TV ONE

Interviewer (IR): Kim Hill.

Interviewee (IE): John Banks: Former Member of Parliament, current Mayor of Auckland City.

The topic of the interview at the time was 'the legalisation of prostitution'. The IE is against the legalisation of prostitution and the likelihood of brothels opening in Auckland City.

1- IR: So why are you so concerned about the legalisation of prostitution?

2- IE: I am concerned about the legalisation of prostitution… because, because criminal gangs will involve themselves in the industry to launder money… Just like they do with the drug trade.

3- IR: Aren't the gangs already involved?

4- IE: In the drug trade? Yes [they]

5- IR: [No] in prostitution.

TST= 3
MU= 4
RA= 5

Pragmatic ambiguity

In turn 3 of the above example the IR asked the IE to explain an obvious deficiency in the IE's argument in turn 2. That is, that organised criminal gangs will *begin* to involve themselves in running brothels when in fact it is generally accepted, among those who are the least bit familiar with New Zealand society, that criminal gangs have always been involved in the prostitution industry. The speculated result of criminal gang involvement in brothels; that the prostitution industry will become embroiled in other illegal activities in which the gangs are involved and provide support for these illegal activities – such as

illicit drugs- as a reason for not legalising prostitution is thus negated.

This example of miscommunication involved misunderstanding at the level of utterance meaning and originated from a pragmatically ambiguous trouble-source-turn (turn 3), which was so concise as to be obscure (Tzanne, 1999). Pragmatic ambiguity refers to a situation in which more than one interpretation of an element; in this case the verb "involved" and its intended object is sustainable in the context of interaction. The first level of speaker meaning, that is the locutionary force, can become the source of miscommunication in the case of incomplete trouble-source-turns whose full form can be reconstructed in more than one way in context (Tzanne, 1999). In this case, the source of the misunderstanding concerns utterance meaning as reconstructed by the IE and does not involve misinterpretation of the elements that are present. The IE's utterance in turn 3: "Aren't the gangs already involved?" could have logically been reconstructed by the IE as: "Aren't the gangs already involved (in prostitution)?" or "Aren't the gangs already involved (in drugs)?"

The unspecific question in turn 3: "Aren't the gangs already involved (in running brothels)?" Was misunderstood by the IE as: "Aren't the gangs already involved (in illicit drugs)?" Although slightly ambiguous, the referent of the statement "Aren't the gangs already involved?" should be sufficiently obvious to have ensured the correct interpretation. The word "involved" in turn 3 ("Aren't the gangs already involved?") referred to the same state of affairs as the 'involved' in turn 2 ("because criminal gangs will involve themselves in the industry to launder money"). The transparency of this reference may suggest an ulterior motive as an explanation for the miscommunication.

Perhaps the egocentric heuristic theory may help to shed light on why the IE selected 'drugs' as the object of reference rather than the intended 'prostitution'. The egocentric heuristic is a tendency to consider as potential referents objects that are not common as referent choices for both participants of a conversation, but are potential referents from the speaker's own perspective (Keysar *et al.* 2000). When speakers clearly know which objects are mutual and which are obscured, they may still unwittingly use an egocentric strategy. This may be because such a strategy uses easily accessible information, and therefore should not require the extra mental processing that may be needed when entertaining a thought that may not already be part of the interpreter's conversational schemata (Keysar *et al.* 2000).

In natural contexts, people seek to establish reference with respect to their behavioural goals during the earliest moments of linguistic processing (Tanenhaus *et al.* 1995). This tendency may follow-through to institutional contexts such as the BNI and cause the IE to select 'drugs' as the object of reference in order to prove his point that the gangs are involved in drugs and thus drugs could become involved in prostitution. Furthermore, this strategy takes into account the collaborative nature of conversation: Participants in a confrontational context like the BNI, where getting the facts may be more important than maintaining civility or creating friendships, may be less rigorous in their specification of reference because any errors that might occur as a result of misinterpretation of reference can be detected and will be corrected by their conversational partners.

Machiavellian tactic

Because the IE was highly experienced, both with the context of the discussion and in terms of communicator competence, such an avoidable mistake may seem questionable. Another explanation may therefore be possible. The IE may be aware of the necessity to remain on the topic, but, being strongly questioned on a controversial subject where doubt exists, the IE may have chosen to seize the opportunity to leave the topic for a short time in order to reaffirm the point that the he was trying to make. The fact that the IE chose to ask the question in turn 4 "In the drug trade?..." may have been an indication of the IE's recognition that he was choosing an object of reference that was not intended by the IR. The utterance "In the drug trade? Yes they..." may have in fact had an illocutionary force of "In the drug trade! Yes they..." with the perlocutionary intent of putting the focus back onto drugs and gangs rather than prostitution and gangs.

The IE is against legalising prostitution. The argument he is using is that gangs will become involved in running brothels and, therefore, prostitution will provide a cover for other illegal activities in which the gangs participate, such as illicit drugs (turn 2). In turn 3 the IR is challenging the IE's statement and questioning whether such a dilemma is not already the case (that gangs are not already involved in prostitution) or whether the legalisation of prostitution will make the situation any worse. If the IE answered, "yes they are" in turn 4 he may have run himself into a corner, invalidating a major component of his argument. Instead by using the possibility of miscommunication (faking a

misunderstanding) he was able to reaffirm his position (temporarily) that gangs are involved in drug production and that drugs will therefore become an element of the brothels once prostitution has been legalised.

The IR's decision not to explicitly refer to 'prostitution' as the object of her statement in turn 3 may indicate a rational judgement of economy of conversation over explicitness (Hilton, 1995). As the reference in this case was expected to be deducible from the information in the proceeding statement and so mutually understood, the IR did not anticipate that this decision would cause a problem. However, in this case a bias in the IE's interpretive perspective could have lead the IE to commit to an interpretive analysis for the unspecified object of the word "involved" that was incompatible with the interpretive analysis that the IR had intended (Anolli, Ciceri, & Riva, 2002).

