

# **Dialogic mediation in international groups of adolescents**

## **Abstract**

Mediation is the action of a third party that helps two conflicting parties to reach a mutually acceptable settlement. This action implies promoting the parties' empowerment and new narratives, by facilitating their communication. The analysis of dialogue, and in particular of mediators' dialogic actions in the interaction, is a way to gain an empirical knowledge of mediation. It shows the ways in which dialogue may promote empowerment and new narratives, enhancing active participation and sensitivity of the participants in interaction. This kind of analysis is applied to international camps for peace promotion involving small groups of adolescents from different countries. In particular, videorecordings and transcriptions of group meetings make it possible to highlight the kinds of dialogic actions used to help adolescents to keep their turns, as well as to support their initiatives and coordinate their reflections, thus managing their conflicts. By looking at how mediators use language in the interaction, research can help improving the theory and practice of mediation.

Key-words. Mediation, dialogic actions, facilitation, empowerment, narratives, participation, conflict management

## **1. Introduction**

This paper focuses on interactions between competent adults and small groups of adolescents in international summer camps promoted by an Italian School of Peace, called Monte Sole, in order to deal with existing international conflicts. In the perspective adopted by the School of Peace,

this kind of interaction is described as “facilitation”, “promotion of dialogue” and “mediation” (Baiesi et al. 2008). The use of these terms mixes different approaches without clarifying their meanings. In this paper, we present a study that aims to a better understanding of what happens in these camps, through the analysis of the use of language in the interaction during group meetings.

## **2. Mediation and facilitation**

Mediation is a way of dealing with conflicts that are considered intractable by means of a judgment that acknowledges a right position, sanctioning a wrong one. Therefore, mediation is a non-adversarial form of conflict management. It is defined as the action of a third party that helps two conflicting parties to reach a mutually acceptable settlement (Bush and Folger 2005). Mediators do not have the power to force outcomes and “flourish when they please all parties equally, when they oppress nobody” (Zeldin 1998: 161). While judgement means siding with the right party, against the wrong one, mediation helps the conflicting parties to appreciate each other and to work together.

There are different theories that try to explain the concept of mediation in more detail. Here, we are interested in those theories that strictly connect mediation to interaction. Bush and Folger (2005) talk about “transformative mediation”, stressing that mediation transforms human interactions, in particular it transforms conflicting interactions from destructive to constructive. In this perspective, mediation has two main objectives: (1) participants’ empowerment, i.e. promotion of their ability to decide autonomously and effectively; (2) recognition, i.e. acknowledgment and understanding of and empathy for participants’ conditions, concerns and perspectives. Winslade and Monk (2000, 2008) talk about “narrative mediation”, stressing the objective of creating stories that are alternative

with respect to those producing conflicts and parties' suffering. Mediation promotes new perspectives in a context in which these can be listened to attentively and respectfully.

Winslade and Monk contrast a social constructivist approach (based on narratives) with an allegedly psychological approach (based on empowerment). However, although empowerment has been defined in terms of individual agency, strength and abilities (e.g. Bailey and McCarthy 2009), it can also be understood as a way of treating disagreements and alternative perspectives as enrichments in communication (Baraldi 2009). Empowerment is thus a specific narrative of the parties' positioning in the interaction; in particular, it may be intended as an alternative narrative with respect to that of lack of power and autonomy in managing conflicts. Promoting empowerment and creating alternative narratives do not seem contradictory processes: a story may be considered alternative if and when mediation promotes the active participation of those who co-construct it, i.e. if it is a new story about affiliation (trust, closeness) and interdependencies (rights and obligations). The construction of alternative narratives and the promotion of parties' empowerment may be considered two aspects of the same process of mediation.

To sum up, following these approaches, mediation is the construction of new and alternative stories through the promotion of active participation in the interaction. The basic function of mediation concerns the production of different perspectives and narratives in communication. This evokes the concept of "facilitation", which is used in some studies on mediation, mediation meaning "facilitating communication" (Sahah-Kazemi 2000: 305) and the role of mediators being "to 'facilitate' discussion that leads to the parties settling their dispute rather than imposing a judgement" (Mulcahy 2001: 508). Facilitation is contrasted with guidance and expertise, in that it implies that the parties are agents who can decide for themselves and that the mediator does not influence their decisions.

The term “facilitation” is also used in other settings, which involve group discussions. In these cases, facilitation means listening to, appreciating, encouraging and coordinating the participants’ contributions. The achievement of facilitation has been explained through some formulae, such as active listening (Rogers and Farson 1979) or reflecting (Mearns and Thorne 1999), which aim to explain the facilitator’s actions leading to transformations without guidance.

In all the above-mentioned approaches, the concept of “facilitation” emphasizes the production of different perspectives. This production can lead to the display and treatment of stereotypes and prejudices, doubts, divergent interpretations, different stories, unexpected emotions, and so on. Facilitation is not associated with specific outcomes, but with the production and management of empowerment and new narratives.

### **3. Dialogue**

The description of mediation (and facilitation) may be enhanced using the concept of “dialogue” as communicative creation of a space where different perspectives may be explored (Bohm 1996). There are other and more general ways of looking at dialogue (see Weigand 1994); we chose Bohm’s because it allows to describe specifically mediation and analyzable communication processes. Observing dialogue in mediation means observing emergent perspectives as enrichment (empowerment) and creating new narratives, through the promotion of active participation and the display of sensitivity for interlocutors (empathy).

