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Exemplary Interpretation of a Text¹**1. Transcript**

(Some notes concerning the translation:

The German original of the transcription contains words spoken in Turkish accent or Berlin dialect as well as mistakes in word order or choice of words. In the English translation we tried to give an account of the speaker's original expression which explains unusual phrases and sentence structure in the English transcript.)

Discussion-group *Sand*, Excerpt: Marriage (duration: ca. 5 minutes)

- 1 Ym: Do you want to have a family some day? (1)
 2 Bm: [Yes, when (1) when our time has
 come for that,
 3 don't know (.) I can't tell; (2)
 4 Am: [Yes having a family is nice
 5 but it is not easy you know, (2)
 6 Y1: [mhm
 7 Bm: [I am unemployed anyway and so on
 8 (2) I think I won't get married so soon.
 9 Am: [A family what does it mean a family °you know?°
 (1) ° (no) (3)
 10 Bm: I would have had some opportunities to marry, but I did not do it in

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2.1. *Topical Structuring*

PT: **Marriage in the „own way“ and „matchmaking“ (making marriage arrangements)**

ST: *Difficulties in founding a family*

02-28

02-11 Founding a family is nice but not easy and the time for that must “have come“

12-27 One must find „the right one“

ST: *Marriage in the „own way“ versus „matchmaking“*

30-131

30-51 Marriage in the „own way“ as an „adjustment to the culture“ (41-42)

52-112 Matchmaking concerning marriage of the family, the relatives and acquaintances in Turkey

112-131 The interventions are like in a „Turkish film“ (130)

2.2. *Detailed Formulating Interpretation*

ST *Difficulties in founding a family*

02-27

The foundation of a family is approved, because it is something „nice“. Although the young men would have had several opportunities to marry, it is not „easy“. The opportunities of founding a family depend on the further development of the young men, which is not easily predictable. In this context the problem of unemployment is playing its role. But it is also a problem that it is difficult to define the sense or the meaning of what determines a family. It is difficult to find „the right“ person. In this context *Am*'s demands are greater than other people's demands.

2.3. *Reflecting Interpretation*

01 *Question by Y1*

This question is an „exmanent“ question, which means a question which is not connected to a topic having been discussed so far. The preceding passage was about Turkish young women and the problem of virginity but this topic had also been initiated through an exmanent question and was hardly discussed by the young men. The question lacks of attempts to initiate narrations or descriptions. (See also: „Reflexive Prinzipien der Ini-

tiierung und Leitung von Gruppendiskussionen“ - „Reflective Principles Of Initiating And Leading Group-discussions“- ; Chapter 11.1 in Bohnsack 2000a)

- 02-11 *Proposition by Bm and elaboration of his proposition in interaction with Am*
- 02-05 This utterance implies a development model, a model of collective („our time“; 02) development. *Bm* has therefore some expectations about his further development. These expectations are still very vague and cannot (only) be influenced by his own plans, but they are inevitable, dependend from fate. This is the reason why he cannot be more precise. *Am* explains that their uncertainty has nothing to do with a lack of corresponding wishes or sketches but with problems in realising these plans („problems in enacting“). This is not in their own power: It is not easy to realise their (existing) wishes and biographical sketches.
- 07-08 Elaboration of the difficulty of realising (“enacting“) by *Bm*: „I am unemployed anyway“ means: I am unemployed and therefore it is not easy (for me) anyway. *Bm* gives one of the reasons which prevents the realisation/“enacting“. But this reason touches the prevailing conditions pre-conditions for the foundation of a family, and not family or the social relationships itself.
- 09 The difficulties are increased or escalated by *Am*: It is not only because of the prevailing conditions that they are uncertain when the time for a marriage has come. Another reason for their uncertainty is that for the young men it is not clear what exactly „family“ means.
- 10-11 *Bm* would „have had some opportunities“. According to what has been explained before, this means that the young women would have been willing to marry. *Am*'s attractiveness is not the reason why he has not got married or has not got a family yet, the reasons are obviously those already mentioned. At the same time *Bm* refers to the fact that he has thought about his biographical options in a responsible manner.

12-28 *Elaboration of the proposition by Am*

12-16 *Am* now elaborates the proposition's component mentioned in 04-05 and 09:

It is therefore not so easy to have a family or to live together with a woman because „the right“ woman has to be found (this especially means a woman, who agrees about what „family“ means, what a family is supposed to be). Hereby, *Am* elaborates the background of his proposition in 09.

Equating „having a family“, „getting married“ and „living together“, or rather the indifference towards these alternatives, implies, that there is no connection to tradition. Therefore, a certain frankness towards the kind of relationship or rather the kind of family is implied. (Hence *Am* goes beyond the frame set by *YI*'s question.)

