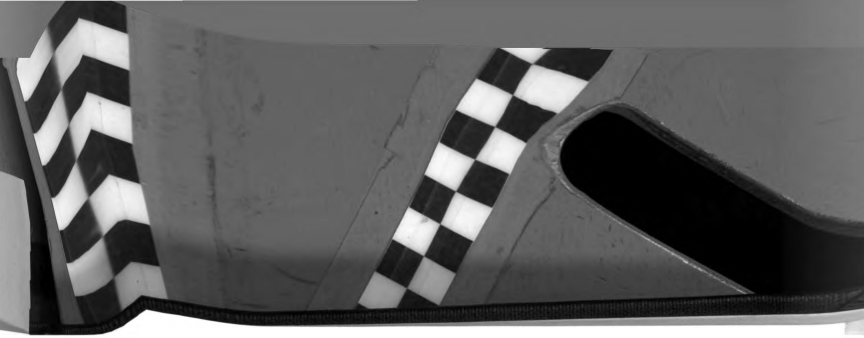

INTERACTION MANAGEMENT IN DISPUTATIOUS SOCIAL SITUATIONS

By

Renee Beth Stahle

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ABSTRACT

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This research had three broad aims; (a) to test a coding scheme for measuring interaction management, (b) to test hypotheses derived from Weinstein's Theory of Interpersonal Tactics, and (c) to investigate the use of interaction management as a social influence attempt in divorce mediation sessions. The coding scheme was developed to study the linguistic and conversational features of interaction management as the complex, simultaneous, and sequentially organized phenomena they are. The results showed that the features could be reliably coded by trained coders.

No significant relationship was found for the overall use of interaction management and mediation outcomes. A significant relationship was found for the use of interaction management between the participants and mediation outcomes. The results of this research indicate that when the participants pursue their goals in disputatious situations, the social influence strategy of interaction management plays a primary but not unequivocal role. In

support of Weinstein's theory, the overall use of interaction management is not as important to reaching a mutual agreement as the use of interaction management between the participants. More specifically, agreement was more likely when the mediators, as opposed to the parents, managed the interaction.

It is not
what you are
that holds you back...

but what
you think
you are not.

This dissertation
is lovingly shared
with fellow graduate students,
who let 'what they thought they were not'
stop them from completing one of their own.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have contributed in important ways to this research; a few must be acknowledged here for the specific marks they left on this enterprise. All of my committee members - Drs. Frank Camilleri, Thomas Conner, William Donohue, William Faunce, Kathy Kellerman, Gerald Miller - gave careful and critical readings to various versions of this manuscript. The questions and issues they raised caused me to clarify my thinking and writing on several points. More importantly, their comments have given me a good sense of both my strengths and weaknesses as a scholar and the means to improve the latter.

My dissertation advisors, Dr. Thomas Conner and Dr. William Donohue deserve additional mention. For several years they have worked together and taken an active role in my professional development; heightening both my intellectual growth and productivity. As my research team advisor Dr. Donohue willingly shared his data base, undergraduate coders, research time, computer time, computer and office. Their tutelage and friendship have been, and will continue to be, valued by me.

Finally, my love and gratitude to family - Dad, Mom, Phillip, Tamara, Lorena, Chip and Robert - and friends -

Dr. Mike Allen, Dr. Nancy Burrell and Dr. Drew McGukin - who comforted, listened, suggested, supported, prodded and then listened some more.

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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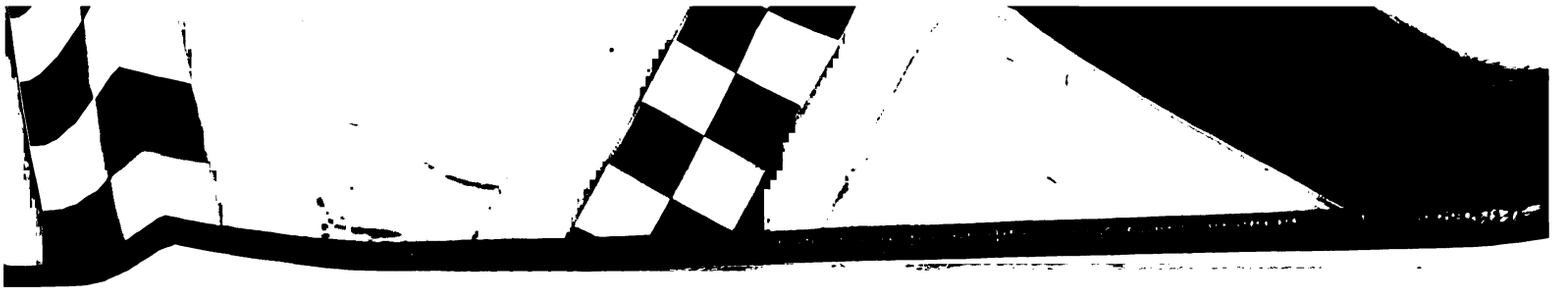
Characterizing all of these encounters is a social influence process whereby two or more parties with different preferences concerning an agreement to be reached attempt to move each other toward their preferred outcome. Because of the pervasive presence of such disputatious social interactions where parties have opposing goals, it is important to look at the means parties can use to manage their disputes (Hocker & Wilmot, 1985). Traditionally, researchers have focused on cooperation and competition as more global strategies for social influence in interaction (Putnam, 1985). More recently, both communication scholars (e.g., Applegate & Leichty, 1985; Putnam, 1985) and social psychologists (e.g., Grimshaw, 1980) have called for work to determine how communication can be used to exert influence in such social encounters.