The study of dialogue in mediation needs four levels of analysis. The first, and more general, level concerns the social system in which mediation is performed (e.g. education, international politics, healthcare, law). The structure of the social system defines the context of mediation and the conditions in which mediation can be applied. The second level concerns

the patterns of expectations that guide mediation, i.e. its “cultural” orientation, which defines the ways in which it is applied. The third level concerns the organization of the interaction in which mediation is achieved. The fourth, and more specific, level concerns the design of the mediator’s actions as part of the overall organization of the interaction.

The main objective of this paper is the identification of this design. Mediators’ dialogic actions deserve particular attention because they promote opportunities for dialogue in mediation. A number of studies in different areas have dealt with dialogic actions (e.g. Black 2008; Bohm 1996; Gergen *et al.* 2001; Gudykunst 1994; Kim 2001; Littlejohn 2004). However, to say that something is “dialogic” (or not dialogic) is only possible by observing specific communication processes in specific social systems. The analysis of mediators’ actions requires attention for all levels of analysis; it requires the identification of the contextualizing system, the specific patterns of expectations and the organization of the interaction.

It is particularly relevant to stress that the observation of dialogic actions leads to challenge the idea of the “neutrality” of mediators. Theories of mediation prescribe mediators’ neutrality to avoid the risk of emphasizing their power in guiding the parties’ actions. Dialogue in mediation means promoting active participation and the display of empathy; how can this be compatible with neutrality?

Neutrality has been criticized as a way to maintain power imbalance in the social context (Gerami 2009; Neves 2009; Wing 2009). In our perspective, however, the basic reason to contest the idea of neutrality is that mediators’ actions are included in a communication system where they cannot avoid creating changes. This is particularly evident if we look at those interactions in which mediation is achieved. Conversation Analysis (CA) observes interaction as an organised sequence of talk, based on the mechanism of turn-taking. Against this background, any “current action may project (...) one among a range of possible next actions” (Goodwin and Heritage 1990:

288). In the interaction, mediators' actions always project their interlocutors' actions, influencing the communication process.

Neutrality has been reframed as impartiality, i.e. as the idea that mediators should avoid judging, taking sides and advocating. Impartiality does not prevent mediators from actively encouraging and supporting the parties' expression of emotions, perspectives and experiences. However, the concept of "impartiality" is ambiguous; should the "impartial" mediator avoid encouraging one party more than the other when the context is unfair or the opportunities of participation are unequal?

The observation of dialogue in mediation, in avoiding the use of simplifying concepts, such as neutrality and impartiality, makes it possible to understand an articulated variety of ways in which the mediator can coordinate the other participants and promote their active participation. In mediation, dialogic actions are ways of coordinating the interaction able to enhance active participation, display of sensitivity, enrichment of perspectives, and new narratives. Dialogue in mediation cannot be reduced to the simplified forms of either neutrality or impartiality, or to any other normative and prescriptive form. It may be observed only in empirical situations. In the next few sections, we shall observe the empirical achievement of mediators' dialogic actions and dialogue in mediation.

#### **4. Data and methodology**

The importance of the use of language in mediation has been recognized in the literature (see Olekalns et al. 2010). However, a widespread preference for quantitative analyses prevents many scholars from achieving satisfactory results in the study of mediation in interactions. Qualitative analyses have instead prevalently focused on role-plays (e.g. Della Noce 1999; White and Agne 2009), which are much more accessible than real sessions of

mediation, which have been analysed rarely and for limited purposes (Heisterkamp 2006).

Research on mediation has highlighted some variables that enhance dialogue. For instance, some features of effective actions in both problem-centred mediation (Picard and Melchin 2007) and cooperation in mediation (Poitras 2005) have been discussed, revealing that emotions can be managed by granting them legitimacy, encouraging their identification, confronting their avoidance, paraphrasing them, and encouraging their perspective taking (Katz Jameson et al. 2010). Previous studies have also identified the factors that can enhance the parties' trust in mediators (Poitras 2009). However, these analyses do not achieve sufficient depth in looking at mediators' use of language in the interaction.

In this paper, we analyze the empirical conditions of dialogue in the process of mediation taking place during an experience of peace education organized by the School of Peace "Monte Sole". This School of Peace is located in a Historical Park, in a mountainous area near Bologna (Italy), where 800 people, mostly women and children, were slaughtered by German Nazi troops between September 29<sup>th</sup> and October 5<sup>th</sup> 1944.

The School of Peace provides educational activities that aim to promote conflict transformation through dialogue. In particular, it organizes international summer camps for young people, in cooperation with two international partners (Hessische Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung and EU Fundamental Rights Agency).

Our study concerns two of these summer camps. Firstly, we analysed a *Campo a Quattro Voci* (Four-Voice Camp), which is the most important educational activity of the School of Peace. This kind of camp aims to encourage dialogue between two delegations of young people pretending they are trapped in violent conflicts in their countries. German and Italian delegations participate in these camps as witnesses of a past, violent conflict that was peacefully solved. Therefore, the "four voices" are those of

Italians, Germans and two other conflicting groups. In particular, we have analysed a Camp that involved two delegations from Kosovo, a Serbian one and an Albanian one. Each of the four delegations included 10 adolescents aged 15-19, and 2 adults called “teamers”. Secondly, we have analysed a European Citizenship Camp, which focused on the issue of European citizenship and human rights. This camp included delegations from France, Poland, Italy and Germany. 38 adolescents (9 Italian, 9 German, 10 Polish and 10 French) and 8 teamers (two for each delegation) were involved in the camp.

During both camps, most activities were group activities and focused on the interpretation of meanings of objects, facts and events related to peace, by means of conferences, visits, and role-plays. After the main activities, teamers promoted adolescents’ reflection on their experience of the activities in dedicated debriefing sessions. In both camps, English as a Lingua Franca was used to communicate.

