

**"Germany will be one single concrete block..."
Point of View and Reference to Topic Aspects in Adversial Discussions on
Immigration¹**

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Abstract

The study analysed effects of point of view on reference to topic aspects in dyadic discussions where interlocutors disagreed.

The analysis is based on eighteen dyadic discussions about restrictions of immigration into Germany. One of the discussants in each discussion was a firm proponent of restrictions (point of view 1), the other a firm opponent to restrictions (point of view 2). The discussions were analysed by means of a system of categories, consisting of seven main categories (main aspects) and thirty-seven subcategories (subaspects).

From the theory of linguistic perspectivity it was proposed that the different points of view would lead to differences in the frequency and quality of reference to main aspects and subaspects.

Results indicated that both groups basically referred to the same pool of aspects. Proponents of restrictions, however, referred more often to the subaspect "population density in Germany" (main aspect "environment") than did opponents.

Stronger effects of point of view were found by an analysis of active, i.e. initiative references to aspects. Besides the subaspect "population density", proponents of restrictions also stressed "economic reasons for immigration", whereas opponents brought "global economic interrelations" and "moral responsibility for refugees" into the discussion.

An exemplary qualitative analysis of sequential, interactive use of aspect reference suggested different patterns of aspect negotiation in dialogues and gave impulses for further investigation of such negotiation processes in naturally occurring dialogues.

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Introduction

The study analysed the effects of point of view on references to topic aspects, in the context of dyadic discussions where interlocutors disagreed. The conceptual framework for this research is the theory of linguistic perspectivity. Before discussing this theory, we present a short overview of psychological models of perspectivity and of research on perspectivity and point of view in language.

Basic Concepts of Perspectivity

The basic concept of perspectivity originated in the context of the visual arts (cf. Kubovy, 1986) and has been widely used in philosophy, psychology, linguistics, and literary theory (for an overview see Graumann, 1989). Although showing considerable variation in focus and depth of conceptualisation, the different approaches all refer to the basic fact that the way the outer world appears to a subject depends on the subject's specific point of view.

Historically, the psychological conceptualisations of this phenomenon can be traced back to two different sources: to the "egological" model of perspectivity elaborated in phenomenological psychology and to the interactionistic concept brought forward by G.H. Mead (1959, 1962).

The phenomenological model was elaborated by Graumann (1960) who, starting from such philosophers as Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, presented a psychological theory of perspectivity that stressed the intentional person/world relationship and the body-centered nature of experience. Graumann's theory states that experience always takes place in situations structured by a given perspective: from different viewpoints, individuals perceive different aspects of an object (or event); they structure the object differently, and they refer to different contexts. This concept of perspectivity has been called the "egological" approach to perspectivity (Graumann, 1989, 96), because in

focusing on the relationship between individual and object world, it neglected the inter-individual relationship.

This interactionist aspect was dominant in G.H. Mead's (1959, 1962) conception of perspectivity which he viewed as a fundamental constituent of society as well as of communication and of ontogenetic development. Referring to Einstein's theory of relativity, Mead postulated that statements about the state of a system can only be made from a given perspective of a given system with its own given state (Mead, 1959). The divergence of individual perspectives, then, is not just a result of subjective errors but is inherent in the nature of interrelated systems. To overcome such perspectival divergence we need to "take the perspective of the other". Emerging in and by communication, perspective taking is a basic feature of cognitive development and identity formation, and is itself a precondition of communication. It also allows the social organisation of individual perspectives, and hence common perspectives of social groups and coordinated actions of individuals and groups.

While Mead's view of perspective taking has become very popular in developmental psychology, his concept of perspectivity has not found much support in experimental social psychology. Here, the term perspective was introduced by Volkman (1951) in the context of (psychophysical) studies of absolute judgement, and it referred to a well-anchored and sufficiently graded range of discriminable categories that a person holds with respect to the dimensions of a physical or social object.

This approach was elaborated and applied to the field of attitudinal judgement by Upshaw and Ostrom (Ostrom, 1966; 1970; Ostrom & Upshaw, 1968; Upshaw, 1962; 1965; 1969; Upshaw & Ostrom, 1984). Their "variable perspective theory" differentiated attitude content from evaluative ratings and conceived of perspective as the range of content alternatives that a subject takes into account when rating his or her own attitude.

Less elaborated than in this model, the concept of perspectivity was also used in attribution research. Jones and Nisbett (1972) explained the diverging attributions of actors and observers in terms of different perceptions or "perspectives": "There are

good reasons for believing that the same information is differentially processed by actors and observers" (Jones & Nisbett, 1972, 85) because "different aspects of the available information are salient for actors and observers" (ibid.). While not undergoing much more conceptual elaboration, perspective was then used as an independent variable in various research contexts, such as in studies on actor/partner relations (Orvis, Kelley & Butler, 1976; Sillars, 1981) or on divergent attributions of initiators and victims of aggressive acts (Mummendey, 1984).

Perspectivity and Point of View in the Study of Language

In the non-psychological theory of literature, perspectival concepts such as point of view have been important for decades. In an overview, Hasenberg (1987, 52) even states "that the study of 'point of view' was declared to be one of the major concerns of modern narration theory". In this tradition, theories have been developed to conceptualise an author's possible means of constructing perspectives in fictional texts. Uspensky (1973), e.g., differentiates four meanings of point of view: the ideological or evaluative position, the spatio-temporal position, the perceptive or "psychological" position, and the "linguistic" position of the author. This approach was further elaborated by Fowler (1982) and others (cf. e.g. Canisius, 1987).

