

Interpreting at B2B wine tasting events. Pragm-dialectical insights

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Abstract

This paper addresses the specific communicative context of interpreter-mediated business-to-business (B2B) wine tasting events bringing together Italian wine producers and English-speaking buyers. Given the difficulty of obtaining authentic recordings of interactions in business contexts, the study examines the scripted dialogues that are used for role-play simulations in dialogue interpreting (DI) courses at the University of Trieste. These scripts were prepared by making use of authentic materials delivered to interpreters and gathered by the author of the paper while working as an interpreter at B2B wine tasting events. The investigation draws on the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation to answer the following research question: what are the argumentative features of interpreter-mediated wine tasting encounters? Focusing on the notions of dialectical profile, argumentative pattern and argumentative structure, the paper will show that, unlike other B2B encounters, wine tasting meetings do not generally entail actual negotiations between producers and buyers, but rather focus on the description, promotion and tasting of wine. They shape up as relatively informal meetings, which share features of business and tourist settings and in which the role of the interpreter is continuously negotiated.

Keywords

Pragm-dialectics, dialectical profile, argumentative pattern, argumentative structure, dialogue interpreting, business interpreting, B2B wine tasting event, epistemic position, interpreter's role, structured role-play.

Wine is widely known to be among the “typical Italian products that frequently emerge as topics in conference and business settings” (Kelleth Bidoli 2016: 108). Together with manufacturing and tourism, the food and wine industry is one of the three pillars of the Italian economy, with sustainably-produced wines generating substantial trade balances that bolster exports (Fortis/Sartori 2016: 284). This enviable position within the international agri-food market multiplies instances of cross-cultural encounters during which the trade of Italian wines is discussed, often thanks to the help of interpreters.

This paper explores the specific communicative context of interpreter-mediated business-to-business (B2B) wine tasting events to provide an answer to this research question: what are the argumentative features that characterise these events? The field of B2B wine tasting meetings has grown considerably over the last few years, not only because these encounters are scheduled at world-famous permanent fairs, such as *Milano Wine Week* or *Vinitaly* – where interpreting services are regularly provided (Palazzi 2006: 317) –, but also because business associations and Chambers of Commerce often organise B2B events to promote the products of more or less renowned winemakers and favour international business opportunities. Innumerable B2B events have lately taken place to enhance the visibility and expand the business networks of Italian winemakers. They include, for instance, the *International Wine Traders* initiatives and *B2B Wine Lombardia*, which were respectively arranged by a company named *Iron 3* and by *UniCredit Bank* and *Confagricoltura Lombardia* (the regional section of the General Confederation of Italian Agriculture). At these events, which are representative of the numerous initiatives organised throughout Italy, international buyers can taste and, possibly, buy Italian wines offered by representatives of Italian wineries. Given the multi-cultural environment, interpreters are regularly present to enable communication and coordinate the interaction (cf. Wadensjö 1998) between producers and buyers.

Analysing the triadic exchanges (Mason 2001) involving wine producers, potential buyers and interpreters is, however, compounded by the data-gathering obstacles characterising business interpreting research in general. The unmistakable fact that “very little attention has been directed toward business interpreting within the field of interpreting studies to date” (Takimoto 2015: 39), notoriously stems from “the obvious difficulty of obtaining natural data due to confidentiality and other constraints” (*Ibid.*). This difficulty not only hampers the examination of the contextual features of the various types of real-life interpreter-mediated encounters in business settings but also jeopardises the description of these features at university level, thereby determining a dearth of educational tools and self-study materials in business interpreting as opposed to public service interpreting (Vigier-Moreno 2020: 200). Scholars who devote their studies to dialogue interpreting (DI) in business settings without having access to authentic recordings of interactions strive to make up for this research gap by describing personal experiences (Della Libera 2009), using interviews as a research method (Takimoto 2006) or resorting to structured role-plays (Cirillo/Radicioni

2017; Vigier-Moreno 2020), in order to provide trainees with the experience they need to start working in the business sector.

In the light of unavailability of authentic recordings of interactions in B2B wine tasting settings, analytical insights will be gleaned from authentic materials that were delivered to interpreters for advance preparation of the subject before real wine tasting events. Building on the author's professional experiences in the sector and drawing on pragma-dialectics (van Eemeren/Grootendorst 1984), the following sections will describe the contextual peculiarities of interpreter-mediated meetings between Italian wine producers (WPs) and English-speaking potential buyers (PBs), highlighting the argumentative nature of WPs' turns and laying emphasis on the interpreter's role in an uncharted communicative context that is providing challenges and offering opportunities to dialogue interpreters.

1. Material and methodology

The analysis focuses on the scripts used to carry out role-playing activities during DI courses at the University of Trieste. These structured role-plays (Cirillo/Radicioni 2017) are destined to BA students with Italian as their L1 and English as their L2 or L3; they are typically "enacted by two instructors playing the two 'primary parties' in a business negotiation and students taking it in turns to play the role of the interpreter" (Cirillo/Radicioni 2017: 122). The structured role-play (RP) has been shown to be "a valuable teaching and learning tool to introduce students to the practice of dialogue interpreting in business settings" (Cirillo/Radicioni 2017: 119). Included in "virtually all modules of dialogue interpreting offered around the globe" (Cirillo/Radicioni 2017: 122), role-playing activities are meant to "shed light on the constraints and expectations associated with (interpreted) business negotiations and raise students' awareness of the coordinating role of the interpreter therein" (*Ibid.*). They are particularly useful at an early stage of the learning path, as trade fairs and business negotiations are the environments in which Italian interpreting students generally start working as interpreters (Cirillo/Radicioni 2017: 120). Wine-related topics have already been used to design RPs for the teaching of business interpreting (Lee/Buzo 2009: 54). In the context of the present study, they serve the research purpose of highlighting the features of a DI setting that has not been described yet and that is likely to continue growing in the years to come.