An important consideration for the IR in deciding whether to explicitly provide a referring expression is the knowledge shared between the IR and the IE. When constructing that referring expression, the IR must rely on her prior assumptions about the level and nature of the IE's prior knowledge and the way he may interpret conversation depending of his conversational goal (Fussell & Krauss, 1992). An understanding of the IR's implicit theories of the IE's interpretation of the direction of the conversation is therefore beneficial in understanding message construction.

It is widely believed that communicators rely on schemata and stereotypes (Markus & Zajonc, 1985) when reasoning about the social distribution of knowledge, predicting which object of the reference the other is most likely to choose, or how likely it is that the intended illocutionary force will be understood. These stereotypes and schemata relate to the social category or categories of the addressee (Fussell & Krauss, 1992). In this case the IE may be categorised most relevantly as a politician, but also institutionally as an interviewee. The relevance of this particular categorisation lies in the fact that as an interviewee, the IE has specific goals which he will endeavour to accomplish, such as justifying to the viewing audience his opinion of the legalisation of prostitution. The categorisation of the IE as a politician may also suggest that the IE has a higher likelihood of using Machiavellian tactics to perform manipulative or cunning actions such as faking a miscommunication in order to accomplish his conversational goal.

For both speakers and listeners, understanding that an utterance is designed for

a particular addressee is a fundamental prerequisite to being able to deal with their own and each other's actions as coherent and intelligible (Wilson, 1991). That is to say, while the IR and IE construct their interaction turn by turn, they do so in part through their orientations to their relevant biographies and identities as interviewer, interviewee, politician, mayor, etc., as well as to what the present occasion is about and its connections to prior occasions and prospective future ones. The realization that the IE's role in the interview is to justify his position, while the IR's role is to challenge or scrutinize that position should, therefore, play a large part in the construction and comprehension of turns at talk.

Ambiguous reference

A successful reference requires the object to be unambiguously identified for the hearer, that is, the speaker must successfully communicate the identification of the object of the reference to the hearer (Searle, 1969). In order for the hearer to successfully identify the object of the reference certain conditions must be met. First of all, there must exist only one object to which the speaker intends the referring expression to apply. In this case, the referring expression involved may be applied to two separate objects: drugs and prostitution; however, the IR intended only one of these to be selected. Second, the hearer must be given sufficient descriptive detail and opportunity to identify the object of the referring expression from the speaker's reference (Searle, 1969). While the IR chose not to be more specific in her referring expression of the object of the verb "involved", she explicitly mentioned "the gangs" as the subject of the verb rather than leave this to be identified from the reference "they". The reason for this may have been because of a foreseeable confusion on the part of the IE over whether the IR was referring to 'they the gangs' or 'they the brothels'. Justification for this doubt may lie in the fact that, while the object "drugs" was specifically linked to the verb "involved" in the IE's utterance in turn 2 ("because criminal gangs will involve themselves in the industry to launder money"), such an obvious link between the word "they" and the word "gangs" was not present, therefore, the referent "they" may not automatically be assumed to identify the object "gangs" to the IE.

Because explicitness must sometimes yield to economy or fluency in conversation, the point of a definite reference is to identify rather than to describe the

object in question (Searle, 1969). Therefore, the referring expression will have the greatest chance of success if the specified characteristics are important to the identity of the object referred to and important to the speaker and the hearer in the context of the conversation. In this case the IE specifically mentioned the word "involved" in combination with the word "prostitution". Successful identification also relies on the participants' awareness of the context of the conversation and the topics involved (Searle, 1969). The IR may have assumed that the IE was aware of the fact that prostitution was the topic of conversation as this was the topic of the BNI. However, preservation of the IE's argument may have caused the IE to challenge the force of the IR's question. That is; the object of reference may have been equally obvious to the IE; however, his goal of enhancing the role of gangs in the illicit drug industry may have caused him to purposefully misinterpret the IR's utterance.

Because of the adversarial nature of modern journalism the motivation behind an interviewee's resistance to a line of questioning is understandable (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). The specific goal of the interviewer, especially where politicians are involved, may be to question opinions and challenge attitudes that are expressed by the interviewee (in contrast to simply extracting the information that the IE is eager to share). This objective inevitably leads to hostile questions, which if answered in a straightforward manner, can inflict damage on a politician's policy objectives, and personal reputation (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). While in the constrained and well regulated context of the BNI (in terms of topic and purpose) the interviewer may expect the interviewee to be suitably responsive to questions, the responsive behaviour of politicians may be more closely scrutinised, so that attempts to resist, sidestep, or evade a question way provide detrimental consequences (Clayman & Heritage, 2002).

Summary

While some explanations were shown to directly relate to the institutional context of the conversation, other alternative explanations were more generic. In MC-1, IE1 changed footing to produce an encapsulating statement in late reply to the IR's request as the need to inform the viewing audience arose. However, there are a variety of possible explanations for this miscommunication: either because IE1 directed his statement towards IE2 rather than the IR, and therefore did not follow BNI conventions, in which case the utterance flaunted the maxim of relevance or did not contain the correct sincerity conditions; or because IE2 saw an opportunity to deride IE1's statement (and position) which, because of IE1's failure to follow certain conversational conventions, and the confrontational context of the conversation, took on a form that IE1 had not intended.

In MC-2 there was a difference in the frame of reference between the IE and the IR. The movement from the current topic to a new topic, in which the same words that were used in the question would impart a different meaning to the question and elicit a different response, may have caused the miscommunication, as the IE and IR each interpreted the statement from distinct perspectives. Apart from the lack of a sufficient signal during the change in topic, there may have been a further factor involved in the miscommunication, one which more closely relates to the role of the IE at the time of comprehension. Because of his alternative lifestyle, the IE frequently gets asked questions about his personal life, in which case, such questions may be expected during a BNI. This effect would be further enhanced if the IE was enacting the role of Rastafarian rather than politician at the time of comprehension. During BNIs, interviewers must conduct questions that unbiasedly challenge the interviewee. The question T-S-T was designed in an abstract fashion in order to falsify the IE's opinion in a reasonable, logical, and therefore unbiased manner.