While the two camps shared the main objective, i.e. the promotion of dialogue, the length (two weeks) and the methodology, their specific goals were different. The goal of the four-voice camp was to promote dialogic management of violent conflicts, while the goal of the European citizenship camp was to promote a dialogic reflection on the peaceful values on which the new European citizenship is based.

Camp activities are explicitly declared as “educational”. However, the primary task of teamers is explicitly declared as facilitation (the term “teamer” itself indicating the function of creating teams). The final goal of teamers’ actions is to manage real or potential conflicts; therefore, facilitation aims at achieving mediation. This kind of mediation is not organized by professional mediators and is not requested by the conflicting parties. Here, the use of the term mediation refers to the promotion of empowerment and new narratives in the interaction.

It has been observed that mediation is not necessarily linked to the conditions of open conflict and to the presence of two parties (Neves 2009; Six 2003). In other words, we could say that mediation can be applied to all situations in which empowerment and new narratives are pursued, regardless of there being a conflict and of the number and type of parties, groups or communities involved. It is this broader meaning of mediation that we shall use when analysing the production of dialogue in group activities in the next few sections.

Our analysis is based on videorecordings of interactions in group activities during the two camps. A total of 52 hours of activities were videotaped. Videotaping enables the researcher to view and analyse the interactions in detail and repeatedly. For this purpose, the videotaped activities were accurately transcribed. All personal details in the talk were altered in the transcription to protect participants' anonymity.

The extracts used in the following sections represent the main types of dialogue organisation in the interactions, and provide an idea of the sequences of talk making the bulk of the dialogic actions observed in the collection of data. However, it is important to note that not all the interactions that were videotaped in the camps include examples of dialogue in mediation. Our aim is not to identify the general structures of interactions during the camps, but to observe how dialogue in mediation works.

In the next few sections, we shall observe the main dialogic actions that promoted empowerment and new narratives during group activities. Our aim is to deal with the empirical meanings of mediation (Charkoudian et al. 2009), stressing the correlation between data and theoretical definitions.

Our analysis focuses on teamers' turn design within organised sequences of talk (Heritage and Clayman 2010). We have analysed the dialogic actions by observing the verbal elements which "highlight, foreground or make salient" (Gumperz 1992: 232) dialogue in mediation. According to Gumperz (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 2009), these elements are "contextualisation



different arts (.) not to make pictures of only differences things (.) like only black and white skin or whatever (.) there was also in our mind but we were thinking: where is the border between them? Normally there don't has to be a border between those peoples. That was the question (.) we tried to make other picture like the thing before. In this picture we had like the camera on the floor, up to the hill and the two black things are the houses, and between them an electronic cables so (.) just there is a border between the houses but the cables just -

2. Maria (T): links -  
3. Christiane: link the houses together, so there is the border but also  
4. Maria (T): the bridge.  
5. Christiane: there is also the bridge over the border  
((applause))

In extract (1), the teamer is not intensively engaged in promoting empowerment and a new narrative, however she is able to support both with minimal contributions to the interaction.

## **6. Opening and coordination**

In the camps, interactions often open with and are coordinated by teamers' dialogic actions. Opening is based on questions whereas coordination includes questions, minimal responses, ways of leaving the floor to other speakers, formulations, and displays of epistemic authority.

Extract 2 is part of an interaction concerning the planning of the "future". Maria opens the sequence with a complex turn that includes a series of questions. Her turn closure seems to invite a negative reply ("was there

some moments like that? No? No moment?”). However, Dejana responds positively, thus leading Maria to coordinate the adolescents’ active participation through a variety of actions: she gives up her turn calling the adolescents by their names (turns 3, 9, 17); she asks new questions, both exploring the meanings of the adolescents’ turns (turns 5, 19) and actively promoting their participation (turn 11); she acknowledges the adolescents’ contributions (turns 11, 14; ah ah, ok) and thanks them (turn 7).

(2)

1. Maria (T): anybody felt that he or she would have had those possibilities (.) want to answer yes, but he or she knows that he couldn't (.) he or she couldn't? So (.) was there a moment or some moments that you would have answered yes but you felt (.) you felt that you couldn't answer yes (.) so you felt in a way frustrated (.) was there some moments like that? No? No moment?
2. Dejana: yea.
3. Maria (T): Dejana -
4. Dejana: I'm frustrating the question: can you (.) do you know how is future? -
5. Maria (T): positive for the future?
6. Dejana: ya (.) positive future for my children (.) I can't (.) but I'm frustrated because I can't answer yes.
7. Maria (T): thanks Dejana -
8. ((Nabil raises his hand))
9. Maria (T): Nabil -
10. Nabil: Maria, also me (.) I'm very optimistic for the future, I'm not very safe for my children's future.
11. Maria (T): ah (.) ah (.) ok (.) what about the others?

12. Tania: my children can live fifty years until I die.
13. ((laughing))
14. Maria (T): ok
15. Sara: Also I (.) I'm very sad for the future of my children.
16. Tania: I have a problem -
17. Maria (T): Ya Tania.
18. Tania: I actually don't know nothing about the organization  
(.) I think that the organization that's mine is like  
Monte Sole. I don't know nothing about organization  
(.) I don't know nothing about political (.) about  
government, but it's interesting that I would like to  
imagine to be something like (.) something same like  
this character (.) president of youth organization.
19. Maria (T): and you felt what?
20. Tania: because I felt that I'm helping other people, I can  
make something better in future (.) you asked us. Do  
you believe in better future? You asked us the  
question and I moved. My character, or what I wanna  
be is something to help people and have a better  
future (.) not for me but for all who come to my  
organization.

The interactional organisation of extract (2) reveals Maria's sensitivity in listening to the adolescents' problems and perplexities, thus creating a space in which they can express themselves. Tania's long final turn demonstrates the successful promotion of both her empowerment and a new narrative about the adolescents' future.