The empirical psychological study of perspectival phenomena in language started in the late 1970s. Research on story understanding had shown that text comprehension and recall was not only affected by knowledge about the text structure but also by world knowledge and readers' predispositions. In a seminal study, Pichert and Anderson (1977), demonstrated that subjects primed with a "burglar's perspective" understood and recalled different details of a text describing a walk through a house from those recalled by subjects primed with a "housebuyer's perspective". A number of follow-up experiments and analogous studies (Anderson & Pichert, 1978; Anderson, Pichert & Shirey, 1983; Black, Turner & Bower, 1979; Bower, 1977; Flammer, 1985; Flammer & Tauber, 1982; Goetz et al., 1983) brought further insights on perspectival phenomena in text processing, but left open other questions:

The term perspective was used rather non-technically if not atheoretically in these studies. The role of perspectivity in text production or in the interaction of interlocutors remained unconsidered, as did the linguistic features that may manifest a perspective in a text (for an exception with regard to text production cf. Bower, 1977).

The Theory of Linguistic Perspectivity

To address some of these questions, Graumann and Sommer (Graumann, 1989, 1992; Graumann & Sommer, 1988) developed the theory of linguistic perspectivity and started a research program to validate this theory empirically.

The theory of linguistic perspectivity can be considered as a combination of the egological and the interactionist approaches to perspectivity. It is based on the egological assumption that perception, cognition, and behavior always take place in situations structured by a given perspective. From different spatio-temporal or cognitive points of view persons perceive different aspects of an object. They structure the object differently, and they refer to different contexts. This holds not only for visual but also for cognitive objects, i.e. for imagined objects or abstract issues. "Point of view", here, can be every definable position in spatio-temporal as well as in cognitive space (cf. Graumann, 1993, 159).

The theory states that such a perspective is also reflected in the linguistic representation of the object. One can identify linguistic characteristics in speech that indicate a speaker's perspective.

Speakers usually do not express their perspectives just for themselves; i.e. "communication aims at transcendence of the 'private' worlds of the participants" (Rommetveit, 1979, 94). Speakers set a perspective the listeners are suggested to take. Following Mead, understanding basically presupposes taking the speaker's perspective, viewing the object he or she is talking about through the filter of the speaker's language. In the theory of linguistic perspectivity, the thesis that indicators of perspective in text affect text comprehension is derived from this idea.

Assuming that each hearer enters communication with his or her own perspective and, in principle, is a speaker too, the theory not only postulates an influence of the hearer's perspective on text comprehension, but conceives verbal interaction generally as a dynamic interaction of perspective setting and taking. In this sense, each dialogue is a negotiation for a common perspective (cf. Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs, 1986). Starting from an "anticipatory comprehension" (cf. Rommetveit, 1979, 98) which results from a "pre-established shared *Lebenswelt*" (ibid.), the first speaker has the opportunity to establish his or her perspective. The partner accepts, modifies, or rejects this view while bringing forward his or her own perspective, and so forth, until both agree upon a common perspective or break off the dialogue (cf. Graumann, 1990).

This conceptualisation of linguistic perspectivity is supported by empirical evidence from a series of experimental studies (for an overview cf. Graumann 1992; Graumann & Sommer, 1988).

In these studies, point of view usually has been operationalised by instructing subjects to identify with one of several protagonists in a text or film (e.g., a seller in a car selling scenario, a cyclist in a traffic accident scenario, or a participant in a schoolyard aggression scenario). The texts that were analysed in these studies were the subjects' short, monological descriptions of the events presented in the stimulus materials.

It has been demonstrated that a speaker's specific perspective on a given person, object, or event influences text production, reflected particularly in syntactic and semantic variables such as choice of grammatical subject, use of spatial terms ("come", "go") or use of mental terms such as *verba sentiendi* ("hope", "feel"), and also in the episodic structuring of events (cf. Graumann, 1992; Graumann & Sommer, 1988; Sommer et al., 1993). In recall studies (ibid.) subjects were able to reproduce these perspectival effects eight weeks later.

In further experiments (ibid.) the same variables also proved to be effective in text comprehension: Texts written from a specific point of view (using the linguistic variables mentioned above) influenced the reader's perspective, and in line with the Pichert and

Anderson paradigm, it was demonstrated that the reader's perspective also affected the comprehension of the text.

In these experiments, preferences for perspectives were occasionally found that could not be attributed to the experimental manipulation. For most of the subjects, e.g., it seemed to be easier to take the perspective of a car buyer than that of a car seller. Similarly, the subjects of Pichert and Anderson (1977) as well as those of Flammer and Tauber (1982) "identified more readily with the burglar perspective than with the homebuyer perspective" (Flammer & Tauber, 1982, 385). This led to the distinction between situational (e.g. experimentally induced) perspectives and habitual (individually or socially acquired, dispositional) perspectives. Graumann and Sommer (Graumann, 1992; Sommer & Graumann, 1989) varied both types experimentally and found that habitual points of view had even stronger effects on text production than had situational points of view.

In contrast to these more or less monologic aspects of the theory of linguistic perspectivity, its communicative assumptions have received little attention (cf. Graumann, 1990).

The Present Investigation

The present study aimed at studying effects of point of view on language in a more natural setting in which the subjects' point of view was their habitual, everyday position and not one manipulated by instruction. The text material analysed stems from realistic, dyadic persuasive discussions, where subjects attempted to convince one another of their point of view. In this context, the study investigates the assumption derived from the theory of linguistic perspective that subjects with different points of view on an issue differ not only in their arguments or conclusions but in the aspects they consider most relevant to that issue.

For this purpose, dyadic discussions on a contentious issue - each between a firm proponent and a firm opponent of immigration restrictions in Germany - were analysed with respect to the following questions:

- a) Which topic aspects are generally relevant to this discussion?
- b) Do opponents and proponents of immigration restrictions differ in the aspects they thematize as relevant to the topic?
- c) How do participants deal with the different aspects in the sequential dynamics of the dialogue? In particular, how are one person's preferred aspects introduced, and how does that person react to aspects brought forward by the other party?

Method

Design

The study employed one between-subjects factor (point of view: pro or con "stopping immigration")² and one within-subjects factor (category of aspect reference), with repeated measures on the last factor.