MC-3 may relate to the function of the conversation and the roles that each participant enacts in order to realise this function. The specific objective of the interviewer is to question opinions and challenge attitudes as the interviewee expresses them. The IR's entitlement to govern whom talks, when, and about what meant that the communication breakdown (discrepancy in meaning) was never resolved. While the IR may have purposefully composed his statement so that it did not follow directly from the proceeding IE1 statement, the illocutionary force (if not the locutionary force) did relate to the objective of the IR in regards to the force of the proceeding IE1 utterance.

The subject of the interview in which MC-4 occurred was highly technical and highly controversial. Such instances often occur in BNIs due to its intended purpose as a mode of transfer of information of interest from expert witnesses to the general public. In this case, the IE was manifestly aware of the viewing audience and their lack of experience and understanding regarding the subject. Even though the IR may have understood the force of the IE's comment, the IE went to extra lengths to make sure his point was properly understood by the viewing audience. The IE's realisation of possible misinterpretation, the IE's attempts to repair the possible misinterpretation, and the rejection of the misinterpretation by the IR were particularly attributable to the participants' awareness of the viewing audience in that they related to their attempts to save face.

The occurrence of MC-5 can be attributed to the participants' prior beliefs and predetermined strategies. Because the IE was taking part in a BNI, he more than likely entered the interview with a specific, predetermined, well-planned objective, based on a rigidly held belief regarding the topic of the interview. An interpretation of the initial question would therefore be likely to take account of this goal. Because of the purpose of the BNI the IE may have assumed that this objective would have formed the bases of the initial question. Ambiguity of the question allowed interpretation to be made according to this plan, however, while the question induced a response that matched the IE's plan, it was not an expression of this plan that was intended by the IR

The miscommunication in MC-6 also occurred as a result of the participants' attempts to perform specific goals based on their roles in the BNI and their desire to preserve their public image in the eyes of the viewing audience. Although the IR's utterance in turn 3 was a rhetorical question designed to falsify the IE's argument, because of the BNI context and the IE's consciousness of the presence of the viewing audience, the IE attempted to get his point across and preserve his reputation in front of the viewing audience by answering the question according to his own contrived interpretation of the force of the question. Although the same tactic as described above may be applied for the same purpose in a variety of contexts, the BNI is by definition a confrontational context, especially when the BNI involves politicians. The BNI may therefore necessitate and consist of more Machiavellian forms of behaviour than other varieties of conversation, especially informal conversation.

DISCUSSION

In answering the research question - does the institutional context of the broadcast news interview effect the success of communication? - It is necessary to determine whether or not miscommunications that occurred during the course of a BNI were in some way associated with the specialized character of the context. That is, did the interlocutors' behaviour correspond to the conventions of the institution or contravene the conventions of the institution? How did the production or interpretation of certain utterances fail to match the intended perlocutionary force of the prior utterance? And what were the processes of comprehension that lay behind an interlocutor's choice of one possible interpretation over another?

From the analysis of the six instances of miscommunication it has been shown that the institutional context of the BNI did impact upon an interlocutor's ability to accurately comprehend or produce a turn at speech. As expressed previously, the instances of miscommunication were shown to directly relate to the features of the BNI that separate it from informal forms of communication, and render it an example of institutional talk. This research has shown that when an understanding of the psychological processes of language production and comprehension are combined with explicit descriptions of the distinct characteristics of the BNI as an example of institutional communication, it is possible to bring to light the manner in which these processes may conform to or resist the regulating effects of the BNI context and so produce either fluent and accurate communication, or confusing and imprecise communication.

The analysis revealed several significant features of BNI communication that were particularly consequential to the occurrence of miscommunication in the conversations in question. Because each analysis of institutional conversation was oriented towards an analytical perspective that presupposed the occurrence of a miscommunication to be the result of a relationship between certain participants; who inhabit certain roles; interacting with specific participants; in a specific environment, the features that lead to miscommunication may be perceived as the result of a dynamic relationship between the relevant characteristics of the interlocutors and the aspects of the context that they reacted with which inevitably lead to miscommunication. Therefore, although the origin of a miscommunication may have been the result of a combination of

situation and participants, features that were more specifically related to the interlocutors are distinguished from features that were more specifically related to the institution. The results of this study correspond to those of various previous studies regarding the psychological processes associated with language production and comprehension, and theories of miscommunication. These theories relate to such processes as the production of inferences, the effect of prior assumptions, interpretation as a function of interpersonal perspective, and the result of situational context on moderating utterance interpretation and production.

The most significant aspects of the participants identified from the six examples of miscommunication that were found to be involved in an incidence of miscommunication were: (1) the interlocutors' prior knowledge of the topic, (2) prior assumptions of the interlocutors, and (3) communicative goals of the interlocutors. While the most significant characteristics of the situation may be generally described as the goal oriented nature of the interview and the conventions that benefit this characteristic, and the manifest presence of the viewing audience. These characteristics of the conversation led to the production of faulty inferences as well as an altering of the force of statements on the part of a replying participant so that they may have no longer matched the intended force of the original utterance.

While many explanations of the six examples of miscommunication were shown to directly relate to the BNI context of the conversation, other explanations may have been more generic and could realistically occur in a variety of contexts. For example, in MC-1, IE1 changed his footing to make an encapsulating statement in late reply to the IR's request for an encapsulating statement. Such statements are made in a variety of contexts, including mundane conversation. The fact that the utterance did not receive the reception that was expected may have been a result of IE2's failure to view the utterance as an encapsulating statement, in which case the utterance flaunted the maxim of relevance and did not contain the correct sincerity conditions, or because IE2 saw an opportunity to deride IE1's position by chastising his utterance, which, because of its failure to follow certain conversational conventions, took on a form that IE1 had not intended. However, the goal oriented, institutional character of the communication may be said to have had a direct affect on this miscommunication if the confrontational context of the conversation is taken into account, and more directly, if the institutional

convention of the BNI that obliges interviewees to direct their speech towards the interviewer is considered. That is, the miscommunication may have originated because IE1 directed his statement towards IE2 rather than the IR, and therefore did not follow BNI conventions. In this case, for IE2, the utterance may not have had the force of an encapsulating statement, as the viewing audience would be expected to be the recipients of such a statement with the IR acting as a conduit.