20-27 Increasing (of the) difficulty of one's own situation (in contrast to 12): At present they cannot find the „right one“

- Like *Bm* in 10-11 *Am* now emphasises that this is not caused by a lack of attractiveness.
- Demanding to be there for each other mutually (25-26) and also looking for a perfect relationship does not imply (with the background of frankness towards the kind of relationship) an orientation towards traditional role models, but the orientation towards an open relationship which can be negotiated.
- What is made explicit in 02-03, 05 and 15-16 finds expression on a *performative* level during the long breaks (15, 16, 23, 29) (which are not interrupted and thus supported by *Bm*): they do not know exactly, they cannot say exactly, they are at a loss and it is not that easy.
- At the same time it is documented in 28 (and also in the questions asking for confirmation, the “questiontags”) (05, 09, 16, 22-23, 26), that *Am* anticipates, that his attitude is difficult to understand. As *YI* reacts on the questions (except for 09) it seems to be addressed to him. (It becomes obvious, that the discourse between the researchers and the persons under research is still relatively dominant in this state of the extract; this will change later on). *Am* anticipates or guesses a strangeness not only towards the German interviewers – which becomes obvious in line 28 – but also towards his peers. This refers to differentiation typical for the social environment (which can be verified by comparative analysis with other groups).

- 30 –56** *Thesis-antithesis (“antithetical”) discourse between Am and Bm: Proposition by Am, Antithesis by Bm*
- 30,33 *Proposition by Am*
35-36 in the modus of a “theory of orientation”
- 39-40 *Elaboration of the proposition* in the modus of an abstracting description
Am gets married “in his way and his mother cannot influence him”: His mother cannot say anything to him or rather what his mother says cannot say anything to him.
- 31-32 + 34 *Antithesis by Bm* in the modus of a question
- 37-38 *Elaboration of the antithesis by Bm* in the modus of a
41-42 “theory of orientation”
- 43 *Antithesis to the Antithesis (of Bm) by Am* in the modus of a question
- 44-51 *Continuation of the antithesis by Bm* in the modus of a “theory of orientation” or rather a theory about the own self.
“In my way” (30) as well as “I live how I think it to be right” (35-36) are addressed antithetically to “adjusting to the own culture” by *Bm*. Only “adjusting to the own culture”, which means the culture of origin, makes it possible to answer the question “what you are and who you are” (49 and 51 as well as 46), which means answering the question for the own identity.
In sociological vocabulary (in the vocabularies of Erving Goffman). *Bm* shows the tendency to answer the question “who he is” in the modus of his social identity, or the identity being ascribed to him, whereas *Am* rather adapts to his personal (individual) identity. This means that two ways (“modi”) of developing an identity or two ways of “sociality” (Sozialität) are antithetically compared.
- 52-62 *Follow-up proposition* in the modus of an exemplification by *Am* and wording/formulation of the proposition by *Bm* (61-62)
- Am* illustrates on the basis of two examples what it leads to, according to his opinion, if someone “adjusts” to the culture or rather he explains to *Am* the kind of adjustment he objects. He disapproves

the kind of adjustment which leads to a marriage based on “matchmaking”.

Exemplification I:

The mother refers to two different engagements in the family or ethnic community (“at ours” relates to a “we”-community not being questioned) and thereupon drafts a negative image, a so called negative “counter-horizon”. These engagements did obviously not develop out of matchmaking, which is the way she prefers. Later on, it becomes evident that she prefers the modus of “matchmaking” in which the wife comes from the husband’s home region. (As the others do not orient themselves at the traditional modus, the utterance implies that the modus becomes precarious.)

Exemplification II:

An acquaintance (who obviously comes from *Am*’s Turkish home region) tried to make *Am* get to know (or even marry) his only daughter (but without directly telling his intentions).

In the framework of orientation that is implied in the two kinds of exemplification and from which *Am* distances himself, it finds expression, that it is regarded as an adequate basis for the “matchmaking” or rather the marriage, that the female partner’s origin is in the husband’s family’s home region. This origin seems to be a guarantee for habitual concordance (a concordance concerning the habitus), which is a necessary condition for the marriage.

(Another reason for matchmaking might be that an effective social control of the marital relationship can be guaranteed if involved persons know each other. In this sense the relatives and acquaintances or friends from the region are not only predestined for a marriage as husband or wife, but also as “people intervening”, people who help to find a partner for someone from their home region.)

In sociological vocabulary, *Am* distances himself from a modus of constructing habitual concordance on the basis of *social* identity.