Although structured RPs have been criticised for being inauthentic (Stokoe 2011 in Cirillo/Radicioni 2017: 126), the activities carried out with DI students at the University of Trieste are "grounded on a dialogic approach" (Cirillo/Radicioni 2017: 119) according to the principles of Conversation Analysis (CA, see Sacks *et al.* 1974). Moreover, the scripts that will be analysed were drafted starting from authentic materials delivered to interpreters before real B2B wine tasting meetings. These materials, including glossaries and descriptions of Italian companies, were gathered by the author when working as an interpreter at B2B wine tasting events. The scripts can, therefore, be considered representative of the typical in-

teraction occurring between WPs and PBs. They are examined using methods drawn from CA and, especially, the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation (van Eemeren/Grootendorst 1984). Argumentation theories have already been harnessed in Interpreting Studies (Marzocchi 1998) as text analytical methodologies in that, when required in argumentative situations, interpreting implies continuous argumentative interaction (Crevatin 1998: xiv). In this respect, argumentation analysis provides the interpreter with a key to understanding the overall meaning of source texts and the argumentative orientation of the professional situations s/he is immersed in (Marzocchi 1998: 5). Pragma-dialectics, in particular, has already been used as a method to examine the interplay between interactants in DI situations (e.g. Delizée/Michaux 2017; Vogeleeer/Delizée 2017), although it cannot be said to be widely used in DI research. Developed by van Eemeren/Grootendorst (1984) at the University of Amsterdam, pragma-dialectics sees argumentation as “a verbal and social activity of reason aimed at increasing (or decreasing) the acceptability of a controversial standpoint for the listener or reader, by putting forward a constellation of propositions intended to justify (or refute) the standpoint before a rational judge” (van Eemeren *et al.* 1996: 5). More simply, argumentation is understood as “a type of communication aimed at resolving a difference of opinion by critically testing the acceptability of the standpoints at issue” (van Eemeren *et al.* 2008: 476). According to pragma-dialecticians, arguers manoeuvre strategically by choosing the themes to be addressed, selecting presentational devices and adapting argumentation to their specific audiences (van Eemeren 2010: 93-94), in an attempt “to reconcile their own preferences for rhetorical effectiveness with the dialectical requirements of reasonableness inherent in the stage concerned” (van Eemeren 2010: 43).

Pragma-dialectics is a versatile methodology that can virtually be applied to the analysis of discourse in all communicative contexts, because “not a day passes without a confrontation, without argument and counter-response. Argumentation is encountered everywhere: during meetings, in scientific articles, in film reviews, letters, and in everyday conversation” (van Eemeren/Grootendorst 1987: 57). In the context of B2B wine tasting events, the interaction between the WP and the PB is inherently argumentative, as the WP strives to convince the PB of the quality of his/her wines in order to persuade his/her interlocutor to buy them.

In its simplest form, argumentation consists of a statement (the *argument*) put forward by a speaker or writer (the *arguer*) in support of another statement (the *standpoint*). (Hitchcock/Wagemans 2011: 185)

The scripts will be analysed to identify the argument put forward by WPs to support their shared and regularly unexpressed standpoint, verbalisable as *you should buy my wines*. In everyday reality, though, argumentation is rarely found in its simplest form:

In analysing argumentative practices, more elaborated *argumentative patterns* can be distinguished [...] having varying degrees of complexity. (van Eemeren 2017: 20, my emphasis)

The following section will demonstrate that WPs put forward more than one argument to convince PBs to buy their wines; in particular, at each stage of the interaction WPs set forth a different argument to defend the same unexpressed standpoint. The prototypical *argumentative patterns* (van Eemeren 2017: 19) characterising B2B wine tasting encounters will, thus, be outlined.

An argumentative pattern is characterized by a constellation of argumentative moves in which, in order to deal with a particular kind of difference of opinion, in defence of a particular type of standpoint a particular argument scheme or combination of argument schemes is used in a particular kind of argumentation structure. (van Eemeren 2017: 19-20)

As WPs advance more than one argument to convince PBs to purchase their wines, their turns result in a complex *argumentation structure* (van Eemeren/Snoeck Henkemans 2017: 55) that will be illustrated in Section 3. In describing the prototypical adjacency pairs (Schegloff 1972) that characterise the stages of the B2B wine tasting encounter, emphasis will also be laid on the notion of *dialectical profile*. First introduced by Walton (1999) with the term *profile of dialogue* and then developed within pragma-dialectics, a dialectical profile is “a means of representing a sequence of connected moves (adjacency-pairs) in a dialogue exchange” (Walton 1999: 53). Notably, the non-casual presence of an argument within the sequence of connected moves made by participants in a conversation is stressed in the definitions of dialectical profile.

A *profile of dialogue* is a reconstructed sequence of connected moves in a given text of discourse in a case *where an argument has been used*. [...] The profile of dialogue represents a local sequence of moves that is one part of a longer sequence of moves in a *goal directed conversational exchange* of a certain kind between two parties (Walton 1999: 54, my emphasis)

A similar definition is provided by van Eemeren *et al.*:

Our *dialectical profile* [...] can be defined as a sequential pattern of the moves that the participants in a critical discussion are entitled – and in some sense obliged – to make to realize a particular *dialectical aim* in a particular stage or sub-stage of the discussion (van Eemeren *et al.* 2008: 6, my emphasis)

This analytical tool is, therefore, functional to displaying the argumentative orientation of B2B wine tasting meetings and informing interpreters that the individual turns produced by WPs and PBs must be seen, as Cirillo/Radicioni (2017: 132) argue in relation to business negotiations, “against the larger picture of a ritualized goal-oriented event”, a professional situation in which an argument is regularly set forth. While describing the prototypical adjacency pairs that characterise the interaction, the promotional nature of the WP’s turns will, thus, be highlighted, as will the translational and conversational contributions the interpreter is called upon to offer in the role of coordinator of the B2B wine tasting meeting.

2. Contextualisation and analysis

Interpreting at international B2B meetings in the wine industry basically “involves interpreter-assisted cross-linguistic interactions in the private sector” (Takimoto 2015: 38) and, therefore, shares features with many business DI situations: it is conducted face-to-face (Mason 2009: 81) and short-consecutive dialogue interpreting (Takimoto 2015: 39) is used; the interpreter is, therefore, involved “in bi-directional translation, requiring active communicative skills in both languages and a facility for constant code switching” (Mason 2009: 81). However, “business interpreting occurs in a variety of settings and encompasses a variety of formats” (Cirillo/Radicioni 2017: 120), and the B2B wine tasting setting presents a series of contextual peculiarities that differentiate it from other business spheres.