Extract 3 is taken from the activity *borders and bridges*. Federica opens the sequence with a question concerning the activity (turn 1), which projects Luca's contribution (turn 2). In turn 3, Maria supports Luca's initiative with

a linguistic help (age). In turn 5, Alain echoes Maria's translation, acknowledging Luca's idea. However, Marek, expressing a different perspective, opens a sequence among the teamers (turns 6-10), showing that the interaction can explore other options. The possibility that Marek and Leni's hypotheses may also be wrong is highlighted in turn 11 by Alain, who coordinates this part of the interaction, leaving the floor to the adolescents through a question that projects their potential dissent from the teamers. This passage projects Matthias' perspective (turn 12). In the following part of the sequence, Federica collaborates with Alain, coordinating the adolescents' contributions through new questions. In turn 13, she echoes Matthias' turn using an interrogative intonation to check her own understanding of his reply while clarifying Mathias' point for the audience. In turns 13 and 15, she explores the meanings of Matthias' reply, introducing doubts about his use of the right/wrong distinction. In turn 17, after Matthias' hesitation, Federica tries to be more precise about her previous question, in this way projecting Luca's persisting doubts (turn 18). Sequence (3) highlights how teamers' joint coordination can offer opportunities for adolescents' empowerment and the creation of new stories (turns 2, 12, 14, 18).

(3)

1. Federica (T): bridge or border?
2. Luca: eh, yeah (.) a border? ((he speaks with the other members of his group)) (.) a border between the new age and the old age, the -, *epoca come si dice?* ((*how do you say "epoca"?*))
3. Maria (T): age
4. Luca: age
5. Alain (T): age

6. Marek (T): (??) it's a bridge
7. Alain (T): what -
8. Marek (T): it's a bridge
9. Alain (T): for Marek is a bridge
10. Leni (T): for me too
11. Alain (T): for Leni too (03) and for you, boys and girls?
12. Matthias: for me is also a bridge because this picture (??)  
two times and doesn't divide (??)
13. Federica (T): so, you mean that a border is always dividing  
two things or maybe then, it can be also -?
14. Matthias: yeah, in some way, yes
15. Federica (T): and what do you mean for the border or the  
bridge?
16. Matthias: mm
17. Federica (T): because there are two differences
18. Luca: I don't know because I think that a border is a  
line where two things are near, nearby

In extract (3), no precise and absolute position can be observed. Marek and Leni express their perspectives, while Alain and Federica promote coordination of the adolescents' autonomous perspectives and narratives. The sequence includes questions that promote participation, echoes and, above all, a three-turn formulation (turns 13, 15 and 17).

To provide a formulation consists in "summarising, glossing, or developing the gist of an informant's earlier statement" (Heritage 1985: 100). Formulations "advance the prior report by finding a point in the prior utterance and thus shifting its focus, redeveloping its gist, making something explicit that was previously implicit in the prior utterance, or by making inferences about its presuppositions or implications" (ibid.: 104). Moreover, formulations project a direction for subsequent turns by inviting

new responses from the answerers. Following Heritage (1985), Hutchby (2005, 2007) conceives formulation as the third turn in a QAF triplet (QAF standing for question-answer-formulation). Questioners' formulations are produced in order to advance answerers' prior reports; they project interlocutors' statements about their feelings or thoughts, moving the interaction forward.

In turns 13-17 of extract (3), Federica's formulation both reproduces the gist of previous turns and encourages the adolescents' personal disclosure and new narratives, revealing her expectation that disclosure and new narratives are positive and important for the group discussion. In turns 13 and 15, Federica proposes two inferences introduced by "so" and "and", which indicate continuity with the previous turns, using the interrogative intonation and the interrogative form respectively. In turn 17, Federica proposes a specification of the meaning of her previous formulation, trying to interpret Matthias' turn (turn 12). However, Luca does not align with Federica's attempt. The three-turn formulation makes it possible to co-construct a narrative, which follows Alain's previous opening-up of alternatives, and does not conclude the interaction, but rather helps to reopen it.

Extract (4) is taken from the activity *Stepping outside the framework*. As a preliminary operation, the teamers draw nine dots on the blackboard, distributed in three imaginary rows and three columns; the adolescents have the task to connect these dots using four lines, without either excluding any of the dots or touching them more than once. Sonia opens the sequence inviting the adolescents to try to solve the problem, stressing that there are different options. However, the adolescents cast some doubts on the possibility of finding a solution (turns 2, 3, and 6). The teamers encourage them confirming that finding a solution is possible (turns 4, 5, 7, and 8). At the end of this part of the sequence, Davorka invites possible solutions ("anyone?"). This invitation projects Kristine's uncertain attempt (turns 10,

14, and 16). This uncertainty starts a dyadic sequence in which Davorka encourages Kristine to go on, showing his interest for her contribution (turns 11, 15, and 17). In turns 17 and 19, Sonia promotes a coordination between Kristine and Beatrice, who has found the solution. Although Kristine has failed, her participation is highly appreciated by the teamers and her idea is highlighted as an important step to find the solution. Kristine's effort in participating is thus supported and empowered. In the final phase, Davorka's question (turn 21) and Sonia's echo (turn 24) produce further coordination of a collective effort to interpret Kristine's idea and to construct a new narrative, in which Kristine is able to find important steps towards the solution (turns 20-25).