- 61-62 In his *formulation of the proposition* by *Am*, *Bm* expresses
 - that he exactly understands *Am*
 - that he approves (‘validates’) *Am*’s presentation by not opposing it and therefore makes the first step towards a synthesis.
- 64-112 *Further exemplification* in narrative modus by *Am*, approval (*Validierung*) and therefore synthesis by *Bm* (97)

Am presents in his narration further components of the “framework of orientation” concerning the matchmaking:

- The aim of matchmaking or the true intentions are not directly but merely indirectly discussed between the intervening person and the person a partner shall be find for: “you can meet her” (75).
- *Am* refuses the attempt to do matchmaking also indirectly, but he creates or produces ambiguity by this.
- Caused by ambiguity, that means by the uncertain (definition of the) situation the uncle insists on his attempt to do matchmaking (93-94). Here it is documented that the way how *Am* expresses his objection indirectly cannot be understood. This and also the distance towards the interventions shows the big distance between *Am* and his parent’s culture of origin.

97 *Bm* helps to find the right wording. He formulates a component of *Am*’s proposition (a component of helps with formulating (‘Formulierungshilfe’) of *Am*’s framework of orientation).

From his own experience *Bm* knows the situation in which someone suddenly realises, without wanting it, that he is in the middle of a situation where someone else attempts to do matchmaking. Consequently, there is the danger to get “paranoia”. By this *Bm* also expresses his objection towards matchmaking or rather towards certain forms of matchmaking.

Bm therefore opens a synthesis: The bond or the adjustment to the culture of origin, which he had first demanded from *Am*, cannot go so far.

77-88 *Inserted meta-communicative dispute (Dispute on a meta-communicative level):*

The others (or at least *Bm*) do not think *Am*’s indifference towards the young woman to be credible. (The utterances of *Y2* and *Bm*, that means their laughing, get their significance for the interpreter concerning the verbatim sense only through *Am*’s reaction in line 79).

98-107 *Am* gets into a dilemma. (This is expressed in a “performatory” way in the breaking of in 105 and 107 and in the disorder of the sentence in 107. The experience of being entangled/caught up is so lasting that it is still obvious in the present situation). He did not succeed in objecting to the attempt to do matchmaking. *Am* is obviously not able to express this in a manner according to his culture of origin.

Now he can only get out of this situation by disapproving his potential bride. This holds the danger of insulting his uncle.

107-112 Formulation of the own proposition by *Am*

112-126 *Further exemplification* in the modus of continuing the narration by *Am* in interaction with *Bm*

As *Am* cannot express his objection towards the whole procedure of matchmaking in an adequate way, the people from the village and/or his mother go on matchmaking. In the end *Am* is not only pursued or hunted by the people intervening but also by his potential wives (“paranoia” 97). Although the situation has the character of a pursue it is attractive in a way: the situation is as antiquated (“according to old tradition”, 124) and romantic at the same time as scooping water in the morning. The fact that the young women are interested in *Am* confirms as well the attractiveness of his family as of himself (see 10-11 and 21-22: The problem is not a lack of attractiveness):

126-131 *Conclusion* by *Bm* in interaction with *Am*

The “matchmaking” (making marriage arrangements) to find a partner for a young person and the modus of social relationships connected with it is a traditional pattern of orientation. This pattern was of great significance for the parental generation, but for the young people themselves it is hardly more realistic than a film: The kind of male existence, in which the foundation of marriage and family is carried out on the basis of common grounds of the regional origin, appears to be like a film and a cliché and as antique at the same time.

Especially in this conclusion the collective character of the orientations and experiences of the two person involved becomes obvious. Bm and Am both share extensively common experiences or - more precisely said - experiences which are identical in structure, that means: they share a conjunctive space of experience. This enables them to arrange the narration and its performance in a highly cooperative manner (although Bm has not experienced that concept situation which is told by Am).

Their common experiences and their common frame of orientation is worked out by Am and Bm in a special mode of the organization of discourse: the antithetical mode of discourse.

Transcription guidelines:

Y: *abbreviation for “interviewer”*

Am / Bm: *abbreviations for “interviewed person No. A or B, male”*

example *underlined word means: speaker emphasises word*

°example° *small circles before and after a word mean: word spoken very quietly*

(.) *full stop in brackets means: short break between two words (up to a duration of one second)*

(2) *number in brackets means: break of a duration in seconds according to the number in brackets*

┌ *tick: overlap: speaker starts utterance while another person is speaking*

(example) *word in brackets means: doubt in transcription: utterance cannot be understood clearly*

() *brackets with space in between: utterance cannot be understood at all*

@example@ *word within @-signs: person is laughing while speaking*

@(2)@ *number in brackets within @-signs: person is laughing for a duration in seconds according to the number in brackets*

((coughing)) *words in double brackets: comments on non-verbal utterances or explanations*

example=example *equals sign between two words: two words are connected with each other*

markers of the melody of utterances:

;
semi-colon: *voice is slightly lowered*

.
full stop: *voice is lowered.*

,
comma: *voice is slightly raised*

?
question mark: *voice is raised*