B2B wine tasting events are generally organised in the form of multi-meeting *speed* events, during which each WP, occupying one of the many numbered tables arranged in a large room, brings a selection of wines and is allotted twenty-to thirty-minute meetings with each PB. Each meeting is supposed to end after twenty minutes, as signalled by the ring of a bell; the final ten minutes can be used by the PB either to conclude the talk with the WP or to start moving, together with the interpreter in charge of accompanying him/her, to another table, which is indicated on the agenda of scheduled meetings provided by the event organiser.

B2B wine tasting events, thus, appear to be shaped by a series of time-constrained meetings in which the interpreter is required to assist one foreign buyer in his/her multiple interactions with national producers. Despite the apparent centrality reserved for buyers, B2B events are particularly important for producers because “B2B sales far outstrip those of B2C” (Kotler/Pfoertsch 2006: 21); the interpreter, therefore, knows that producers view B2B encounters as unique opportunities to expand their business networks. Notably, even though the interpreter is “assigned” to one specific buyer, s/he is not hired by that buyer, but by the institutions organising the event, generally through a translation and interpreting agency. In this respect, the doubts that beset interpreting scholars about the frequent partiality of the interpreter in business settings (Takimoto 2015: 39) are dispelled in the context of B2B wine tasting meetings, because the interpreter does not belong to either of the two sides. The hoped-for neutrality and impartiality of the business interpreter (Garzone 2001) are, in this specific setting, guaranteed by the fact that s/he is hired by a client who does not take part in the interaction and does not have a direct stake in the outcome of the negotiation.

The discursive orientation of B2B wine tasting events is, in general, rather predictable, because they are usually devoted to specific wine typologies or regions; therefore, the interpreter knows in advance which wines will be presented at the meetings. For instance, the 2014 edition of *B2B Wine Lombardia* focused on Oltrepò Pavese wines, while the 2015 edition was dedicated to Franciacorta

1 The acronym B2C stands for “business-to-consumer” and refers to transactions conducted between businesses and individual customers.

wineries. This latter edition was organised in Brescia with the additional support of the *American Chamber of Commerce in Italy*. At this event, a team of interpreters were in charge of translating and coordinating the interaction between Italian producers and American buyers. Having a look at an excerpt drawn from the authentic materials delivered to those interpreters helps frame the topicality of B2B wine tasting events.

1. 1701 srl Società Agricola	
www.1701franciacorta.it	
DESCRIZIONE AZIENDA	On the top of Santa Giulia hill, beside the Cluniac church of the same name, within a singular landscape, the glorious eighteenth-century villa Palazzo Cazzago is home to our winery. The villa is part of ancient land belonging to the noble families Bettoni and Cazzago. The land includes approximately 15 hectares of hillside in Cazzago San Martino, Franciacorta. The name 1701 was chosen to recall the first vinification year of our <i>brolo</i> , a 4-hectare vineyard framed by XI-century walls. Today 1701 Franciacorta is a 10-ha organic certified winery. We have recently received Demeter certification, the first and only certified biodynamic producer in the Franciacorta region. As members of <i>Renaissance des Appellations</i> we follow biodynamic farming methods - an approach which excludes any chemical intervention. It is ultimately a philosophy of life, about working closely with the vine, understanding and respecting its life cycle until the point when bottled it can fully express its vitality and character and above all the authenticity of its terroir.
CARATTERISTICHE PRODOTTI	Spumante / Bollicine
Vino 1 - Spumante	80% chardonnay 20 % pinot noir - hand-picked from our biodynamic vineyards - Charmat method - 4 months in pressure tanks - dosage 8 g/l
Vino 2 - Spumante	85% chardonnay 15 % pinot noir - hand-picked from our biodynamic vineyards - classic method - minimum of 30 months on the lees - dosage 4 g/l
Vino 3 - Spumante	100% chardonnay - hand-picked from our biodynamic vineyards - classic method - minimum of 30 months on the lees - dosage 2 g/l
Vino 4 - Spumante	100% pinot noir - hand-picked from our biodynamic vineyards - classic method - skin contact for approximately 8 hours - minimum of 30 months on the lees - dosage 4 g/l
2. AZIENDA AGRICOLA FRATELLI BERLUCCHI SRL	
www.fratelliberlucchi.it	
DESCRIZIONE AZIENDA	The Azienda Agricola Fratelli Berlucchi is the unquestioned ambassador of Franciacorta land in the world, thanks to the spirit of people that have never kept away from tradition and at the same time are looking to the renewal of all the characteristics of the offer. Owned by the five Berlucchi brothers - Francesco, Marcello, Roberto, Gabriella and Pia Donata - the historic winery has always been maintaining the family name in all the labels and with 400.000 bottles produced every year it addresses the best restaurants and wine shops in Italy, Europe, US, Japan and China. All the Franciacorta Docg (Freccianera Vintage Collection) wines by Fratelli Berlucchi are obtained from Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Blanc grapes with the classic method of refermentation in bottle and they are all vintage, that is to say matured for more than 37 months. Always appreciated are also the Curtefranca wines, called Mandola and Cà Brusade both younger than Dossi delle Querce Red and White.
CARATTERISTICHE PRODOTTI	Rosso Ferno - Bianco Ferno - Spumante / Bollicine
Vino 1 - Franciacorta non-vintage	FRESH, YOUNG, 25 MONTHS OLD. CHARDONNAY AND PINOT BLANC
Vino 2 - Franciacorta Rosé vintage 2010	FULL BODY, RED FRUIT TASTE, DRY BUT PLEASANT, LONG-LASTING PERLAGE, PERFECT WITH FISH DISHES. CHARDONNAY AND PINOT NERO
Vino 3 - CURTEFRANCA BIANCO DOC 2014	STILL WINE VERY FRESH, CHARDONNAY AND PINOT BLANC GRAPES
Vino 4 - CURTEFRANCA ROSSO DOC 2013	YOUNG RED WINE, CABERNET AND MERLOT BLEND, AGED IN BIG OAK BARREL

Figure 1: Excerpt from the “List of companies”

Figure 1 displays the first of the twenty-two pages that compose “The list of companies”, a document containing information about the Italian winemakers who took part in the 2015 edition of *B2B Wine Lombardia*². It suggests that the conversation between producer, buyer and interpreter belongs to those cases in which the interaction is governed by a topical agenda, as happens in certain instances of institutionalised conversation (Straniero Sergio 2007: 57-58). Each interaction in this context generally starts with a presentation of the company and then focuses on the wines (four, in these cases) selected by the producer to be tasted. The topic is, thus, predetermined and the typical interaction can be divided into three consecutive stages, which the participants follow to fit their conversation in the time slot allocated.