Additionally, an exemplary qualitative text analysis was conducted with respect to the interactive, sequential use of aspect reference.

The Topic Discussed

For the purpose of this study (and of other studies, cf. below), the issue to be discussed by the subjects had to match the following preconditions: Firstly it had to be well known to everyone, i.e. widely discussed in public. Secondly it had to evoke a sufficient number of aspects and to allow for contradictory positions. It had to be relevant to the subjects, so their discussions would not be just role playing but authentic discussions with the aim of convincing one another. Finally, the subjects' involvement, should, in

² The two experimental groups were selected and measured independently of each other. But the measures on these two groups are not fully independent in so far as proponents and opponents were in conversation with each other. For this kind of "social" dependency there is no adequate statistical model. One solution could be to consider this factor as a within-subjects factor, too, but this would lead to an underestimation of the error-sum-of-squares. So, the more conservative estimation of a between-subjects analysis was chosen.

principle, not be so strong that changes of positions were very unlikely. The issue of immigration into Germany was thought to meet all these requirements and was chosen as topic for the discussions to be conducted within the study.

Subjects and Procedure

The material for the analysis is a subsample of the corpus of 74 dyadic discussions collected in the context of other studies (cf. Rettig et al., 1993).

In this context, the total sample consisted of 148 subjects (73 women, 75 men) aged from 20 to 65 years with a broad range education and income (employees, students, workers, housewives, etc.) and political orientations (adherents or members of all relevant political parties). Subjects had been recruited in the Heidelberg/Mannheim area by flyers, announcements in local media, and by mailings to political organisations. In this way, they were invited to participate in discussions on immigration problems. Subjects were paid for their participation.

Before the discussions started, the subjects' points of view were elicited by asking a series of questions in a short semi-structured interview conducted in individual sessions. The questions asked were:

1. "People in Germany nowadays talk a lot about stopping immigration. Could you describe your point of view in this discussion?"
2. "Do you think that one should take measures concerning this issue?"
3. "Please tell us your arguments and demands."

Subjects' free oral responses were tape-recorded and transcribed. The term "stopping immigration" (*Ausländerstopp*) was selected as the stimulus word because pilot studies had shown that this was the relevant keyword in public discourse on the issue of immigration.

Following the interviews, subjects were brought together in random pairs to discuss the issue of immigration. They were asked to convince one another of their own point of view. The experimenter did not participate in the discussion; having given the instruction, his or her role was limited to supervising the procedure and to giving only

"technical" information when required and to ending the discussion after 30 minutes. All discussions were audio recorded and transcribed.

After discussion, each participant's point of view again was recorded, using the same procedure as before the discussion.

Independent Measure: Point of View

The analysis of the transcripts of the pre-discussion interviews showed that subjects referred to a number of different groups of immigrants in varying degrees of differentiation. The groups identified were: Immigrants from Eastern Europe of German origin (*Aussiedler*), immigrants from the former GDR (*Übersiedler*), applicants for asylum (*Asylbewerber*), political refugees (*politische Flüchtlinge*), refugees for economic reasons (*Wirtschaftsflüchtlinge*), foreigners in general, and immigrant workers (*Gastarbeiter*).

References to these groups were identified consensually by two expert raters - linguistically trained members of the research staff. Then, the total of each subject's utterances referring to one immigrant group was rated on a five-point scale (1=con, 5=pro stopping immigration) by three other independent raters. Interrater reliability for this procedure was .83 (according to Holsti, cf. Merten, 1983). Using factor analysis, the ratings of the groups were weighted and combined to one index for each subject: "point of view towards stopping immigration".

For the purpose of this study only discussions between subjects with different points of views were of interest. For that reason, discussions were selected in which one of the participants fell into the lower and the other into the upper quartile of the independent variable "point of view" (N=18). In terms of socio-demographic characteristics, this sample was not significantly different from the total sample.

Dependent Measures: Reference to Topic Aspects

A category system of topic aspects was developed by content analysis. To that aim, five of the 18 discussion transcripts were selected randomly. In this subsample all

utterances referring to the topic "stopping immigration" were identified and paraphrased. By generalisation, these paraphrases were reduced to thirty-seven categories (for the method cf. Mayring, 1988). These were hierarchically structured into main categories. The result was a category system comprising seven main categories (aspects) and thirty-seven subcategories (subaspects) (cf. table 1 in the Appendix). This category system was then used to analyse the whole sample of 18 discussion transcripts.

The coding unit used was the "turn", defined as the speaking activity of an interlocutor until the speaker changes (cf. Henne & Rehbock, 1979: 22 f.). Following Henne and Rehbock, simple backchannel feedback by the listener ("sure", "hm") or ineffective efforts to take the turn ("Well, I'd ...") were not considered as turns. Unlike these authors, however, we included comments as these could contain information relevant to questions of this study.

Two trained coders segmented each discussion transcript into turns according to the above definition. Intercoderreliability for this was .89 (according to Holsti, cf. Merten, 1983).

Two other trained coders categorised references to subaspects in each turn. For every turn, several different subaspects could be coded, but each subaspect could be coded only once.

Intercoder reliability for this procedure was .83³. For each discussant, the frequency in each category was counted and standardised with respect to the total number of turns by the subject (number of aspect references x 100/number of turns), so that the means can be read as average percentage of turns in which a subaspect occurred. Main aspects were not coded directly, but their scores were obtained by adding the scores of the respective subaspects.

³ Because of low cell frequencies in many categories, intercoder-objectivity was computed over the whole category system and not for single categories.

Hypotheses

In line with the theory of linguistic perspectivity, it was expected that the two groups differ in their aspect references. No hypotheses were made about specific (sub-) aspects or about the direction of the differences.

Results

Main Aspects

Table 2 shows the mean number of references to the main aspects by proponents and opponents of stopping immigration.