(4)

1. Sonia (T):                    Make many many try, ok? Keep trying, the important is to try, ok?
2. Nabil:                         Just tell us where the point does start ((laughing, together with Sonia))
3. Jana:                         But it's impossible to do.
4. Davorka (T):                No.
5. Sonia (T):                    It's possible.
6. Samir:                        Is possible?
7. Boris (T):                    Yes, it is.
8. Sonia (T):                    It's possible, it's possible. Of course it's possible ((laughing))
9. Davorka (T):                Anyone?
10. Kristine:                    I don't have the solution but I think that we have to go outside the main points, but I don't know.
11. Davorka (T):                How did you realize that? ((Kristine raises her hands in a gesture that seems to mean "I don't know"))

12. Jana: Maybe we should not write a straight, but like a ((she draws a circle with her hands))
13. Davorka (T): No, you have to do straight lines. ((refers to Kristine))  
Would you please come and write? Yes, please.  
((Kristine reaches the blackboard to show her attempt))
14. Kristine: I don't know, but -
15. Davorka (T): What did you mean before when you say -
16. Kristine: Ehm ((she shows her attempt, which is not successful in connecting all the points))
17. Davorka (T): Try again, or you can help her to do it. ((he refers to Beatrice who seems to have found the solution))  
((silence)) What a suspense! ((laughing))
18. Davorka (T): Ok. ((Beatrice has found the solution))
19. Sonia (T): ((indicates the two girls' attempts)): I think that this ((Beatrice's)) can be a result of this ((Kristine's)) (.)  
How did you learn to step outside?
20. Kristine: I've tried a lot of possibilities ehm (.) so I understand that I have to go outside of the -
21. Davorka (T): Of the what?
22. Kristine: framework.
23. Jana: of the points.
24. Sonia (T): of the points.
25. Nabil: of the frame.

In extract (4), the teamers display their epistemic authority. Epistemic authority concerns the “management of rights and responsibilities related to knowledge and information” (Heritage and Raymond 2005: 16). In this case, the teamers' epistemic authority is connected to their roles, by virtue of which they possess the knowledge of the task and the authority to define

it, guide its accomplishment, and assess the adolescents' proposals. In a situation like the one presented, it may seem difficult to display epistemic authority while "staying" in dialogue. However, in this case, the display of epistemic authority neither imposes ways of acting, nor judges the quality of the adolescents' performances. On the contrary, the teamers' display of epistemic authority supports the adolescents' active participation in the problem-solving process, without paying real attention to the results. Firstly, the display of epistemic authority reassures the adolescents of the effectiveness of their efforts; secondly, it supports appreciation of Kristine's efforts. The teamers' questions do not project either display of knowledge or assessments of learning; rather they explore the adolescents' perspectives, regardless of their exactness or relevance. This absence of evaluations is particularly significant in a context that can be considered "educational".

## **7. Support of initiatives**

Teamers' support of adolescents' initiatives is particularly important after formulations and other actions project these initiatives.

Extract (5) is taken from an activity on the European Constitution. In turn 1, Albert expresses his opinion about the relevance of religion in the Constitution. Erica formulates the gist of Albert's turn, showing her attention for his perspective (turn 2). This formulation is acknowledged by Albert (turn 3), and in the next turn Erica starts supporting participation through a question that does not address any specific adolescent. This action projects Laure and Victor's initiatives (turns 6, 7, and 9), which are encouraged by Erica through an acknowledgement token (turn 8, ah ah). This minimal response projects Victor's new contribution (turn 9).

(5)

1. Albert: religion shouldn't take decision, political decision

2. Erica (T):           ah, ok, so you didn't agree with the (04) with the putting in of the religious theme into this text for all European citizens
3. Albert:             (yeah)
4. Erica (T):         were you all agree?
5. Adolescents:     yes
6. Laure:             yeah, but we had to talk a bit because (03) ((she asks Cedric something in French))
7. Victor:            and we take the topic "united in diversity"
8. Erica (T):         ah ah
9. Victor:            because it's the (??) of the European union and also the motto for the European union, united in diversity, so it's really many nations but we are united, we're together (03) go on somebody

The question in turn 4 promotes the adolescents' personal perspectives, without assessing Albert's. The absence of evaluation in turn 4 encourages the adolescents' initiatives. Erica's acknowledgement token in turn 8 contributes to avoiding evaluation, signalling attention and sensitivity, and successfully promoting the continuation of Victor's narrative.

Extract (6) is taken from the concluding part of an activity concerning human rights. The sequence focuses on civil rights for homosexuals. In turn 1, Dan expresses a negative assessment of homosexuality. In turn 2, Maria formulates Dan's perspective using an interrogative intonation and checking her understanding (if I got well), and Dan confirms the formulation (turn 3). In turn 5, Emilio replies interrupting Maria (turn 4). After Maria's request of clarification (turn 6: "eh?"), caused by lack of understanding, Emilio repeats his reply in turn 7. Maria immediately invites Emilio to participate (turn 8), promoting his narrative. Finally, Maria checks the other participants' understanding and invites other contributions (turn 10).

(6)

1. Dan: when homosexual people educate a small child, this child ((Marwin helps him find the words)) would be with this, with this ill people, with this are -
2. Maria (T): yes, so, if I got well, it's (..) ok, it's that if they are educated, if a child is educated in a family of homosexual people they get the same illness?
3. Dan: yes
4. Maria (T): and -
5. Emilio: I think the opposite
6. Maria (T): eh?
7. Emilio: I think the opposite
8. Maria (T): please, say your opinion
9. Emilio: if a child is grow up by maybe two men, two people that are looked different by the society, this two people may (..) insegnare è ((*teaching is*)) (.) teach to this child to accept all the different people from you and have no prejudice, maybe it's better grow up with two homosexual parents than two normal parents
10. Maria (T): did you understand what Emilio said, everybody understood? (??) you understood as well? ok, and what do you think about it (..) and then I'm very curious as well (..) yes ((refers to Lotte who has asked to speak))

In extract (6), adolescents' personal perspectives are treated as a priority with respect to teacher's control. In turn 2, Maria does not either comment on or adapt the gist of Dan's turn, which is openly adverse to the idea of human rights; rather, she formulates it for the other adolescents, so that they

can understand it. Furthermore, Maria does not react negatively to Emilio's interruption in turn 5. On the contrary, she invites Emilio to continue, confirming his right to participate. Finally, Maria stresses Emilio's perspective, in order to open a reflection about the preceding controversy (turn 10, and then I'm very curious as well).