1. Presentation of the company
2. Wine description and tasting
3. Negotiation of terms and exchange of contact details

Given the severe time constraints under which the event takes place, the conversation at each table regularly begins *in medias res*, after a brief greeting. At this initial stage, WPs generally recite the scripted presentations of their companies. The interpreter, as Mason puts it (2009: 81), “translates the speaking of what has been written” in the “List of companies” rather than totally spontaneous speech, unlike what generally happens in DI situations (*Ibid*). This peculiarity is also due to the fact that the WP has to repeat the same introduction various times, to each of the PBs who sit at his/her table in turn. The prototypical interaction between Italian wine producers and English-speaking buyers occurring in the first stage of the meeting was reconstructed by harnessing the authentic material displayed in Figure 1. An excerpt of a scripted dialogue, containing the turns of the WP and PB in Italian and English respectively, is shown below.

- 2 Although this document was exclusively given to the participants in the communicative event, the information displayed in Figure 1 is not confidential, as it can also be found on the websites of the individual companies in Italian and English alike.

WP: Benvenuto, piacere di conoscerla. Conosce già la nostra azienda?

[*Welcome, nice to meet you. Do you already know our company?*]

PB: Nice to meet you, too. No, I have tasted a lot of Franciacorta wines but none of yours, so far.

WP: La nostra azienda agricola, Lo Sparviere, ha sede a Monticelli Brusati, nel cuore della Franciacorta; un luogo senza tempo che parla di storia e amore per la terra. Il suo nome deriva dalla raffigurazione dello sparviere posta sul maestoso camino all'interno del salone della casa padronale, nucleo storico della cantina. Lo Sparviere ha sede in un'antica dimora di campagna risalente al XVI secolo. Alla sua guida troviamo la Sig.ra Monique Poncelet Gussalli Beretta, donna determinata che ha fortemente voluto il recupero della storia e del fascino di questo antico angolo di Franciacorta. Oggi l'azienda si estende su più di 60 ettari di proprietà di cui 30 vitati a Chardonnay e Pinot Nero, tutti rigorosamente condotti in agricoltura biologica dal 2013. I Franciacorta Lo Sparviere esprimono le caratteristiche uniche dei terreni da cui nascono, molto ricchi di marne calcaree, e l'elevata qualità data dal nostro microclima, più fresco rispetto ad altre aree della Franciacorta. Ma solo attraverso la massima cura per la vigna e la terra, la rigorosa selezione delle uve e l'attento lavoro dell'uomo in cantina si raggiunge l'eccellenza che porta nel bicchiere la naturale vocazione del territorio; la filosofia alla base dei Franciacorta Lo Sparviere.

[*Our winery, Lo Sparviere, lies in Monticelli Brusati, in the heart of Franciacorta; a timeless place narrating a story of tradition and love for the land. Its name derives from the image of a sparrowhawk depicted over the majestic fireplace inside the manor house hall, the historic heart of the winery. Lo Sparviere is housed in an ancient country residence dating back to the XVI century. It is owned by Mrs Monique Poncelet Gussalli Beretta, a resolute woman who was determined to recover the history and charm of this ancient corner of Franciacorta. Today, the winery extends over 60 hectares of property, 30 of which are planted to Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, all cultivated organically since 2013. Lo Sparviere Franciacorta wines express the unique characteristics of the soils from which they originate, very rich in calcareous marls, and the high quality given by our microclimate, cooler than elsewhere in Franciacorta. But only maximum care for the vineyards and the soils, rigorous selection of the grapes and careful effort in winemaking ensure the excellence that infuses our wines with the natural qualities of the territory; this is the philosophy behind Lo Sparviere Franciacorta.*]

Figure 2: Stage 1 of the interaction

As shown by this initial part of the script, the WP generally produces a significantly long turn during the first interactional stage. In this respect, although note-taking is generally thought not to be involved in business interpreting situations (Vigier-Moreno 2020: 199), the interpreter usually takes notes in order to retrieve given elements that will enable him/her to accurately render WPs' messages. More broadly, the interpreter is also advised to regulate turn length by interrupting the WP, with a view to delivering an accurate translation. Resorting to compression strategies (Kalina 2015) would ensure an exhaustive conversation to fit the time allotted. Yet, the content and form whereby wine companies are presented are not mere frills but pivotal and recurring presentational devices (van Eemeren 2010: 118) that enable the arguer to implicitly defend his/her standpoint. By reciting the scripted presentation exemplified in Figure 1, the WP aims at promoting his/her brand by rapidly highlighting the historical and traditional assets of the firm. As shown in Figure 2, this presentation is generally evocative, as brands are seen as "the ideas, perceptions, expectations and beliefs that are in the mind of consumers" (Kotler/Pfoertsch 2006: v):

Brand building goes far beyond creating awareness of your name and your customers promise. It is a voyage of building a *corporate soul* and infectiously communicating it inside and outside the company to all your partners, so that your customers truly get what your brand promises. (Kotler/Pfoertsch 2006: ix, my emphasis)

The WP's intention to convey the *corporate soul* of his/her company was highlighted in the scripts to render the role-playing activity "situationally and interaction-

ally authentic” (Cirillo/Radicioni 2017: 126). From a pragma-dialectical point of view, history and a long-standing tradition are the first arguments whereby the WP tries to turn the potential buyer into a buyer. In this regard, the prototypical *argumentative pattern* characterising the first stage can be represented as follows:

- (1.) (Standpoint: You should buy my wines.)
 - 1.1 Because: My company has a long history and tradition of winemaking.
 - (1.1') (And: Wines with a long history and tradition should be bought.)

This argumentative pattern highlights the first argument WPs advance in the context at issue, revolving around the promotion of the historical and traditional aspects of the firm. Standpoint (1.) is placed between parentheses because it is not explicitly expressed by the arguer; it is left unsaid and supported by means of causal argumentation, as argument 1.1 is linked to the standpoint by a relation of causal dependence. (1.1') is the implicit premise upon which argumentation rests.