M SD	Social issues	Economy	Politics	Legal aspects	Culture	Environ- ment	Ethics
Propo- nents	19.8 11.3	19.5 17.5	17.8 11.3	10.0 12.9	7.4 8.9	5.3 7.0	8.1 7.8
Oppo- nents	17.1 11.3	15.0 15.5	18.0 14.1	9.0 11.0	6.2 7.2	1.4 2.5	7.5 9.0
Overall	18.4 11.2	17.2 16.4	17.9 12.6	9.5 11.8	6.8 8.0	5.2 7.0	7.8 8.3
F	0.50	0.66	0.00	0.07	0.21	4.92*	0.21

Table 2: References to main aspects

Mean, standard deviation and F value (* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$)

A 2-factor ANOVA, with point of view (pro/con) as a between-subjects factor and the seven main aspects as a within-subjects factor yielded a significant main effect of the latter factor: Both supporters and opponents of "stopping immigration" referred more frequently to social issues, politics and economy than to other main aspects ($F=14.03$; $df=6,245$; $p<0.001$).

With one exception, both supporters and opponents refer to the main aspects in about equal numbers. The only significant difference is found with the main aspect "environment" ($F=4.92$; $df=1,34$; $p \leq 0.05$). Proponents of stopping immigration referred to this aspect more frequently than did opponents ($M=5.3$ vs. 1.4).

Subaspects

Table 3 (cf. Appendix) shows the means for the subaspects. The subaspects most frequently referred to by the overall sample were "political situation in Germany", "economic reasons for immigration", "political situation in countries of origin", "conflicts between Germans and immigrants", "foreigners and welfare benefits" and "jobs/housing".

A Wilcoxon rank-sum test⁴ showed significant differences between proponents and opponents only for the subaspect "population density" ($Z=-2.15$; $df=1,34$ $p<0.05$). Supporters of stopping immigration thematized population density much more often ($M=5.29$; $SD=7.04$) than did opponents ($M=.83$; $SD=1,65$). This difference was also the reason for the significant difference on the main aspect "environment".

Introduction of Aspects

The small number of differences found between proponents and opponents may be due to the fact that aspect references were measured as overall frequencies over the whole discussion text, ignoring the dynamics of the dialogue. This procedure does not differentiate between actively introducing an aspect into discussion and just picking it up from the interlocutor before possibly rejecting it. It was therefore additionally analysed by which group an aspect was first brought into discussion, i.e., now, only first references were considered.

The analysis on the level of main aspects showed basically the same pattern as in the previous analysis (cf. table 4). Again, the only significant differences found were with the main aspect "environment" ($\chi^2=5.9$; $df= 1,34$; $p<0.05$).

⁴ The precondition of normal distribution was not fulfilled.

□ freq. percent	Social issues	Economy	Politics	Legal aspects	Culture	Ecology	Ethics
Propo- ponents	17 51.52	15 55.56	15 50.00	10 50.00	10 62.50	10 76.92	11 50.00
Oppo- ponents	16 48.48	12 44.44	15 50.00	10 50.00	6 37.50	3 23.08	11 50.00
chi ²	0.364	1.333	0.000	0.000	1.800	5.900**	0.000

Table 4: First references to main aspects

Frequency, percentage, and chi² value (* p ≤ 0.05, ** p ≤ 0.01)

With subaspects, proponents of stopping immigration introduced "population density" (chi²= 10.60; df= 1,34; p<0.001) and "economic motives for immigration" (chi²=7.48; df= 1,34; p<0.01) significantly more frequently than did opponents. On the other hand, opponents to restrictions introduced "global economic interrelations" (chi²=7.26; df= 1,34; p<0.01) and "moral responsibility for refugees" (chi²=6.42; df= 1,34; p<0.05) significantly more frequently than did proponents of stopping immigration (cf. table 5 in the Appendix). No other significant differences between the two groups were found for subaspects. These results support the hypothesis that there are some subaspects that are particularly important to each group, namely the aspects that are actively introduced into discussion. A considerable number of aspect references, however, cannot be attributed to a specific point of view. This may be so either because these aspects are within the scope of both perspectives, or because they are introduced by the opponent and then just picked up to be rejected.

Negotiation over Aspect Relevance: Qualitative Analysis

In the theory of linguistic perspectivity, dialogues are conceived of as dynamic interaction of perspective setting and perspective taking. With respect to aspect reference in discussions where there is disagreement, this means that each speaker introduces those aspects of the theme he or she considers as relevant from his or her point of view. Moreover he or she has to deal with the aspects brought forward by the opponent. If communicating is to work on a common perspective - as it is assumed here - both discussants have to negotiate which aspects relate to the overall topic and which

do not. In this sense, the discussions analysed in this study can be considered as negotiations over aspects.

Four basic types of this interactive aspect use can be differentiated:

1. First introduction of a new aspect into the discussion

This comprises cases of first introduction of an aspect into the discussion.

2. Acceptance of an aspect

An aspect is accepted if the speaker refers to an aspect brought forward in the preceding turn. This does not imply acceptance of the interlocutor's evaluations or arguments he or she connected with the aspect.

3. Rejection of an aspect

An aspect is rejected if the speaker indicates that he or she does not consider this aspect as relevant to the topic of discussion.

4. Re-introduction of an aspect

An aspect is re-introduced if it has been introduced before, but was rejected or ignored by switching to another aspect. Both re-introduction and introduction (except at the start of discussion) are cases of aspect change.

Like any other activity of the interactants, aspect negotiation has to comply with the general conventions of conversation as they are elaborated by Grice and others (for a summary cf. Kraut & Higgins, 1984). Even when rejecting or ignoring an aspect brought forward by the interlocutor, each participant has to follow the cooperation principle and its specifications, the conversational maxims; otherwise the very basis of each conversation, the implicit contract to collaborate (cf. e.g. Rommetveit, 1974) is threatened.