The prior beliefs and assumptions of the interlocutors specifically played a part in miscommunication when roles were enacted according to these assumptions or beliefs that may not have been applicable to the force of the utterance. For example, in MC-2 there was a difference in the frame of reference between the IE and the IR that was a result of the IE occupying a role that was not relevant to the question. This may have been a result of the movement from one topic to another topic without realisation from the IE. The IE was therefore enacting a role that was no longer relevant and, as a result, the IE and IR each interpreted the statement from distinct perspectives. Although it has been claimed that during institutional forms of communication roles may not readily vary during the course of a conversation when compared to informal forms of communication (Tzanne, 1999), in the case of BNI the role enacted by the IE is especially susceptible to change. However, this may be an artefact of the exact nature of the television interview genre in which the communication occurs. In less restrictive interviews, where the interviewee is the topic of the interview, the interviewee normally has a variety of socially significant roles, whereas in a more determined, practical interview, where the topic is set, the role is determined by this topic and so may not readily change. The occurrence of MC-5 can also be attributed to the participants' prior beliefs and predetermined strategies. As interviewees who enter an interview with a specific, predetermined, well-planned objective, based on a rigidly held belief regarding the topic of the interview may be likely to interpret the initial question from this perspective, whether or not it was intended as such by the interviewer.

Language comprehension and production was found to relate to the goal oriented character of the BNI. By goal oriented conventions I refer to those conventions that aid the interviewer in soliciting information or opinions from the interviewee for the benefit of the viewing audience. These conventions are also related to efficiency, neutrality, and fairness. The goal of the participant may refer to the interviewer

performing the role of the solicitor of information; challenger of opinion; or maintainer of a sense of unresolvedness, at least until the end of the interview, while at the same time remaining neutral. The goal of the participant may also refer to the interviewee striving to maintain his or her public image; promoting an opinion; or justifying a publicly expressed belief. Miscommunications occurred when participants aligned their interpretive mechanisms towards achieving their predefined goal, while the correct interpretation of the proceeding utterance may not have had this specific goal in mind. For example, in both MC-3 and MC-6 a participant altered the force of their fellow participant's utterance in order to make the statement more conducive to the performance of the their institutional goal. In MC-3 it was the IR who altered the force of an IE's statement so that the IR could counteract the IE's otherwise foolproof argument. In MC-6 it was the IE who altered the force of the IR's question so that the IE could use the statement to prove his point more effectively.

Miscommunication was also the result of a participant's lack of appreciation for the way their fellow interlocutor's behaviour was regulated or constrained by conventions associated with a participant's predefined goal during the BNI, which in turn was related to the participant's institutional role. For example, because during BNIs interviewers must present questions that unbiasedly challenge the interviewee, these questions may sometimes be designed in an indirect or abstract fashion in order to falsify or challenge the IE's opinion in a reasonable, logical, and therefore unbiased manner. The indirect nature of such speech may lead to miscommunication. For example, in MC-2 the IR's question was designed to challenge the IE's belief, while at the same time justify the challenge with additional information. The arrangement of multiple goals in the same speech event and the abstract nature of the utterance itself may have led to an interpretation of the utterance that was different from that intended by the speaker.

A further finding of the analysis was that the asymmetrical amount of experience or knowledge regarding the topic of the interview or a fellow interlocutor's personal perspective was shown to contribute to miscommunication. As well as actual discrepancies in prior knowledge, perceived discrepancies were also associated with the occurrence of miscommunication. For example, the subject of the interview in which MC-4 occurred was highly technical, the IR was an expert in the subject, while his communicative partner, in comparison, had no obvious prior experience above a general

understanding expected of a reasonably well-informed layperson. In this case the IE may have anticipated a difference in knowledge leading to a misunderstanding and gone to great lengths to make sure the IR properly understood his point. The hearer's perception of the speaker's background experience and knowledge may have been misjudged, thus causing him to misinterpret the IR's utterance as an incorrect interpretation of his own utterance when it was in fact correct. It may be that in some errors, hearers overestimated or underestimated the knowledge they have in common with their fellow interlocutors, or their fellow interlocutors' appreciation for, if not agreement with, their own perspective.

Faulty assumptions regarding an interlocutor's (especially the IE's) dependence on or conformity to the topic of the interview were also observed to effect communication. In particular these miscommunications were shown to relate to the maintenance of topic and topic shift over the course of the interview. For example, in MC-2 the IE appeared to comprehend the question in turn 1, from the interpretive perspective that was more applicable to the topic that was active immediately prior to the trouble-source-turn. However, the opening of the trouble-source-turn was designed to change this topic so that an interpretation of the question based on the previous topic would not be relevant. While in MC-5, the IE interpreted the opening question according to the understood topic of the interview, although this interpretation was not appropriate according to the force of the utterance as the IR intended it.

These results regarding the influence of perspective on the production and comprehension of language correspond to those of Graumann & Sommer (1988) who found that an individual's perspective affects both content and linguistic structure during the production and comprehension of text. In the case of the BNI, Graumann & Sommer's finding and the findings of this research suggest that an understanding of the social character of cognition and the possible orientation of each interlocutor are prerequisite to an accurate interpretation of speaker meaning even in a constrained and relatively predetermined situation like the BNI. An implication of this finding is that successful communication may require either mutual perspective or an appreciation for a fellow interlocutor's perspective. In instances of communication between people from acutely different backgrounds, where perspectives may vary, as often occurs in the BNI context, fluent discourse may be more difficult to achieve.

The manifest presence of the viewing audience was an especially noteworthy

aspect of speaker meaning in terms of the efforts made by the speaker to maintain an image and provide information pertinent to the topic of the interview. According to Tzanne (1999) the variety of repair strategies used in misunderstandings during informal conversation reveals that, in repair, participants are faced with two conflicting goals; (a) restoring successful communication, and (b) maintaining their own and others' positive public image in the encounter. In regards to the relationship between miscommunication and participants' face considerations in interaction, Tzanne's findings led to the conclusion that the amount of attention paid to the issue of saving face while repairing a misunderstanding was dependent on the power relations between the participants involved, with powerful speakers being the ones who show less regard for preserving the face of a communicative partner. Her findings also suggest that overall, face considerations appear to be more important than the need to communicate successfully in an interaction.