The initial part of the interaction illustrated in the above script already displays a discursive peculiarity of B2B wine tasting events, i.e. the regular use of specialised lexicon. For instance, most interpreters will be unaware of what *mame cal-caree* are, what is their relation to wine and what is the equivalent English term. This is due to the different *epistemic positions* (Gavioli 2015: 76) of participants in relation to the topic. This “knowledge gap”, signalled by the participants’ use of the same language for specific purposes that launches terminological challenges to the interpreter, is typical of (business) interpreting situations (Sandrelli 2005: 81). Drawing on research on epistemics in CA (Heritage 2012), Gavioli (2015: 76-77) underlines that in interpreter-mediated interactions each participant holds an *epistemic position*, i.e. a display of authority on particular matters of knowledge, and contends that interpreters “have access to and deal with information another participant is supposed to be more knowledgeable about” (*Ibid.*: 77). The WP and the PB are acknowledged as the *epistemic authorities* (*Ibid.*) as regards knowledge of wine-related matters, but the interpreter can also be considered an epistemic authority in light of his/her knowledge of interlinguistic communication strategies. Hence, the interpreter who works at B2B wine tasting encounters is engaged with the other participants in a constant “negotiation of territories of knowledge”, to borrow Heritage’s expression, which Gavioli (*Ibid.*: 73) already used to describe interpreter-mediated talk in guided tours. The notion of *epistemic territory* or *territory of knowledge* precisely refers to “what is known, how it is known, and persons’ rights and responsibilities to know it” (Heritage 2012: 5-6), and it is continuously negotiated in conversation (Gavioli 2015: 76-77).

In order to cater for their disadvantageous epistemic position within the event, interpreters are generally given a glossary of winemaking terms; those working at the 2015 edition of *B2B Wine Lombardia* were provided with a monolingual glossary, only containing Italian terms and their explanations. An excerpt of this glossary is shown below.

Affinamento

Il termine si riferisce all'incirca a una serie di operazioni di cantina che seguono la fermentazione e precedono l'imbottigliamento (chiarificazione, taglio, filtraggio, stoccaggio, ecc.), che mirano a migliorare, maturare ed a curare il vino. L'affinamento di certi vini di alta qualità può essere un lavoro assai intenso e richiedere una notevole quantità di tempo.

Aggraziato

Un vino aggraziato è ben equilibrato e raffinato. Un sinonimo più comunemente usato è "elegante".

Aggressivo

Un vino aggressivo è quello che è eccessivamente e sgradevolmente sbilanciato con tannini aspri od acidità.

Figure 3: Excerpt from the glossary

This specific glossary was delivered a couple of weeks before the event and contained more than two-hundred entries, but their usefulness was subordinate to the interpreters' struggles to find all the English equivalents before the event. In this respect, the stage concerning the description and tasting of the wines on the table is characterised by a proliferation of technical terms signalling the WP's and PB's belonging to the same *diaculture*, i.e. "a group culture defined by the shared professional background, common technical expertise" (Pöchhacker 1995: 49). While listing the bottles selected, the WP pours a glass of each wine for the PB to taste. S/he then describes the wines in turn, during the tasting, eliciting the PB's response. At this stage, too, the WP's turns are considerably longer than those of the PB, precisely because the interaction centres on the WP's argumentative endeavours to find new trade partners. Hence, interpreters are primarily engaged in IT>EN translation.

WP: Oggi la mia azienda Abrami Elisabetta ha selezionato quattro vini per questo evento. Il Franciacorta Brut, il Franciacorta Rosé, il Franciacorta Satèn e anche un vino rosso, l'Etna Rosso. Cominciamo la degustazione con il Franciacorta Brut. Conosce questo prodotto?

[Today my company Abrami Elisabetta has selected four wines for this event. The Franciacorta Brut, the Franciacorta Rosé, the Franciacorta Satèn and a red wine, too, the Etna Rosso. Let's start the tasting with the Franciacorta Brut. Do you know this product?]

PB: I can swear I tasted it for the first time when I was on holiday on Lake Garda, back in 2013. I am happy it is here on the table today.

WP: Bene, così potrà provarlo di nuovo! Il Franciacorta Brut D.O.C.G. delle Cantine Abrami è ottenuto con uve di Chardonnay e Pinot Nero vendemmiate a mano, è un vino ottimo da servire come aperitivo. Ha un perlage persistente, colore intenso giallo paglierino con riflessi d'oro e un profumo delicato con una leggera nota di vaniglia. Sulla tavola è un vino perfetto per accompagnare le portate a base di pesce e crostacei o i primi piatti molto delicati.

[Well, you will taste it again, then! The Franciacorta Brut D.O.C.G. of the Abrami winery is obtained from hand-picked Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes, it's excellent as an aperitif wine. It has a persistent perlage, an intense straw yellow colour with golden hues and a delicate perfume with a light vanilla note. It pairs perfectly with fish and shellfish dishes or with very delicate first courses.]

PB: Is it your base product?

WP: Sì, è il nostro prodotto di base.

[Yes, it is our base product.]

PB: (after tasting the wine) Yes, it's perfect as an aperitif wine, along with fish, as you said. But I think it partners well with cured meat, too. So, you said the grape variety is Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. In which percentage?

WP: Il vitigno è 80% Chardonnay e 20% Pinot Nero.

[The grape variety is 80% Chardonnay and 20% Pinot Noir.]

PB: And the refinement?

WP: L'affinamento avviene in barrique di rovere e/o in botti d'acciaio per minimo 24 mesi sui lieviti, e minimo 3 mesi post sboccatura.

[The wine is refined in oak and/or steel barrels for minimum 24 months on the lees, and minimum 3 months after disgorgement.]

PB: I see... Yes, it definitely brings with it all the qualities of traditional ageing.