The cooperation principle implies that each speaker has to comply with certain "obligations" (Henne & Rehbock, 1979, 207). Henne & Rehbock discriminate between three levels of obligations: the level of relationship, of (verbal) action, and of topic. On the level of relationship, an interlocutor is obliged, e.g., to respond to friendly and polite behaviour in a friendly and polite manner. On the action level, a question, e.g., obliges

the interlocutor to give an answer. Not only for the purpose of the present investigation, the thematic obligation is particularly important: "The obligation to adhere to the introduced and accepted topic is for all conversations very strong [...] one cannot leave the topic abruptly: An abrupt change of topic has to be indicated explicitly [...]" (Henne & Rehbock, 1979, 206).

An interlocutor can be more or less "responsive" (Henne & Rehbock, 1979, 211) with respect to these obligations. Lacking responsiveness can threaten the basis of the conversation. Henne and Rehbock state that "low responsiveness [...] particularly on the level of relationship, arouses indignation, anger, or even the wish to break off the conversation" (Henne & Rehbock, 1979, 215). Lack of responsiveness on one level can possibly be compensated to a certain degree by responsiveness on other levels. These assumptions, however, have not been empirically tested.

To gain a preliminary heuristical insight in the process of aspect negotiation in the course of discussion, a qualitative analysis of two discussion sequences (excerpt 1 and 2) was conducted. By analysing the excerpts in terms of the four basic categories of interactive aspect use an indication is provided of how each party entered preferred aspects into the common perspective and kept out aspects that do not fit the person's own perspective. We consider how speakers can do this without threatening the common perspective, i.e. without risking ending the conversation, in terms of communicative responsibility.

In the following each excerpt is presented and analysed individually. Then a comparative interpretation serves to draw conclusions.

Excerpt 1 (from the first half of discussion 10)

Subject # 19 (teacher, male, 50 years of age: proponent of immigration restrictions): *(1) If everyone could come in then sometime the population would be too high, wouldn't it, if people were allowed in without any limitation, here in Germany.*

Subject # 20 (psychologist, female, 27 years of age: opponent to restrictions): *(2) I mean, basically, I mean, morally, what criteria are there to decide that certain people*

would not be allowed to come to this country? (3) It can only be done on the basis of nationality. I see no other criterion how one can say, well, this one is allowed in and that one not. (4) And drawing this borderline is completely arbitrary, isn't it, so that somehow ...

19: (5) Well, o.k. ["Ja, ja, also"], I'd say that Germany is no immigration country in the first place, (6) it is pretty full (7) and Germany hasn't had any colonies, and so it has got no responsibilities in that direction, and when today people are allowed to come to this country then ...

20: (8) Isn't there a general human responsibility for refugees? (9) But anyhow, what do you think about it, which criterion would you use to deny people the right of residence in Germany?

19: (10) Well ["Ja"], as I said: I would limit the stay of resident aliens, to three months for example, like in Turkey, or somehow, (11) because I would simply say that the differences in economic status, the gap between Germany and other countries is so wide, that it is no longer a free and natural decision to say, well, why not live in Germany. No, it's simply the egoistic, economical interests of the foreigners that makes them come here, they simply have egoistical ...

20: (12) Yes, but it is our egoistical interests when we say first of all we want to maintain our standard of living, we won't have it spoiled, and we don't see why we should give away any of it. (13) And another thing: this whole problem is nothing new, take for example all the Polish people that once came to the Ruhr area, that was a natural thing in history because the jobs used to be here, and there was a chance to earn some money (14) and, er, I don't find that so bad.

In utterance (1), subject 19 introduces the subspect "population density". The quantitative analysis has shown that this is one of the most important aspects of the proponents' perspective, whereas it plays no role in the opponents' perspective. Subject 19 evaluates this aspect negatively ("too high") and uses it to argue against an acceptance of economical refugees.

Subject 20 complies with the principle of thematic responsiveness by taking up the word "allow", but she ignores the subaspect "population density" and introduces the subaspect "moral responsibility" (aspect change), which, according to the analysis of first references, is the most important subaspect in the opponents' perspective: At (2), she questions, whether there are any criteria at all to reject refugees. The only obvious criterion she sees, "*nationality*", is rejected as "*arbitrary*" (4). By the interjections "*I mean*" (2) and "*I see*" (3), these arguments are explicitly indicated as coming from the speaker's particular point of view (cf. Graumann, 1993), which implies that there may be other standpoints as well and invites the interlocutor to present his own point of view.

Subject 19 starts his reply with a "contact signal" ("*Well, o.k.*" (5)). Contact signals can but need not signal acceptance of the previous speaker's argument. They are "also - and often only - a confirmation that one has taken notice of what has been said" (Weiss, 1975, 24). Here, the contact signal is followed by an announcement of subject 19's own point of view: "*I'd say...*" (5). In terms of perspective negotiation these two operations may be interpreted as: "I have taken your perspective and understand how things look from your point of view. Now I want you to take my perspective." This opening signals that subject 19 is responsive to the invitation, and it enables him to change aspects without violating the cooperation principle. He introduces the subaspect "debate on immigration law" and declares that Germany was not an "*immigration country*" (5), which implies the rejection of economical refugees. This is again supported by re-introducing the subaspect "population density" (6) and by introducing the new subaspect "historical responsibility for refugees" (7).

Subject 20 also changes aspects, by re-introducing the subaspect "moral responsibility for refugees", which she contrasts to the aspect of (lacking) "historical responsibility for refugees" (8). In taking up the word "responsibility" and in sticking to the main aspect "ethics", she complies with the principle of thematic obligation. In paralleling subject 19's previous effort to re-introduce the proponents' central subaspect "population density", she once more tries to establish the opponents' central subaspect

"moral responsibility" in the common perspective. On the level of action, her question for her interlocutor's criteria for a denial of immigration (9) obliges him to an answer.