In extracts (5) and (6), support of adolescents' initiatives is a priority with respect to teamers' control of the interaction, and, formulations are the starting point for further dialogic actions.

## **8. Coordination of reflection**

Coordination of group reflection on relevant issues is another important opportunity for promoting dialogue. In particular, this coordination enhance narratives of emotions, experiences and perspectives.

Extract 7 shows reflection on a role-play in which some adolescents have played the role of "mirrors" of their mates, interpreting their personal traits. Maria invites the participants to describe the emotions that they felt during the activity (turn 1). After the first short reply (turn 2), Maria's questions (turns 3, 9, 13, 26, and 30) project descriptions and clarifications of the adolescents' emotions. Moreover, she promotes adolescents' participation through direct invitations to speak (turns 6, 21, and 23), linguistic support (turns 11, and 15), thanks (turns 17, 21, and 26), and acknowledgment tokens (turns 23 and 28). Maria pursues the adolescents' active participation, avoiding prolonged dyads: once the involvement of one adolescent has produced some meanings, Maria asks questions that encourage other speakers to self-select (turns 21, 26, and 30). She avoids assessments and acknowledges all contributions.

(7)

1. Maria (T): before changing parts, I would like to know your feelings in expressing yourself and in being mirrors. How do you feel in expressing yourself and how do you do feel in being mirror? It was difficult, it was nice (.) It was (.) I don't know.
2. Boris: It was interesting for me
3. Maria (T): In which sense interesting?
4. Boris: In the sense of being mirror of somebody.
5. Nabil: To know what someone feels.
6. Maria (T): Christiane.
7. Kristine: I think it was a little bit difficult because I had a problem with some words and I want to say more but I can't.
8. Alice: Difficult and nice at the same moment.
9. Maria (T): Why difficult and why nice?
10. Alice: Nice because it's beautiful to (.) come si dice conoscere ((how do you say conoscere))
11. Maria (T): Know
12. Alice: know the particular of the person (.) and difficult because (.) is difficult ((laughing)).
13. Maria (T): In what sense?
14. Alice: Cioè di esprimere (.) quello che pensi (that is, to express what you think))
15. Maria (T): It's difficult only to express yourself?
16. Alice: Yes, Yes.
17. Maria (T): Ok, thank you.
18. Beatrice: For me it's nice because in this way the others know a part of me and what I (.) think about.

19. Maria (T): And is to learn something more from, you know, from each other. Like she said, special things what people likes to work out.
20. Nabil: And I think that it's just by learning everything it's more of an exercise to know how do people understand you and how can you show your feelings to someone or how good are you at that.
21. Maria (T): Thank you Nabil. I would like to hear also some mirrors. How do you feel in being mirrors.
22. Dragana: It was hard to say about how those persons feel only by knowing one thing on that person, you know?
23. Maria (T): Mmh, mmh ((she nods)) Liz?
24. Katrine: I don't think it was so difficult, because you can't say more than you can see. You just say what you can see and it's enough. You must only say one word and not everything of the person.
25. Igor: after their speech you have the mission to work to explain their feelings and what they feel, yes, about their part, some parts that are close, body -
26. Maria (T): Ok, thank you. And what about you in expressing yourself?
27. Samir: Interesting when you told the other something that you feel and to view what they (.) what they feel if they could be you, for example. That's it.
28. Maria (T): Mmh, mmh ((nodding))
29. Samir: To change the point of view.
30. Maria (T): Any other idea?
31. Ighli: It was nice to express something about your body like me, like I express my necklace because you, everybody can know his meaning (.) that.

In particular, the “and”-prefaced turn in 19 occurs between two adolescents’ turns, proceeding from the previous one (like she said) and projecting a continuation in the following one, which is again “and”-prefaced. The resulting triplet is an interesting example of coordinated construction of a new narrative.

Extract 8 is part of a narrative of emotions experienced during an activity of problem-solving, which has introduced the topic of stereotypes and prejudices. Sonia’s starting question checks the adolescents’ perception of the activity and projects a prolonged collective participation (turns 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 12, 14, and 16). This participation is supported by Sonia and Maria’s confirmations (turns 5, and 7), acknowledgments of personal expressions (turns 11, and 15), and minimal invitation to continue them (turn 13).

(8)

- 1 Sonia (T):           How did you feel when you were trying to solve this problem?
- 2 Franz:               that you go on (.) and you move in this framework (.) that is impossible, and you have to try and try to find the solution -
- 3 Nabil:               challenging (.) you try and try and try and you go: I will do it, but there is no result (.) I will do it, but there is no result!
- 4 Blaze:               I thought that it was too easy and that I had a problem (..) maybe it's too easy and I cannot find the solution
- 5 Maria (T):           ah, ah! Which is quite true at the end (...) which is quite true.
- 6 Jana:                I think that is not a solution because we have nine points and just four lines (.) and we can't make -
- 7 Maria (T):           very logical.