WP: Ne vuole un bicchiere anche lei? (rivolgendosi all'interprete)

[Do you also want to taste the wine? (talking to the interpreter)]

Figure 4: Stage 2 of the interaction

The strategic role played by the WP's turns in glorifying production methods, exalting wine description and enhancing the tasting experience stand out when reading the script displayed in Figure 4. Interpreters should be made aware that winemakers see the B2B tasting encounter as an opportunity to pique the interest of their interlocutors and make a profit (Jackson 2017: ix). As with the insistence on history and tradition, then, the listing of the production, organoleptic and sensory qualities of wine are best viewed as arguments that are advanced to carry on the defence of the same implicit standpoint that has already been defended during the initial phase of the meeting.

- (1.) (Standpoint: You should buy my wines.)
 - 1.2 Because: My wines are characterised by excellent production methods and organoleptic qualities.
 - (1.2') (And: Wines that are characterised by excellent production methods and organoleptic qualities should be bought.)

This argumentative pattern highlights the second argument set forth by WPs, whereby they promote the production methods and organoleptic qualities of their wines.

While the script for stage 2 shows the argumentative nature of WPs' turns, it also suggests that the turns of PBs are not prototypically characterised by an argumentative nature. As indicated by the turn in which the PB recalls a holiday on Lake Garda, in this setting the topic is also determined by the fact that "any wine is interpreted through the lens of unconscious mental models constructed throughout a lifetime of tasting experiences" (Jackson 2017: ix). As the most important wine taster at the meeting, the PB is generally given free rein in the choice of themes, which often focus precisely on "previously generated vinous memories" (*Ibid.*). In broader terms, the topic is co-constructed by the participants and develops over the course of the conversational exchange, as happens in ordinary conversation (Straniero Sergio 2007: 48). Owing to the sequential nature and participatory structure of interaction (*Ibid.*), conversation in the B2B wine tasting context can be steered towards the most unexpected themes, although the topic is predetermined. For instance, when talking to a Chianti producer, the PB might recall his/her childhood memories and inform the other participants of a time when his/her whole family spent an unforgettable summer holiday in Tuscany. These digressions are more likely to be made after the buyer has encountered a few producers and tasted a number of wines; at this stage, the interaction generally becomes more informal and challenges the interpreter to discursively withstand the increasing relaxation of the event, which remains characterised by the overuse of specialised lexicon. Indeed, the script shows that the interaction between the WP and the PB is rather informal but also sheds light on the technical nature of the discussion, presenting additional specialised terms such as *affinamento sui lieviti* ("refinement on the lees") and *sboccatura* ("disgorgement"). Actually, the use of technical terms is not stifled but favoured by the general informality of the conversation in business settings.

The complexities of technical concepts/processes/jargon are regarded as one of the most difficult aspects of business interpreting. In fact, the more technical the discussion becomes, often the more relaxed the manner of discourse will be (Gentile *et al.* 1996: 120).

This use of specialised terminology in an informal conversation is liable to generate overlapping between the territories of knowledge in which the participants are supposed to "reside". The display of authority the other participants have on wine-related matters is frequently manifested through turn and/or role usurping, as observed in media settings (Straniero Sergio 2007: 266-269), especially when the situation is characterised by a certain "permeability of language barriers" (Cirillo/Radicioni 2017: 134). This situation is not infrequent, as those wine-makers who are used to trading their wines transnationally often show a certain proficiency in English³ and sometimes opt for dyadic exchanges with the buyers, thereby usurping not only the turns but also the role of the interpreter, as happens in media interpreting (Straniero Sergio 2007: 269). A prototypical situation sees the WP selecting English from the outset by saying to the interpreter "Non

3 It is, instead, much more uncommon to find an English-speaking buyer who displays a working knowledge of Italian.

c'è bisogno che traduca, parlo inglese” (“There is no need for you to translate, I speak English”). A few WPs are even unaware of who the interpreter is and only when running into a communication problem do they realise that the “third person” at the table is not some sort of “deputy buyer”, but a language expert hired by the event organiser to facilitate the work of wine experts. More frequent cases of turn usurping can precisely be observed in this second stage, when the PB tastes wine and discusses its organoleptic qualities: if the interpreter omits a certain referent when rendering the PB’s words, the WP generally “steals” his/her turn by producing utterances of the type of “*Sono sicuro che abbia detto anche ‘liquorice’, liquirizia. Non ha sentito?*” (“I am sure s/he also said ‘liquorice’. Didn’t you hear it?”). These turn usurping practices may lead interpreters to lose face, actually expelling them from the epistemic territory of their field of expertise.

Yet, interpreters are not always hampered in the execution of their professional tasks; in fact, they are also frequently “invited” to the epistemic territory of winemaking. Despite being the supposedly less knowledgeable participant regarding wine production, tasting and trade, the interpreter can nevertheless be involved in the role of (possible) *connoisseur* of Italian winemaking tradition and culture because s/he shares the WP’s *paraculture*, i.e. “culture at the level of a people, nation or society” (Pöchhacker 1995: 40). In other words, the language professional is often legitimised by either the producer or the buyer to address wine-related matters, because “in interaction, participants negotiate the ‘informativeness’ and the novelty of the issues dealt with as well as who can knowledgeably speak about them” (Gavioli 2015: 76). For instance, when the PB talks of his holiday on Lake Garda, the interpreter might be encouraged to provide his/her conversational contributions about Franciacorta wines or personal memories of holidays on Lake Garda.

The practice of business interpreting often shades off into other activities that reflect the protean nature of business contacts and the lack of clarity between interpreting and other roles – such as tourism interpreting and guide-work, which is often monolingual or bilingual work linked to other roles (Gentile *et al.* 1996: 12)

The above quotation captures the essence of the wine tasting setting, where it is even not uncommon for the interpreter to be invited to join the tasting and have a say on wine quality, as suggested by the last turn displayed in Figure 4. In these cases, the WP and PB either enquire into the interpreter’s expertise or simply wish to be kind, but their moves actually end up adding humour and light-heartedness to the encounter, because the interpreter is obliged contractually to decline the invitation. Hence, the offer generally leads to mocking the language expert because s/he is prevented from tasting wine and enjoying the day.