In terms of repair in the context of the BNI, it appears that if and how repair is attempted may not simply be a matter of power asymmetries; instead, it appears to be more a matter of mutual understanding of experience in the context, or the adversarial nature of the BNI (such as when politicians are involved and the goal is justification of a belief or decision). Also important in repair of misunderstandings in the context of the BNI is the presence of the viewing audience. For example, the IR's correction of the IE's mismatched utterance in MC-6, "[No] in prostitution." May have been designed in an undisguised manner because the topic of the interview was controversial and the mode was adversarial. On the other hand, with the use of "And…" at the beginning of the utterance signalling an intent to design the utterance as if it were a new question rather than a clarification of the first misunderstood question, the IR's correction of the IE's mismatched utterance in MC-2 "And… my point is that the police aren't *actually* implementing the *law*…so why not worry about something else?" was sympathetic, as while the topic to which the IR was aligned was controversial government policy, the topic to which the IE was aligned during the utterance was personal rather than controversial governmental policy and the mode was not adversarial. In MC-4, the repair attempt IE: "…*Producing* them will be faster…", IR: "…Right", IE: "Yeah, but not necessarily the crops will grow [fa]" was very tentative and sympathetic as the IE was in a less powerful position and probably did not view the nature of the conversation as

adversarial. Also, he was not completely sure that a miscommunication had occurred. Also, in MC-4, the IE's realisation of and persistent attempts to repair the possible misinterpretation, and the passionate rejection of the misinterpretation by the IR, were particularly attributable to the participants' awareness of the viewing audience and an attempt to save face and preserve their public image. While during informal communication miscommunications may be left unresolved in order to save face, in the case of the BNI repair is imperative due of the presence of the viewing audience and the goal-oriented nature of the discourse.

According to Tzanne (1999), miscommunications may arise as a result of a speaker's efforts to preserve the good reputation of an addressee. For example, participants can create misunderstandings when being extremely indirect and thus making their meaning difficult to decipher. In MC-2 the trouble-source-turn "All right... If cannabis... is sufficiently prosecuted for you to want to decriminalise it... why haven't *you* been busted?" was designed in an abstract manner and needed several phases of deductive inferences in order to comprehend the illocutionary force of the utterance. As well as a means of maintaining neutrality, this indirect utterance design may have served the purpose of maintaining the IE's face by not blatantly discrediting his belief. In the case of the BNI, the interviewer is faced with the conflicting task of conducting a somewhat interrogative procedure, while at the same time attempting to encourage the interviewee who is not under typical interrogative pressure, to speak freely and give the information required.

Intentional miscommunications may be employed by the less powerful participants in an asymmetrical encounter, as a means of attacking the face of the more powerful figure in the encounter or as an underhand manoeuvre with the intent of proving a desired point. In MC-1, the trouble-source-turn, IE2: "Yes I know you do, I hear [you, I listen]" may have been an intentional misunderstanding used to attack IE2's statement, IE1: "Yeah... Well I have to say, gently, that... umm, I happen to think you're wrong", which, in context, may have been perceived as arrogant or patronising. Although the IR's question in turn 3 of MC-6, IR: "Aren't the gangs already involved?" was rhetorical and designed to falsify the IE's argument, the IE attempted to emphasise his point and preserve his reputation in front of the viewing audience by answering the question according to his own contrived interpretation of the force of the question, IE: "In the drug

trade? Yes [they]". Although the same tactic may be applied in a variety of situations, the BNI is by definition a confrontational context. The BNI may therefore necessitate and consist of more Machiavellian forms of behaviour such as false miscommunication than other varieties of conversation. The miscommunication in MC-6 also occurred as a result of the participants' attempts to perform specific goals based on their roles in the BNI.

According to Scheu-Lottgen and Hernandez-Campoy (1998), miscommunication in cross-cultural contact may emerge when two or more participants fail to agree on the initial system of hierarchy or misuse the linguistic markers of politeness in the negotiation of face. This may be comparable to the BNI institution, where the interviewer and interviewee must negotiate the relative power balance between themselves, from a possible predetermined belief in automatic interviewer dominance, or when the interviewer and interviewee must negotiate the degree of adversarialness of the interview and how this level of adversarialness will effect the production and interpretation of discourse and the interlocutors' consideration of face. For example, in MC-1, IE2 failed to accept IE2's use of politeness markers IE1: "Yeah... Well I have to say, gently, that... umm, I happen to think you're wrong", possibly as a result of a perceived attempt on the part of IE1 to assert a dominant position over IE2 or in response to an awareness of a higher degree of adversarialness than IE1 may have had in mind. In reaction to this perceived expression of dominance, IE2 disregarded the issue of preserving his co-participant's face and produced a turn at talk that did not match the intended force of IE1's utterance and instead belittled IE1's turn at talk.

Tzanne (1999) highlights several factors that may account for the occurrence and structure of miscommunication in discourse. First of all, according to Tzanne, "the creation of misunderstandings relates to the dynamic way in which conversation develops by constructing its own interpretive context turn by turn. The tendency participants display to interpret a linguistic item on the basis of directly preceding discourse leads to misunderstandings if the item in question is meant as a shift from the frame established by previous discourse in the exchange" (Tzanne, 1999, p. 234). The results of my analysis are consistent with this finding. For example, in MC-1, the misunderstanding may have been a result of IE1's sudden pause in the natural flow of the discussion to produce an encapsulating statement. If interpreted on the bases of the flow of the discussion, as IE2 may have, the encapsulating statement may appear to violate conversational conventions

of relevance.