Subject 19 takes over with a contact signal ("*Well*" (10)) and responds to that obligation. But in delivering the answer, he introduces the new subaspect "immigration practice in other countries" (10), giving the practice in Turkey as a positive example. Then, he introduces the new subaspect "economic motives for immigration" (11) which, according to the analysis of first references, is the subaspect that is most important to proponents. In doing so, he not only makes an internal attribution for immigration but also gives a negative evaluation of these motives ("*egoistic*").

Picking up the keyword "*egoistic*", subject 20 accepts this subaspect, but rejects its negative evaluation (14) and interprets it as a general motive which can be found everywhere, even with the Germans (12). Furthermore, she attributes immigration to external factors, i.e. to the economic situation. Again, this dissent is not threatening the common basis of the dialogue, because the speaker opens with a combination of contact signal and indication of a divergent point of view ("*Yes, but*" (12)). In other words, she responds to the obligations on the level of relationship. Moreover, with the acceptance of the subaspect, she also shows responsiveness on the thematic level.

Excerpt 2 (from the end of discussion 41)

Subject # 82 (pensioner, male, 71 years of age: proponent of immigration restrictions): (1) *I welcome foreigners in this country if they come to build things up and contribute to the community - they get good wages, they get good money* (2) *but if they become criminals then it's the end of the road with me!*

Subject # 81 (secretary, female, 48 years of age: opponent to restrictions): (3) *What's that obsession of yours with "becoming criminals"?* (4) *Why do you blow it all up in that way, it's not the issue.*

82: (5) *I'm talking about the criminals.* (6) *You haven't heard enough about foreigners who become criminals.*

81: (7) *That's not important to me ["für mich"] at the moment, it's another issue.*

(8) *You're constantly besides the point.*

82: (9) *No, I'm not! To my mind ["Nach meiner Ansicht"] that is part of the question "Am I for or against foreigners".*

81: (10) *Now, I want to stop this interview, there's no point in going on!*

(The interview actually was stopped here, a few minutes before the supposed time limit of thirty minutes.)

In the first turn, subject 82 **re-introduces** the subaspect "**delinquency of foreigners**" (2), which he has referred to several times before. "Delinquency of foreigners" is quantitatively one of the proponents' most important subaspects. Proponents use and introduced it far more often than did opponents, and this difference missed statistical significance by very little.

Correspondingly, subject 81, an opponent, **rejects** this aspect (4) explicitly as not relevant to the topic. In doing so, she is thematically responsive, but there is no responsiveness on the level of relationship. There is no contact signal at the beginning, no indication that she appreciates the other's contribution at least formally. On the contrary, switching to the meta-communicative level, she blames her interlocutor for violating the maxim of relevance, that is for leaving the common topic by insisting on a subaspect which from her point of view is not even slightly related to the issue. The corresponding questions (3, 4) imply the obligation (on the action level) of the partner to give an account.

Words such as "*obsession*" and "*blow up*", however, indicate that she is not just protesting against a violation of the implicit communication contract, but that she is going to cancel this contract from her side, too. This devaluation of the interlocutor violates at least the maxim of politeness (Grice, 1975, 47).

By the opening "*I'm talking about ...*" (5) subject 82 indicates responsiveness to the obligation of giving an account. Insisting on its relevance, he justifies and **re-introduces** the subaspect "delinquency of foreigners" (5, 6). With the reproach "*You haven't heard*

enough..." (6), subject 82 follows his interlocutor to the meta-communicative level and also gives up being polite.

Subject 81 rejects the subaspect again (7, 8). She repeats the accusation of not "being relevant" and takes another step towards cancelling the communication contract: (7) - "*That's not important to me...*" - can be interpreted as a retreat from the common ground, which implies "importance to" both of the discussants, to her own private world where the private world of subject 82 is no consideration.

Subject 82, again, responds to the accusation of not being relevant and insisting on the subaspect's relevance, and re-introduces it (9).

Now subject 81 takes the final step and actually cancels the communication contract (10).

These two discussion sequences represent two clearly distinct patterns of aspect negotiation both on the level of aspect reference and on the level of responsiveness.

In excerpt 1, aspects are constantly changed, mainly by introduction of new aspects. In this short sequence, six different subaspects are referred to. Each interlocutor brings forward his or her own perspective by basically ignoring the opponent's aspects and introducing another aspect implied by his or her own perspective.

This is not threatening the communication contract because both speakers are highly responsive. In spite of the frequent aspect changes, they are very sensitive to communicative obligations, particularly to relational and thematic obligations: aspect changes are usually prepared by contact signals and sometimes take place within the same main aspect. No aspect is explicitly rejected. The common perspective seems to be rather wide, the boundaries between the two individual perspectives are not strictly defined.

In excerpt 2, by comparison, only one aspect, "delinquency of foreigners" is discussed. The pattern is re-introduction - rejection - re-introduction, until one discussant decides that there is no way to establish a common perspective and refuses further discussion.

The speakers are responsive on the thematic and on the action level, but they lack any responsiveness on the level of relationship. Divergent perspectives are introduced rather abruptly, without any contact signal that would indicate the necessary basic appreciation of the other as an equal partner. The resulting break-off of the conversation makes this sequence a perfect illustration of Henne & Rehbock's thesis of the importance of relational responsiveness.

It is obviously the high relevance of the subaspect "delinquency of foreigners" - central to the perspective of the proponent, definitely not acceptable to the opponent - that makes it impossible for the discussants to establish a common perspective. There is no fuzziness, no overlapping of individual perspectives with this aspect; and the aspect is too important to both of them to skip it and go on with other aspects.

After all, these two patterns seem to reflect two basic ways of negotiating over aspects. Possibly, specific conditions can be identified that favour the occurrence of one or the other pattern. So, it could be assumed, e.g., that the pattern found in excerpt 1 is more likely to be found with complex topics, with discussants less involved, or at the beginning of a discussion. But these are assumptions to be refined and empirically tested by further research.