Two different approaches to the study of communication

focus on the use of talk for social influence attempts. In the first approach Brown and Gilman (1960), Brown and Levinson (1978), and Weinstein (1966) proposed that participants use talk to communicate relational identities that promote and maintain their social influence in an encounter. The most attention has been paid to forms of address and reference to persons (Brown & Fraser, 1979). Stahle (1985) broadened the scope of this research to include other forms of talk - hedges, positive tag questions, interruptions - used in the negotiation of the relational identities holding between the participants in disputatious social situations like divorce mediation. The second approach has focused on the management of the interaction itself as a social influence attempt. Grimshaw, (1980) and Street & Cappella, (1985) proposed that participants can exert influence through interaction management, or the use communication tactics to determine who talks about what and how in the encounter. There has been, however, little research on interaction management as a social influence attempt.

This dissertation extends Stahle's (1985) previous work by exploring the manner in which disputing couples use interaction management in an attempt to structure the interaction in ways that are congruent with their goals in divorce mediation. The goal of this dissertation is to advance the theoretical explanation and empirical development of interaction management as a strategy for



social influence attempts in disputatious social situations like divorce mediation. To accomplish this goal this dissertation will proceed in four sections. The first section discusses the significance of the study. The second section summarizes the work on interaction management. The third section presents Weinstein's Theory of Interpersonal Tactics as a theoretical framework to account for how social actors go about influencing others in accordance with actors' goals in social encounters. The last section presents a theoretical and empirical integration of Weinstein's theory and the work on interaction management from which several propositions are derived. These propositions, in turn, are applied to divorce mediation as a disputatious interaction and the hypotheses to be tested in this study are presented.

Significance of the Study

Understanding how participants use talk to manage interactions in pursuit of their goals has both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, little integration or empirical development exists of the related aspects of interaction management; the use of talk as a social influence attempt, identification of the features of talk that are available to structure interactions, and how interaction management is conducted in social encounters. This study is one attempt to provide such a theoretical integration and empirical development.

Identifying the ways interaction management can be used

to structure the interaction also has practical implications for those involved in disputatious interactions. In the mediation context, Donohue and his colleagues (Donohue & Weider-Hatfield, 1986; Donohue, Allen, & Burrell, 1985) have proposed that one component of mediator competence is the ability to structure the interaction so that mediators can direct the course of the mediation toward agreement. The practitioners, then, need a working knowledge of and ready access to a variety of communication tactics that can be used to control the course and structure of disputatious interactions (Pruitt, 1981; Rubin, 1980; Saposnek, 1985). Once research identifies the features of talk available for interaction management, practitioners could be trained to move interaction in productive directions. A second aim of this study, then, is to add to the practitioners' repertoires of scripted interaction management tactics, so as to facilitate intervention speed and effectiveness.

Interaction Management

This dissertation will begin by focusing on how talk is used to manage the structure and content of disputatious social interactions. The idea that participants use talk to manage the structure and content of disputatious interactions in attempting to influence one another in pursuit of their social goals has been discussed by a number of different researchers (e.g., Argyle, 1969; Street & Cappella, 1985; Wilmot, 1986). Together, these researchers' definitions and discussions suggest several common themes

that can be used to further develop the strategy of interaction management.

These themes appear among the various definitions of interaction management:

> Conversational control...the ability to determine who talks about what does constitute one type of influence. Some common indicators of conversational control include who talks most, who interrupts whom and who changes the topic most often (Adler & Towne, 1987, p. 273).

> Human social actors spend much of their time with others engaged in talk... [M]uch of this talk is in some sense manipulative with speakers attempting to cause (influence) their hearers to alter their behaviors (including speech) or beliefs...in some way (Grimshaw, 1981, p. 205).

> The more typical connotations of the word manage implies that a person intentionally seeks to alter the content, tenor or events of a conversation toward some preordained end or purpose. A less typical connotation of the word management will also be discussed here...the ability to control interaction depends upon the existence of certain regularities that can be exploited by one or the other conversational partners (Street & Cappella, 1985, p. 2).

> Conversational control or dominance is any communicative device (e.g., speaking length, speaking frequency, or interrupting one's partner) which lessens the communicative role of another (Wilmot, 1986, p. 105).

> ...Control is the constellation of constraints people place on one another by the manipulation of both interactional structure and content, which limit the options appropriately available subsequently to each relational partner and the relational system as a whole (Weimann & Kelly, 1981).