- 8 Jana: yes. ((laughing))
- 9 Sonia (M): so we are cheating.
- 10 Jana: because I didn't know that we can go out of the borders.
- 11 Sonia (T): Ok
- 12 Adele: I think that at first when I tried to do this I said to myself: Ok, all the things have a solution.
- 13 Maria (T): mmm -
- 14 Adele: what is important for us is to find, because all (.) all the things in the world have a solution.
- 15 Maria (T): ok -
- 16 Adele: So I keep trying, trying (.) maybe if you try an hour the reason will me.

Teamers cooperate in offering contributions that can be minimal because adolescents' involvement is high. These minimal contributions support adolescents' collective construction of narrative.

Extract 9 is part of a narrative that has been prompted by a visit to the places where the Nazis killed local people in 1944. In turn 1, Erica summarizes the two narratives emerged in a previous conversation (not transcribed). This turn projects the adolescents' participation through two questions, which originate from previous contributions by Marcin and Victor. In particular, Erica checks Victor's narrative through a formulation of its gist followed by a check of her own understanding (it's like this?). The formulation projects Victor's disconfirmation (turn 2), which is followed by his clarification (turn 4), supported by Boris' linguistic help (turn 3). In turn 5, Erica tries again to formulate the gist of Victor's perspective, thus projecting Marcin's new contribution, which starts a dyadic conversation with Victor.

(9)

1. Erica (T): ok, so let's continue, just to summarize, we have two things on the table, one the problem Marcin suggested, I describe you the situation in Falluja, from a military point of view, it was almost the same as in Monte Sole, but Marcin asked, it's different? Partisans here, what else over there, terrorists or civil population or army, what's there, ok let me summarise a bit and then, the other question on the table is Victor question (.) how was possible that Nazi troops came here killing all these people, looking for partisans and because they weren't able to catch them they came back to the villages and killed all the civil population (.) it's like this?
2. Victor : ehm (.) no it's not why (.) why they, if they want to hunt the partisans, they said it was ((unintelligible word in German))
3. Boris (T): mission
4. Victor: a mission and they see the partisans troops to partisan and then, they don't follow them, they went back and why (.) is their mission to shoot them or they could killed other people
5. Erica (T): so, why not follow partisans up to the hill but kill other people who were not their target
6. Marcin: I can suggest (.) alright (.) I' m afraid check and (?) in -, I give an example of the soviet forces are trying to spring the communist regime all over the Europe in nineteen twenty and first of all they attack Poland and they came to Warsaw (.) they fall, they fell at the battle of Warsaw (.) in nineteen twenty then the eastern part of Poland was destroyed, burnt, so it was

- a total war, I think that in the second world war when the Nazi commanders (?) order to provide a total war to destroy all enemy target in order to, to (.) frightened the civilian people
7. Victor: do you think they attacked (?) because frightening the civil population of a country
8. Marcin: maybe but there is there's another thing I that I feel (.) maybe it was not the initiative from the high headquarter, the soldiers maybe afraid, this soldiers who were fighting in Italy at the Nazi service, they were also a human, a man and they could be afraid of their life and maybe it was the reaction of it, I don't know (.) I don't know whether it was the initiative from the high headquarters, or whether it was they own initiative, maybe they fell endangered by the people (.) I don't know, but, I must one word just (.) that they, the Nazi soldiers, the soldiers, lower rank soldiers, sergent, private (.) and the officers, the tenent they were also influenced by the Nazi propaganda who told them that they're the master of the world, Arian race, they are better than other people, and maybe under this propaganda they were able to (.) even to kill the civilian people each day, notice the (?) and the worst than they were

Extract (9) highlights that adolescents' personal expressions can be supported and appreciated even if they contradict teamers. Furthermore, a dialogic conflict management of the kind presented in extract (9) encourages direct interaction between Victor and Marcin, who show reciprocal interest and sensitivity.

Extract 10 is part of the conclusion of an activity about the European Constitution. The adolescents have been divided into small groups, where they have discussed and produced posters, which they are now presenting. In turn 1, Erica appreciates the latest presentation (projecting an applause) and explicitly stresses her interest for the adolescents' participation, inviting them to intervene. Nadja accepts her invitation, but in her reply she highlights some difficulties in accomplishing the task (turns 2, 4, and 6). Erica acknowledges her first contribution, immediately asking for a clarification (turn 3), confirms her understanding after the second part of the reply (turn 5), and finally invites Nadja to illustrate the ideas previously elaborated by the group (turn 7). She avoids either assessments or explanations and her action supports Nadja's narrative. After Nadja's request of clarification (turn 8), in turn 9 Erica supports Nadja's contribution through a first- person narrative (if you were not able to understand everything it can be, me too ok?). This allows Nadja to go on, in spite of the difficulties she has previously mentioned. Erica suggests a possible way to proceed (turn 11), Nadja takes up this suggestion (turn 12), and Erica replies showing her concern that Nadja may not be heard by the others (turn 13). After the production of Nadja's narrative (turn 15), Erica acknowledges adolescents' autonomous coordination in solving problems (turn 16), which Nadja confirms (turn 17).