The final line of the script demonstrates that “even a small change in the participation framework may in fact require the interpreter to provide not just a translational but also a conversational contribution” (Cirillo/Radicioni 2017: 134) to decline the invitation to taste wine. Generally, a reply such as “*La ringrazio molto, ma non ci è permesso*” (“Thank you very much, but we are not allowed to”) is enough to refuse the offer politely. Broadly, Figure 4 also indicates that interpreter involvement in the tasting experience can be considered a feature of B2B

meetings in the wine industry; the interpreter is actively involved in the interaction – through questions such as “Have you ever tasted this wine?” or “And you, have you ever been to Valpolicella?” – and, therefore, significantly contributes to rendering dialogue “a co-constructed sense-making process involving all parties as co-authors of meaning in a given context” (Dal Fovo/Niemants 2015: 1-2).

If the WP and PB respect the time limitations and foresee a collaboration, a third interactional stage follows during which the two parties touch upon terms of payment and delivery and exchange their contact details with a view to resuming the talk at a later moment.

PB: I appreciated all your wines, the Franciacorta non-vintage, the Rosé vintage, the Curtefranca Bianco and the Curtefranca Rosso. As you probably know, Americans are particularly fond of red wines... so, let's talk about costs.

WP: I prezzi di questi quattro vini sono, rispettivamente, 14,69 €, 19,13 €, 9,70 € e 8,80 € (indicando le bottiglie una a una). All'ingrosso, i prodotti sono venduti a bancali di 120 bottiglie l'uno. Quindi... Oh, è suonata la campanella!

[The prices of these four wines are, respectively, 14,69 €, 19,13 €, 9,70 € and 8,80 € (indicating the wine bottles in turn). On the wholesale market, the products are sold in pallets of 120 bottles each. So... Oh, the bell has rung!]

PB: Our time has run out! (laughing) So, let me just write the prices down... What if I wanted to place an order directly with you?

WP: Se è interessato può contattarci all'indirizzo e-mail che trova sull'elenco delle aziende, ma le lascio anche il mio biglietto da visita; qui c'è il mio indirizzo personale, può scrivere direttamente a me.

[If you are interested, you can contact us at the e-mail address you can find on the list of companies, but I also give you my business card; there is my personal address here, you can write directly to me.]

PB: Great! This is very kind of you, I enjoyed the tasting very much.

WP: Grazie a lei, è stato un piacere. E (rivolgendosi all'interprete) se più tardi vuole provare anche lei i nostri prodotti torni pure qui! Almeno a fine giornata vi è concesso un bicchierino, vero?

[Thank you, it has been a pleasure. And (talking to the interpreter) if you also wish to taste our products later, please come back here! At least at the end of the day you are allowed to drink a glass of wine, aren't you?]

Figure 5: Stage 3 of the interaction

Given the limited duration of the meetings, at this stage the interpreter is often required by contract to urge the PB to move to the table of the following WP, in order to keep the event running smoothly. In other words, s/he is, again, called upon to coordinate the interaction by providing a conversational contribution, as happens when s/he is invited to drink; this conversational habit is likely to recur in the third stage, as suggested by the final line of the script. Incidentally, at the end of the working day the interpreter is entitled to drink a glass of wine.

As exemplified in Figure 5, at this third stage it is the PB who takes the initiative and asks the WP for information about the terms of payment and delivery. Cirillo/Radicioni (2017: 133) suggest that the final phase of the simulated business negotiation can be exploited by the instructor to familiarise students with Incoterms, which should become part of the specialised terminological competence of the business interpreter. However, Incoterms and, in general, terms of delivery are seldom addressed in this context owing to time constraints and the informality of the setting. Prices are, on the contrary, almost ubiquitously mentioned in this interactional sequence that is prototypically started by the PB. Building on the tasting experience of stage 2, the PB can calculate the quality/price ratio of the wines tasted; interpreters should, therefore, write prices down

and accurately communicate them to PBs, because they constitute (in relation to wine quality) the third class of arguments whereby WPs defend their shared standpoint.

(1.) (Standpoint: You should buy my wines.)

1.3 Because: My wines are characterised by an excellent quality/price ratio.

(1.3') (And: Wines that are characterised by an excellent quality/price ratio should be bought.)

Argumentation regarding prices plays an instrumental role in leading the PB to consider a purchase. Yet, WPs do not always have the time to put forward their third argument, because the “informal chatting” that characterises the event is very likely to continue until the ring of the bell, thereby limiting or even exhausting the scope for discussing – let alone reaching – a commercial agreement. In this regard, the B2B wine tasting context provides further evidence that the nature of business interpreting is *often*, but certainly not always, adversarial (Lee/Buzo 2009: 52). After all, “the atmosphere in which business meetings are conducted [...] can range from friendly informal chatting to detailed, possibly adversarial, negotiations” (*Ibid.*: 51), and B2B wine tasting events are definitely found at the left end of the continuum. Indeed, they can actually be said to eschew the very nature of business meetings, with repercussions on interpreting. Business interpreting aims at enabling the conclusion of commercial operations (Vigier-Moreno 2020: 198), as “in a business negotiation a deal must be clinched and participants’ moves will tend to be driven by economic interests” (Cirillo/Radicioni 2017: 133). Yet, agreement is not necessarily the objective of B2B wine tasting meetings, which rather centre on the mutual enjoyment of a product. From a discursive point of view, these meetings do not exclusively focus on financial advantages, but are also characterised by discussions on the histories, traditions and philosophies of winemaking companies and on the participants’ emotional responses to wine, as happens in other interpreter-mediated encounters in the tourism, agri-food and cultural sectors (Gavioli 2015: 74). Although the commercial nature of conversation in the context under analysis cannot be overlooked, agreement is not paramount and can (only possibly) be reached at a later moment “outside” the main event.

Therefore, the B2B wine tasting event can be said to lie at the intersection of business and tourism contexts. When working in this setting, the interpreter is called upon not only to coordinate the interaction to assist parties in reaching a possible agreement, but also to act as an intercultural mediator who enhances interactional closeness and promotes cultural exchange between two subjects sharing the same *diaculture* but (generally) ignoring the *paraculture* of their interlocutor.

3. Discussion

The pragma-dialectical analysis of argumentation has revealed the three arguments that WPs set forth in succession to win the PB’s trust. In the light of these

findings, the *dialectical profile* characterising B2B wine tasting events can be schematically represented as follows, with a view to providing interpreters with a sequential representation of the argumentative moves that the participants will make.