Secondly, Tzanne shows that "the creation of misunderstandings relates to the dynamic way in which social interaction proceeds as a succession of frames (situated activities) and participants' roles. Miscommunication arises when interlocutors fail to realise an intended shift of a co-participant' role or a change in the hitherto operating activity" (Tzanne, 1999, p. 234). Because Tzanne only examined instance of miscommunication in informal settings, she expressed doubt as to whether such changes in role may occur in the relatively constrained context of institutional discourse such as the medical examination, where participants have more specific goals. The findings of my results demonstrated that, at least in terms of the particular examples I analysed, the role enacted by the interviewee was capable of change during the interview, and that such changes occasionally led to miscommunication. For example, in MC-2, the IR suddenly changed the topic of the interview and as a result, change the IE's appropriate interpretive perspective from the role of 'Rastafarian cannabis user', to 'politician campaigning for the decriminalisation of cannabis'. However, the IE's failure to observe this change meant that the IR's turn was interpreted from the previous perspective and miscommunication resulted. However, the role of the interviewer during an interview was not observed to change. The interviewer continually occupied the same position, with the same purpose, mission, and goal. Although the mode of approach used by the interviewer was observed to vary depending on whether the interview was highly adversarial, and therefore, more combative in nature, or more cooperative, and therefore more deferential in nature. These differences were most often dependent on the behaviour of the interviewee, as with a lack of cooperation from the interviewee came more direct and hostile questioning from the interviewer. For example, in MC-6, the IE attempted to alter the force of the IR's question so that it was more conducive to the realisation of the IE's goal. However, this tactic was recognised by the IR who replied with a direct, undisguised correction of the IE's mismatched utterance.

Finally, according to Tzanne, "the development of the misunderstandings yields different combinations of reparative steps. Each reparative step is constrained by steps taken previously to it and at the same time contributions to the construction of the context on whose basis other steps will be taken" (Tzanne, 1999, p. 234). Although the contexts were distinct, my analysis also revealed similar phenomena. For example, in MC- 4,

repair of the miscommunication needed 4 turns at talk. The tentativeness of the IE may have been an adaptation to the lack of adversarialness during the interview and an effort to preserve the face of the IR, who was regarded by the IE as the cause of the miscommunication.

The findings of previous research on miscommunication between interlocutors from distinct ethnic backgrounds; between people who differ in meaningful ways within the same ethnic background; and between interlocutors engaged in a variety of forms of institutional talk, where behaviour is constrained or altered by the context of the communication, show similarities with miscommunication in the BNI. In general, these findings relate to a discrepancy in the norms of interpretation and the mutual understanding of the structure of communicative exchange.

As noted in previous research, between interlocutors from distinct cultural backgrounds miscommunication may be caused by a difference in the mode of language acquisition during upbringing, which will lead to the development of different interpretive norms. These differences relate to an individual's idea of appropriate participation and the structure of speech exchange during a conversation. For example, Crago *et al.* (1997) argued that when the communicative competence required for successful participation in the classroom is in disagreement with the norms of interaction that where developed through previous home and educational experiences, miscommunication between teachers and students of distinct ethnic background can occur. This communicative disparity may be analogous to the difference between an interviewee's previous experience of language and the distinctive use of language during the BNI, which may be more natural for the interviewer. Miscommunication between cultures may be comparable to miscommunication in the BNI context as successful communication in the BNI context is also a function of the prior knowledge or experience regarding the communicative norms associated with each institution.

Previous research into the occurrence of miscommunication within the context of a specific, controlled, and defined institutional situations, for example, Cass *et al.* (2002), Mishler (1984), found that miscommunication was related to the power differences between participants; the style and form of discourse; a discrepancy in prior knowledge, opinions, beliefs, or perspectives, between interlocutors; or a bias in the interpretive style related to the perceived difference between the interlocutors and prior

experience of the interlocutors. Although the specific characteristics may differ, the issue of who has control of the time, place, purpose, topic structure, and language that were advanced by these researchers are particularly pertinent to the area of the BNI. My analysis has shown that, in several examples, these issues were consequential to the occurrence of miscommunication, although the method and function of these differences may have differed. For example, in MC-5 a difference of opinion or belief between the IE and the IR may have led to alternate interpretations of the initial question, in MC-4 the miscommunication may have been the result of a disparity in actual prior experience or knowledge and perceived prior experience or knowledge between the IE (scientist) and the IR (journalist), and finally, the miscommunication in MC-3 may have been caused by IE1's lack of appreciation of the often feigned contentious and adversarial nature of BNI discourse.

Following from past research that has shown the effect of context on the interpretation and production of discourse, for example, Tanenhaus *et al.* (1995), Alba *et al.* (1981), and Barsalou (1982), this study has shown that the behaviour of participants during a BNI is governed by the characteristics of the BNI context. At the beginning of an interview certain cues, such as the surroundings, the participants, the apparatus, etc., may induce the enactment of a schemata. This schemata held by each participant, as a function of the original predetermined context of the occasion, or as a function of prior beliefs or experiences with BNIs or environmental factors, may not match the schemata held by other participants, or, as the precise context is negotiated and altered, may not match the schemata that is appropriate to the modified context. This schema operates to regulate participant behaviour by organising the various rights, obligations, conventions, and procedures that define the BNI as a form of institutional talk, for example, the turn taking, question-answer routine, the conventions regarding the addressees of talk, and the conversational idiosyncrasies that differ from informal forms of conversation. As the words, people, environment, etc. activates certain schematic plans, communicators may align their interpretative devices to these plans in order to produce interpretations that conform to the schema and are therefore more likely to conform to the intended force of the message.

Summary

Mistakes made during comprehension allude to the inherent ambiguity of language and an interpreter's failed effort, as a function of his or her misaligned adaptation of the context of the conversation, to disambiguate the intended message. A variety of psychological factors may work to impede successful communication in informal forms of discourse. According to Henly (2002), a speaker may overestimate the transparency of his or her own speech and produce discourse that is originally difficult to comprehend. Also, Keysar *et al.* (2000) suggest that addressees tend to rely on information from their own perspective to resolve ambiguity in conversation, which may be biased according to the specific individual. Although these findings may not equally relate to the context of the BNI as, due to its intended function as a means of informing the public, messages may need to be produced in a more apparent, and less ambiguous manner in order to guarantee that the viewing audience will comprehend the meaning of each speech act. A further factor that may confuse these prior studies into the psychological processes of comprehension is that the interpretation of ambiguous utterances relies on prior knowledge of the context, that is, prior knowledge of the topic, the speaker, as well as interpretive possibilities in the form of routine proceedings provided by the schemata. In the context of the BNI these issues are especially important, as they are peculiar to the institution. For example, the topic, although variable, is precisely defined and controlled by the interviewer, the topic is often technical, controversial, or both, and the participants may have only recently met or may only know of each other through the media.