(10)

1. Erica (T): ok, thank you Marcin ((applause)) just a second for you, groups. It was a very (.) how can I say (.) high political presentation and the last sentence from Marcin was very concrete problem (.) if you prefer shadow you can come near, but I have some question for the rest of the group, also (.) can the rest of the group tell something about concretising more and

- more the last line of you (.) I mean, what does it mean for you, people, Nadja, Janika, Camille, Thierry and Giorgio, Europe, ok? Marcin said very concrete problem, the last level, but what does it mean for you concrete? (.) if you can answer –
2. Nadja: we have a problem to answer I think ((another girl says "yes"))
  3. Erica (T): ok, why you have a problem in answering?
  4. Nadja: because I think our working in the group was a little bit difficult for us (.) because we had little problem to understand everything what -, were in the constitu-, constitution
  5. Erica (T): constitution, yes
  6. Nadja: and we didn't understand everything
  7. Erica (T): ok, so what is your idea -
  8. Nadja: our idea?
  9. Erica (T): I mean, if you are-, if you were not able to understand everything it can be, me too ok? I think it's a very difficult writing but then, reading, your first idea reading this (.) what does it mean for you, I mean, not really understanding all but feeling something in reading -
  10. Nadja: what we felt when we read the constitution
  11. Erica (T): yes, about European prospective, for example
  12. Nadja: yes, my first thought was that I think the Constitution is very, very important (?)
  13. Erica (T): are you all able to hear Nadja?
  14. Victor: no
  15. Nadja: ok (.) as my first thought were, was when I read the Constitution that it is very, very important for the

European people because I think there are many important things in it which are very - (.) very necessary to live in peace and to live united but when we look (.) more carefully, in the constitution there are some problems, and with the problems that was our problem, that we didn't understand so much (.) with the problems

16. Erica (T): ok, ok (.) so maybe you can also ask after their presentation to other groups to solve let's say your problem and you can debate a little bit with them

17. Nadja: yes

In extract 10, Erica's actions pursue the co-construction of a new narrative, in spite of Nadja's persistent attempts to withdraw. In this way, Erica shows that the production of a narrative is possible and acceptable even if adolescents are uncertain and worried about their performances.

## **9. Conclusions**

Our analysis has focused on the ways in which teamers promote dialogue during group meetings. The analysis highlighted some teamers' actions that may prove successful to this purpose. We have not tried to find either abstract presuppositions of dialogue or some sort of prescriptive methodology of mediation (such as transformative mediation, narrative mediation, problem-solving mediation, etc.). The analysis has looked at real data, which – we believe – may be of some help for both future research, which could further explore this way of observing mediation, and practice, as practitioners can observe how language is used in real interactions and observe how dialogue and dialogic actions are produced.

Our study has shown that there is a variety of ways of enhancing dialogue in mediation, and that these ways do not follow pre-established pathways, but must adapt to a variety of interactional situations, especially in terms of interlocutors' reactions. The parties' actions are not homogeneous, and they do not originate from recurrent behaviors. For this reason, prescriptions for mediators' actions tend to be unsatisfactory and usually wrong.

This is particularly evident in our data, where both the number of participants and the variety of their cultural backgrounds enhance a vast range of contributions.

The analysis of extracts 1-10 demonstrates the complexity of the ways in which dialogue is promoted through teamers' actions. We shall now summarize these actions, with the warning that a summary cannot account for the complexity that we have explored.

Firstly, we have observed minimal supportive actions, which enable adolescents to keep their turn. Secondly, we have observed promotional questions opening a coordinated sequence, which is supported through direct handing over of the turn, encouragements, acknowledgement token and minimal invitation to continue, echoes, displays of epistemic authority, and formulations that do not conclude, but reopen the interaction. Thirdly, we have observed formulations as a starting point to support adolescents' initiatives, which are subsequently prompted through checking of perception and understanding, and acknowledgement token. Finally, we have observed coordination of reflection, which is the most complicated kind of organization, as it is explicitly devoted to the construction of new narratives, achieved through a combination of actions (including appreciations, explicit confirmations, and first-person narratives). New narratives are promoted in a variety of ways, which range from minimal contributions to more complex attempts to pursue adolescents' contributions.

The design of these actions and the organizations that include them require further analysis. In this paper, we have tried to demonstrate the overall

importance of analyzing interactions. We have analyzed the organization of the interaction, including its cultural presuppositions. Our main point is: what patterns of expectations can legitimize and promote dialogue?

The extracts discussed above show that the analysed interactions are based on a set of expectations regarding adolescents' personal expressions. Dialogic actions constantly promote the inclusion of first-person perspectives in the interaction. This is demonstrated by the absence of any assessment on performances and by the evident lack of interest in right/wrong positions, even if tasks are involved. This specific pattern of expectations can be called *affective*, affectivity being based on expectations of personal disclosure.

Studies on mediation have shown that to take emotions into account is a fundamental action in the practice of mediation itself (e.g. Jones and Bodtke 2001; Katz Jameson et al. 2009, 2010). The importance of affective expectations that enhance personal disclosure, however, is not confined to the support of displays of emotions; affectivity concerns the whole realm of personal expression, which includes narratives of personal experiences and points of view, as well as emotions. The dialogic investment in disclosure is not only demonstrated by emotional expressions; it is also demonstrated by different ways of taking the turn, all of which contribute to coordination, rather than displaying a selfish perspective (judging, assessing, challenging, advocating, etc.). The success of dialogue is proved by adolescents' affiliation to affective expectations, through disclosure of both their consent and dissent. Difficulties in dialogue can instead be observed in adolescents' silence and withdrawal.

The context can be important in affecting these expectations and their successful fulfillment. Firstly, teamers' training does not include the methodologies of mediation suggested here, and their background is not theoretically founded from this perspective. This suggests an interesting intersection between different professional skills in enhancing practices of

mediation. Secondly, adolescents voluntarily participate in the camps because they want to experience a new way of communicating, although they do not know how to do that. This means that the kinds of actions that teamers may expect are probably more varied and less extreme than those in cases of conflict mediation.

However, these are only suppositions, which demonstrate that, in the field of mediation, we need more comparative research. Such research should focus on systems that include mediation, cultural presuppositions of mediation, and organizations of the interactions achieving mediation, all of which being essential conditions to interpret the design of mediators' actions. A research-oriented approach of this kind could help contrasting the tendency to provide only normative prescriptions for mediation, which seems to be rather dominant in the field.

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