Conclusion

The analysis shows that the issue of (restriction of) immigration is represented as a complex and multi-faceted topic. The **main aspects** associated with this topic cover a broad range from economic and social to even environmental aspects. With the exception of the last, this holds for both opponents and proponents of restrictions. On the level of **subaspects** it becomes evident that by "environmental aspects" the proponents of restrictions understand nearly exclusively problems that, in their eyes, are caused by overpopulation.

If the **dynamics** of the discussions are taken into account; that is the question whether the discussants refer actively or reactively to the different aspects, then significant differences that before were only tendencies become evident: The analysis of **first references** shows that proponents stressed that foreigners want to immigrate merely for economic reasons and that their presence would cause even environmental problems, whereas opponents brought forward global economic interrelations and the moral responsibility for refugees. The basic difference behind this seems to be that proponents of restrictions make a clear distinction between "them" and "us", between "their problems" and "our problems", whereas opponents stress that we are all human beings living in "one world".

The **qualitative analysis** revealed two different patterns of dialogic negotiation of these aspects, and illustrated how they are used in natural language.

All in all, the divergence of points of view is not revealed by simple addition of an individual's aspect references in his or her overall text contribution. The only difference here seems to be due to the fact that the subaspect "population density" stressed by the proponents is so unfamiliar to the opponents that they not even reject it. The other aspects, however, seem to be well known to both groups. Even if they rejected the relevance of some of those aspects, they could be compelled to refer to them, because they are in the common focus, pre-established by public discussion.

This is in line with findings of earlier studies on monological texts, where subjects with different points of view had to recall episodes from a video (cf. Graumann & Sommer, 1988). Here, having a specific point of view did not result in subjects omitting things that did not correspond to their point of view. Thus subjects identifying with a car buyer, also recalled content items that had been rated as typical for a car seller's perspective. This could be explained by the fact that seller and buyer had complementary roles in these events, so that these items were necessary for the events to be coherently recalled. Instead of omitting things, subjects used rather subtle syntactic or semantic means to mark their perspective. In the present study, such subtle linguistic variables were not tested. Here too, however, a more refined analysis - of first references - shows stronger perspectival effects.

The qualitative analysis of discussion sequences gives some cues for further research on the previously neglected interactive game of perspective setting and perspective taking in natural dialogues. The four types of interactive aspect use, e.g., could be applied to a larger sample of discussions. Statistical methods such as lag-sequential analysis (Bakeman & Gottman, 1986) could then allow an empirical testing of hypotheses about sequential patterns of interactive aspect use. Moreover, the comparative analysis of the two different discussions can be used as a starting point for constructing and operationalizing more specific hypotheses, for example on the respective relevance of the different dimensions of responsiveness to the success of conversations.

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Appendix

Main aspect 1: Economy

- 1.1 Economic situation in Germany
- 1.2 Debate on affluence in Germany
- 1.3 Economic situation in countries of origin
- 1.4 Economic motives for immigration
- 1.5 Global economic interrelations
- 1.6 Other economic aspects

Main aspect 2: Social issues

- 2.1. Crowding/psychological effects of immigration
- 2.2 Conflicts between Germans and foreigners
- 2.3 Good relations between Germans and immigrants
- 2.4 Foreigners and welfare benefits
- 2.5 Jobs/housing
- 2.6 Delinquency of foreigners
- 2.7 Other social aspects

Main aspect 3: Legal aspects

- 3.1 Debate on immigration law
- 3.2. Debate on the right to vote for foreigners
- 3.3 Debate on citizenship
- 3.4 Legal status of persons applying for political asylum
- 3.5 Immigration practice in other countries
- 3.6 Other legal aspects

Main aspect 4: Culture

- 4.1. Religion
- 4.2 Position of women in society
- 4.3 Cultural integration
- 4.4 Other cultural aspects

Main aspect 5: Environment

- 5.1 Population density
- 5.2 Ecological policy
- 5.3 Environment/ecology in Germany general
- 5.4 Environment/ecology in other countries
- 5.5 Other environmental aspects

Main aspect 6: Ethics

- 6.1 Moral responsibility for refugees
- 6.2 Historical responsibility for refugees
- 6.3 Other ethical aspects

Main aspect 7: Politics

- 7.1 Political situation in countries of origin
- 7.2 Political situation in Europe
- 7.3 Political situation in Germany
- 7.4. Right-wing radicalism in Germany
- 7.5 Foreign aid policy
- 7.6 Other political aspects

Table 1: Category system: Main aspects and subsaspects

M SD	Proponents	Opponents	Overall	Z
1.1 Economic situation in Germany	3.57 3.70	3.63 8.03	3.60 6.15	0.86
1.2 Debate on affluence in Germany	4.41 4.81	3.297 6.10	3.85 5.44	-1.25
1.3 Economic situation in countries of origin	3.13 5.91	2.76 6.85	2.95 6.31	-0.83
1.4 Economic motives for immigration	9.44 11.6	5.20 6.06	7.32 9.40	-0.95
1.5 Global economic interrelations	1.59 4.14	6.18 10.8	3.88 8.43	1.76
1.6 Other economic aspects	0 0	0 0	0 0	0
2.1 Crowding/psycho logical effects of immigration	2.99 5.94	1.33 3.23	2.16 4.78	-0.56
2.2 Conflicts between Germans and immigrants	3.82 5.66	5.58 8.54	4.70 7.19	0.74
2.3 Good relations between Germans and foreigners	1.35 2.95	1.60 2.54	1.48 2.71	0.87
2.4 Foreigners and welfare benefits	5.02 5.84	3.70 2.02	4.40 5.63	-0.79
2.5 Jobs/housing	3.80 4.23	4.92 5.04	4.35 4.58	0.16
2.6 Delinquency of foreigners	5.47 11.1	1.43 3.12	3.45 8.32	-0.32
2.7 Other social aspects	0.41 1.15	0.42 1.84	0.41 1.75	0.04
3.1 Debate on immigration law	2.01 7.14	2.31 6.89	2.16 6.01	0.02
3.2 Debate on the right to vote for foreigners	1.08 3.31	0.99 2.97	1.04 3.09	-0.39
3.3 Debate on citizenship	0.19 0.81	1.62 4.77	0.90 3.44	0.62
3.4 Legal status of persons applying for political asylum	2.88 4.39	3.14 4.56	3.01 4.41	-0.01
3.5 Immigration practice in other countries	1.96 2.97	2.75 6.86	2.36 5.22	-0.79
3.6 Other legal aspects	3.94 7.65	4.60 9.51	4.27 8.50	-0.86