Interlocutors use language to get things done; the appropriateness of the language they use is dependent on the context of the occasion and the perlocutionary intent of the speaker. From the listener's perspective, all utterances are relevant and will be understood in whatever way will make them most relevant to what is going on at the time. However, language is also indeterminate; inferences must be made in relation to the context of the conversation. When incorrect inferences are made miscommunication is often the result. In summary, the characteristic of the BNI context that were found to be relevant to understanding miscommunication during BNI communication were: prior opinions and beliefs; actual knowledge and experience; perceptions of knowledge and experience; the manifest presence of the viewing audience; conventions that allow interviewer neutrality and viewing audience participation; and the feigned adversarial nature of the discourse.

IMPLICATIONS

Although most, if not all, institutional aspects of the BNI are functional in character and aid in some way the realisation of the goal for which the institution was created, it is not necessarily the case that all currently operative procedures are essential for doing the business at hand, or that they are the only or the most efficient ones imaginable. It may be possible that the current aspects of the BNI that affect its performance are simply artefacts of past administrative organizations, cultures, or time periods. Relative to society's fundamental requirements, other institutions, such as the court system or the doctor's office, with regulations administered by governmental policy, may be perceived as more critical. Because their success or failure will likely have especially dire consequences it may be imagined that the rules, regulations, and procedures that govern their performance will need to match more specifically to the needs of the society in which they occur. However, because of their level of severity, such institutions may also be less changeable. As these institutions are relatively old and have taken a long time to be established and verified as effective, and their characteristic forms have been specifically adapted for the goal of the institution, a change in form based on a change in requirement will need to be exact. On the other hand, BNIs, because they lack to a certain extent the formality and bureaucracy of other institutions, may be understandably more adaptive and susceptible to change, as their survival depends on how well they keep up with society's inconsistent vogues of interest and entertainment.

The fact that the BNI institution may be viewed as less formal in nature than many other institutional forms of communication as it is primarily based on a foundation of entertainment and interest, implies that as peoples' interests and trends in entertainment change, so to may the conventions and procedures that govern the performance of the BNI. For example, in England and the U.S., journalistic questioning has become less deferential and more adversarial since the 1950s (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). In line with this change, the conventions that govern the production of turns at talk and the strategies used by participants to achieve their communicative goals have also changed. There are, however, practical limits on the achievement of particular tasks, and while the methods, conventions, or procedures for conducting a BNI may change over time, the purpose of the BNI, the reason for its existence, will always remain stable. That

is, the transfer of information of public interest from expert witnesses to the viewing audience.

The variety of information transfer approaches currently used in the television medium may grow as a result of fundamental changes in the status of the various roles, the methods used, and the specific goals of a particular form are modified and branch off into other forms with distinct characteristics. For example, the talk show may by and large be grouped under the same general category as the BNI in that both are based on the desire to obtain information of public interest from expert witnesses for the benefit of the viewing audience. However, there are fundamental differences between the two. These varieties of television interview mostly relate to differences in the conventions that regulate the turn-taking procedures, and power relationships between the participants.

This research has shown that it may be difficult or even impossible for interlocutors in a BNI to rely on the unmodified use of practices such as turn-taking conventions, topic maintenance and shift, and politeness strategies in the construction and interpretation of speech, regardless of the fact that such strategies may work more or less effectively in the production of informal conversation (Atkinson, 1982). An appreciation for and understanding of the context of the conversation may enable researchers to better understand the rationality or irrationality of interlocutors' judgements regarding the production and comprehension of speech. An awareness of the manner in which institutional speech in general, and the BNI in particular, may impede successful communication may aid interlocutors in efforts to limit such problems.

With effective communication a variety of objectives can be achieved. For example, an interviewer who has an appreciation of the features of the BNI that may impede communication may more easily manipulate these features in order to perform the goal of the interviewer, that is, extract important information from the interviewee. Alternatively, an interviewee who can adapt well to communicating in such a context may more easily perform persuasive, ingratiating, justificatory, or convincing behaviour and so maintain a more positive public image. In the context of the BNI, such practical ends are often the difference between success and failure.

Because of the presence of the viewing audience, miscommunication needs to be resolved, even if the miscommunications do not significantly affect the flow of the conversation. The presence of the viewing audience also means that the considerations

related to saving face are especially enhanced in the context of the BNI. Individual-based training in social skills with the goal of preventing miscommunication may help to fix some of the problems of everyday communication (Petronio, Ellemers, Giles, & Gallois, 1998). However, in the case of the BNI, this training may not be useful unless it is accompanied by a clear understanding of the conventions and procedures that are used to govern the performance of the interview, as well as the relationships between participants.

This study has shown that the construction of a schematic description of the BNI context may be more complicated than simply producing lists of features that appear to affect the performance on the BNI. Instead, the nature of the BNI must be described as the participants orient their behaviour towards the features that are relevant to the production or comprehension of speech at that time. Although, at first, this may appear a highly unstable and abstract concept, this research has shown that there are certain aspects of the BNI that act to regulate and alter participant behaviour that may be generalised into more constant and better established principles.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Because of the small scale, qualitative design of this study, it may be argued that subjectivity and reliability were difficult to maintain. There were limited numbers of both participants and examples of miscommunication. In total there were only 7 individuals interacting in the 6 instances of BNI conversation. This may raise an issue as to the legitimacy with which findings may be generalised to other instances of BNI discourse, with different interviewers and interviewees. Although in the case of interviewers, the fact that they are professionals enacting a role in a specific institution with policies and conventions that may, to a certain extent, standardise their behaviour, may somewhat mitigate this doubt. However, in the case of interviewees, were the level of experience and the degree of cooperation is variable; the variability between each participant might be such that reliably general relationships and processes may not be attainable from such a small number of interviewees.