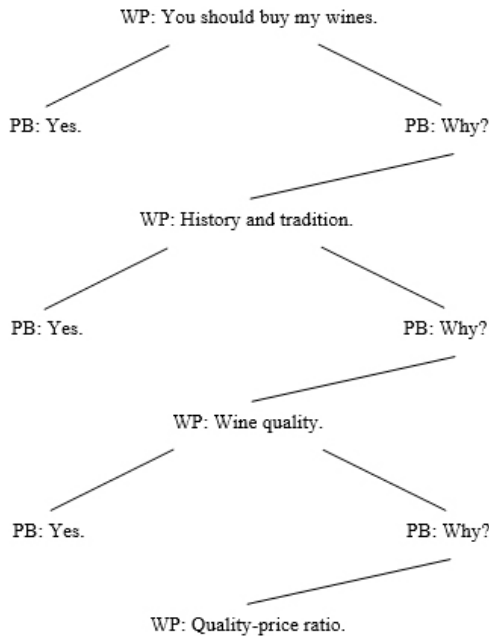


Figure 6: Dialectical profile of B2B wine tasting events

Figure 6 schematically informs interpreters that each WP will strenuously, but implicitly, defend his/her standpoint throughout the whole encounter, aware that the PB must be convinced through a dialectically reasonable and rhetorically effective discourse. Hence, WPs will try and convince PBs to buy their wines firstly by addressing the history and tradition of their companies, secondly by exalting the organoleptic qualities of wine, and finally by highlighting its competitive price. The three arguments described in Section 2 and presented schematically in the central part of Figure 6 can be seen as “alternative defenses of the same standpoint, presented one after another” (van Eemeren/Snoeck Henkemans 2017: 58); as such, they mould a *multiple argumentation structure* (*Ibid.*) that contains causal arguments and that is prototypical of the WP’s argumentation.

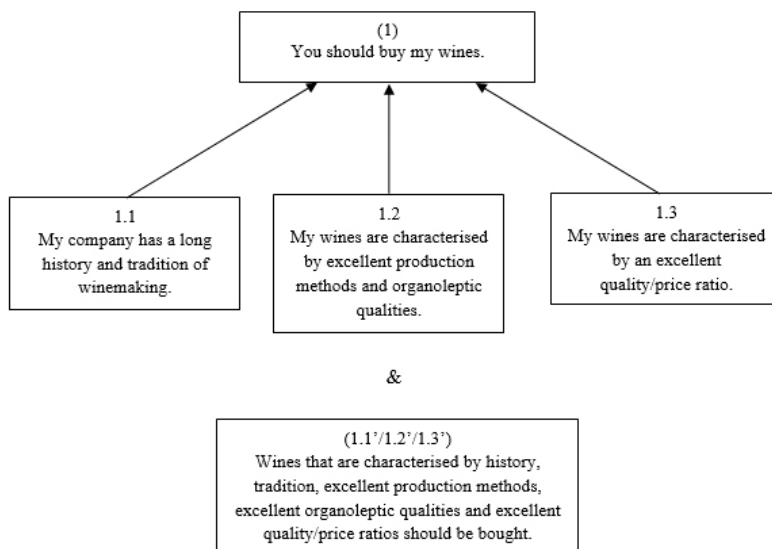


Figure 7: Multiple argumentation structure in WP's turns

As Figure 7 shows, three arguments (1.1, 1.2, 1.3) are used to defend standpoint (1). Advanced one after the other, they shape a multiple argumentation structure because they “could theoretically stand alone [...] do not depend on each other to support the standpoint and are, in principle, of equal weight” (*Ibid.*). Each argument rests on the implicit premise (1.1'/1.2'/1.3'). Notably, the standpoint is also left unsaid, as the choice to pursue the commercial aim “silently”, without discursively “forcing” the PB to buy wine, actually enhances the acceptability of the standpoint. After all, the elements of argumentation are frequently left implicit to increase the pragmatic force of discourse in various communicative settings, such as advertising or politics (Amossy 2000: 152). This is something interpreters must be aware of, if they wish to reproduce the intensity of the source-language speaker's messages, providing a dialectically reasonable and rhetorically effective rendition.

4. Conclusions

The prototypical situation of a B2B wine tasting meeting sees a national wine producer, a foreign potential buyer and an interpreter who is in charge of coordinating dialogue between the two parties. The interpreter is hired by the company or institutional body organising the event, generally through a translation and interpreting agency; impartiality is, therefore, contextually guaranteed by the non-involvement of either of the two sides in the selection of the intercultural mediator, who is “assigned” to one foreign buyer in his/her multiple interactions with national producers.

Even though the topic is predetermined because of the severe time constraints of the single B2B meetings, additional themes can arise during the con-

versation and the interaction remains rather informal. On account of this nature of dialogue as “informal chatting”, the interpreter’s role and epistemic position are regularly negotiated during the rapid meeting, as s/he is either: legitimised to act as “adjunct” wine taster (in spite of contractual obligations); or prevented from translating and coordinating the interaction in light of his/her relatively limited knowledge of wine-related matters; or because the Italian wine producer frequently speaks (or is convinced s/he can speak) English. In this sense, interpreters are often required to provide not only translational but also conversational contributions and act as intercultural mediators, in order to preserve their epistemic position – which is unique within the communicative event – and facilitate communication between those who share an epistemic position but ignore each other’s language and culture.

Notably, the B2B wine tasting meeting has been shown to be an atypical form of business encounter, as it does not necessarily aim at the contextual attainment of a commercial agreement. These meetings are, rather, time-constrained opportunities for national winemakers to meet foreign potential buyers and try and expand their business networks. These atypical contextual features influence the type of interpreting that must be provided, which appears to share characteristics of business and tourism interpreting.

The use of pragma-dialectics has been functional to describing the characteristics of this type of interpreting. In particular, it has laid emphasis on the inherently argumentative nature of the dialogue exchange occurring *before*, *during* and *after* the actual wine tasting experience. WPs have been shown to exploit these three interactional stages to advance three distinctive but complementary arguments, with a view to persuading PBs to place orders for their wines. In this regard, the conceptual tools of *argumentative pattern*, *argumentative structure* and *dialectical profile* have been productive to emphasise the omnipresence of three explicit arguments and an implicit standpoint in WPs’ turns. Thus, they have contributed to illustrating the interactional and translational features of a thriving professional context that could fruitfully be integrated in classroom settings.

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