Table 3: References to subspects (continued)

Mean, standard deviation and Z value (* $p \geq 0.05$, ** $p \geq 0.01$)

M SD	Proponents	Opponents	Overall	Z
4.1 Religion	0.19 0.81	0.60 2.55	0.39 1.87	0
4.2 Position of women in society	0.76 3.25	0.60 2.55	0.68 2.88	0
4.3 Cultural integration	3.50 5.18	4.42 6.29	3.96 5.70	0.05
4.4 Other cultural aspects	1.74 6.73	0.95 2.83	1.34 5.10	-1.44
5.1 Population density	5.29 7.04	0.83 1.66	3.06 5.52	-2.15*
5.2 Ecological policy	0 0	0.39 1.68	0.19 1.19	0.94
5.3 Environment/ ecology in Germany general	0 0	0 0	0 0	0
5.4 Environment/ ecology in other countries	0 0	0.15 0.66	0.07 0.46	0.94
5.5 Other environ- mental aspects	0 0	0 0	0 0	0
6.1 Moral responsibility for refugees	2.36 4.43	4.22 5.92	3.29 5.03	1.22
6.2 Historical responsibility for refugees	2.07 3.69	1.03 5.92	1.69 3.78	-0.92
6.3 Other ethical aspects	3.91 5.47	2.60 4.61	3.26 5.03	-0.47
7.1 Political situation in countries of origin	5.22 8.52	5.57 6.58	5.40 7.50	-0.33
7.2 Political situation in Europe	0.18 0.79	2.66 6.84	1.42 4.96	1.44
7.3 Political situation in Germany	7.50 8.65	8.22 10.7	7.86 9.59	-0.34
7.4 Right-wing radicalism in Germany	0.43 1.27	1.45 3.09	0.94 2.38	0.95
7.5 Foreign aid policy	4.63 5.50	2.98 4.65	3.80 5.08	-1.08
7.6 Other political aspects	0.79 3.37	0.22 0.70	0.51 2.41	0.49

Table 3: References to subspects

Mean, standard deviation and Z value (* $p \geq 0.05$, ** $p \geq 0.01$)

freq. percent	Proponents	Opponents	chi ²
1.1 Economic situation in Germany	9 64.29	5 35.71	1.870
1.2 Debate on affluence in Germany	8 66.67	4 33.33	2.000
1.3 Economic situation in countries of origin	5 62.50	3 37.50	0.643
1.4 Economic motives for immigration	11 78.57	3 21.43	7.481**
1.5 Global economic interrelations	1 11.11	8 88.89	7.259**
1.6 Other economic aspects	0	0	0
2.1 Crowding/psychological effects of immigration	4 57.14	3 42.86	0.177
2.2 Conflicts between Germans and immigrants	7 63.64	4 36.36	1.178
2.3 Good relations between Germans and foreigners	4 44.44	5 55.56	0.148
2.4 Foreigners and welfare benefits	9 69.23	4 30.77	3.010
2.5 Jobs/housing	7 50.00	7 50.00	0.000
2.6 Delinquency of foreigners	5 83.33	1 16.67	3.200
2.7 Other social aspects	4 66.67	2 33.33	0.800
3.1 Debate on immigration law	1 33.33	2 66.67	0.364
3.2 Debate on the right to vote for foreigners	3 75.00	1 25.00	1.125
3.3 Debate on citizenship	1 33.33	2 66.67	0.364
3.4 Legal status of persons applying for political asylum	4 44.44	5 55.56	0.148
3.5 Immigration practice in other countries	6 75.00	2 25.00	2.571
3.6 Other legal aspects	4 44.44	5 55.56	0.148

Table 5: First references to subspects (continued)

Frequency, percentage and chi² value (* p>0.05, ** p>0.01)

freq. percent	Proponents	Opponents	chi ²
4.1 Religion	2 50.00	2 50.00	0.000
4.2 Position of women in society	1 100	0 0	1.029
4.3 Cultural integration	6 60.00	4 40.00	0.554
4.4 Other cultural aspects	1 25.00	3 75.00	1.125
5.1 Population density	10 90.91	1 9.09	10.60**
5.2 Ecological policy	0 0	1 100	1.029
5.3 Environment/ ecology in Germany general	0 0	0 0	0
5.4 Environment/ ecology in other countries	0 0	1 100	1.029
5.5 Other environ- mental aspects	0 0	0 0	0
6.1 Moral responsibility for refugees	2 18.18	9 81.82	6.415**
6.2 Historical respon- sibility for refugees	6 75.00	2 25.00	0.109
6.3 Other ethical aspects	7 58.33	5 41.67	0.500
7.1 Political situation in countries of origin	5 38.46	8 61.54	1.084
7.2 Political situation in Europe	1 20.00	4 80.00	2.090
7.3 Political situation in Germany	6 46.15	7 53.85	0.120
7.4 Right-wing radicalism in Germany	3 30.00	7 70.00	2.215
7.5 Foreign aid policy	8 72.73	3 27.27	3.273
7.6 Other political aspects	1 50.00	1 50.00	0.000

Table 5: First references to subaspects

Frequency, percentage and chi² value (* p≥0.05, ** p≥0.01)

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aus dem Sonderforschungsbereich 245
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