As mentioned in the analysis, the fact that each interviewee may come from such diverse walks of life as politics, science, or religion may imply that the strategies that are employed in producing and interpreting language may be equally diverse. Although this fact may be viewed as a positive aspect of this research as a broader range of the various types of BNIs that do occur has been examined. However, for future research it may be suggested that the background of each participant remain more stable in order to mitigate the effect of a small number of participants, for example, analysis of BNI communication in which the interviewees are all politicians. However, as shown by the analysis of MC-2 in which the IR switches topic from a personal to political orientation, the role occupied by an interviewer, even a politician, may not always be constant throughout an interview. In this case, the topic of conversation must be more firmly established and non negotiable. The topic must be issue specific rather than personality specific.

As well as the small number of participants, the lack of variability in the gender of the participants may also place doubt on the conclusions drawn from the analysis. While the gender of the interlocutors was also not incorporated into or specifically discussed as part of the results, a research design which incorporated only data from male participants may have only been applicable to instances of BNIs with male interlocutors,

or visa versa. However, although the majority of the participants were male, there was a single female interviewer involved in two of the examples. The differences between the communicative strategies of men and women have been well documented. For some researchers these differences have led to a two cultures perspective of interaction between men and women (Mulac *et al.* 1998). The differences in the communicative behaviour of men and women in everyday life may follow through to instances of institutional communication, in which case, these differences should be controlled for in a study of communication. Although this study did not take account of these differences, further research on communication in institutional contexts such as the BNI may incorporate these differences into its design, for example, by comparing differences in the production and comprehension of institutional language between interviews during male interviewer to male interviewee; female interviewer to female interviewee; female interviewer to male interviewee; or male interviewer to female interviewee BNIs.

Although this research was specific to BNIs, it is comprehendible that it may be applied at least generally to other forms of institutional talk, such as the courtroom or the doctor's office. All institutional forms of communication have certain characteristics in common. For example, in all forms of institutional talk communication is strictly goal oriented, this means that certain presuppositions and expectations are formed prior to commencement and the schematic plan initiated to drive processing is generally well established and defined. The institutional nature of communication also means that there are rules governing who can talk, when they can talk, and what kind of utterance will be an allowable contribution to the interaction. These factors regulate the inference making processes that in turn govern the direction of the conversation and the negotiation of meaning. The force of each utterance may be a function of the context in which it occurs. In which case, the force may be identified by firmly establishing the relevance created by the context. Although there are a wide variety of institutional forms of conversation, and these differ with regards to the specific processes, they share in common a goal oriented, institutional nature which could possible relate to similar processes of inference making.

A further issue in deciding on the reliability of the results is the fact that in the examples provided, the level of experience in the performance of BNIs of each interlocutor, both interviewer and interviewee, was not constant. With varying levels of experience come varying understandings of the methods and processes that are in effect

during a BNI. An interlocutor's knowledge of such processes may allow that interlocutor to judge the relevance of an utterance and determine the most appropriate reply in regards to achieving the desired goal of the interview. For example, the lack of continuers, such as "right", "ah huh", may cause problems for an inexperienced interviewee but not for an interviewee with experience. In future research this issue may be solved by the use of interviewees that all have the same level of experience, either by choosing those with no prior experience, or those with such a large amount of experience that a maximum limit of effect has been reached and the possible differences between each participant are negated.

Also, as shown in the analysis, the specific topic of the interview plays a large part in the communicative behaviour of the participants. For certain topics (politics, religion, etc.) the level of adversarialness of the interview will be high, while for other topics (personal life, etc.) the interview will be more amiable. Because these differences have been shown to relate to the repair strategies of the interlocutors and issues regarding saving face, the differences may be said to play a large part in the production and interpretation of language. In future research the topic may be more stringently maintained by using examples of communication that only take account of one specific topic, i.e. politics, or by using a research design that compares the behaviour of participants with one topic to participants dealing with a different topic of a less adversarial nature, i.e. personal life. Although in this particular study I was attempting to deal with only an adversarial, current event genre of television interview, there were instances, for example in MC-2, where the topic shifted from a current-event, adversarial type of interview to a more personal talk show style, and back to an adversarial style. These changes were shown to relate to the specific interviewee in question. The fact that these differences in the adversarialness of the interview were not taken into account, and that the level of adversarialness was shown to influence communicative behaviour, may imply that the results may not be applicable to all instances of BNI miscommunication.

Because communicative behaviour may vary depending on whether the interview contains controversial subject matter, and the amount of technical or specialized content, perhaps for future research these factors can be kept constant or incorporated into the research. For example, future research may examine how participant behaviour differs between interviews regarding an extremely contentious topic and interviews regarding

uncontroversial, general interest topics. Future research may also explore how interviewers alter their use of the regulations of the BNI as a result of a participant's level of experience, for example; the interviewer's use of continuers or acknowledgement tokens, normally absent in BNIs yet vital to the organisation of speech during informal conversation, or differences in repair strategies during interviews with inexperienced or experienced interviewees.

Summary

The main issue concerning the validity of any conclusions drawn from the results of this research may be the lack of quantitative analysis. Although the fact that external observation is an inherent aspect of the BNI may imply that quantitative analysis is a feasible option, an important part of this research concerned determining speaker meaning in order to identify the possible origins of miscommunication. The analysis of speech in interaction may discount quantitative studies because they reduce the complexities of human behaviour to quantifiable abstractions of meaning that may lack relevance to the actual situation. Although the context of the BNI is relatively predefined and the rules and regulations are somewhat specified although not always universally known, one difficulty of quantitative research is that instances of miscommunication are quick and unconscious, occur spontaneously, and are dependent on interlocutors' negotiation of context, all of which are hindered by the constraints of laboratory data collection. Discourse analysis has a well-established and recognised legitimacy and, in this case, was regarded as the best option.

This research has shown that when an understanding of the psychological processes of language production and comprehension are combined with explicit descriptions of the distinct characteristics of the BNI as an example of institutional communication, it is possible to bring to light the manner in which these processes may conform to or resist the regulating effects of the BNI context and so produce communication that is either fluent and accurate, or confusing and imprecise.

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