As these definitions illustrate, the first major theme is many scholars (e.g., Grimshaw, 1980; Street & Cappella, 1985) conceptualize social influence to operate during most

social encounters. For example, in the Grimshaw (1980) definition presented earlier, he states that actors spend much of their time with others attempting to influence them into performing certain actions or in themselves being the object of such influence attempts. This position suggests a complementary character to social life and the goals that social actors pursue in interaction. Social actors have goals they want to accomplish; making a decision, escalating relational intimacy or making a good impression (Street & Cappella, 1985). Accomplishing many of these goals, however, is dependent upon receiving the desired response from the other actor in the interaction. When actor and other interact, actor tries to elicit the desired response from other as other becomes the object of a social influence attempt. This reciprocal activity characterizes the mechanism for social influence attempts.

There has also been increasing recognition of a second theme present in the work on interaction management; actors in social interaction spend the greater proportion of their time with others engaged in talk. For example, as early as 1949, Morris contended that "sharing a language with other persons provides the subtlest and most powerful of all tools for controlling the behavior of these other persons to one's advantage" (p. 41). This theme can also be clearly seen in the Adler and Towne (1987) definition presented earlier when they equate conversational control with talk. These observations led Grimshaw (1981) and Putnam & Geist (1985),

among others, to conclude that communication is the essence of social influence attempts. Unfortunately the attention paid to the linguistic and conversational features employed in social influence attempts has been, until quite recently, so modest as to be practically nonexistent (Giles & St. Clair, 1986; Grimshaw, 1980). Research across several disciplines has identified common groups and patterns of linguistic and conversational features that have been associated with social influence attempts; e.g., terms of address and reference (c.f., Brown & Gilman, 1960; Erwin-Tripp, 1964; 1972), interruptions and duration of speaking time (c.f., Donohue & Weider-Hatfield, 1986), and use of declaratives and questions (c.f., DeVito, 1987; Erwin-Tripp, 1968). This association is useful for identifying some similar features of talk that are available for social influence attempts. Without clear criteria or a conceptual rationale, however, it is difficult to identify, classify or evaluate other features of talk as part of an interaction management strategy for social influence attempts.

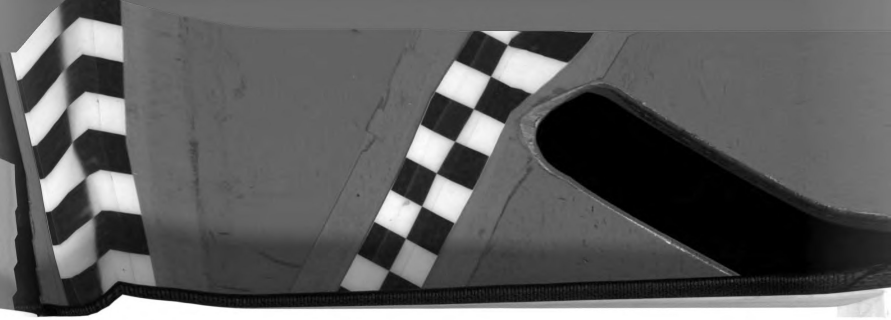
In summary, the similar themes that appear in the definitions of interaction management are: (a) social actors attempt to influence each other in pursuit of their goals in social interaction, (b) management of the interaction is a strategy that is available for these social influence attempts, and (c) various features of talk and conversation are the resources available to implement an interaction management strategy. In this body of work, however, little

theoretical explanation/integration or empirical development of these related aspects of interaction management exists. One promising approach to this theoretical integration is the work done by Weinstein (1966) in his Theory of Interpersonal Tactics (ITT).[1]

Interpersonal Tactics Theory (ITT)

This section will begin with an explication of Weinstein's theory to be followed by a review of some of its limitations and suggested directions for future work. Weinstein's ITT provides an explanation of the means by which a social actor attempts to influence other interactants into doing things that aid the pursuit of the actor's goals in a social encounter.

The first major premise of ITT is the postulate from the work of Goode (1960a,b) and Homans (1961) that human behavior is goal directed. This premise is similar to the first theme from the definitions of interaction management presented above. The implication Weinstein draws from this postulate for social interaction is that social actors bring personal purposes into interaction. When a social actor and another interact, these purposes can be defined in terms of the interpersonal task or the desired response from the other that the actor tries to elicit in the encounter. This response may be an end in and of itself or a means to evoke other responses more crucial to the actor's goals in the interaction. To accomplish this interpersonal task, the actor selects lines of action (strategies) and implements



them in some behavior (tactic) directed toward the task. This social influence process, as presented by Weinstein, contains the two critical elements of lines of action and behavioral displays. For Weinstein, then, the central problem in the study of interaction is how lines of action are selected and elaborated in the actor's expressive behavior in order to elicit the desired response from the other.

Weinstein proposed three considerations for the selection and elaboration of a line of action by the actor: (a) maximization of the likelihood of obtaining a desired response from the other (b) the degree of conscious awareness in the selection of a line of action, and (c) the extent to which actor selects strategies based on the meaning they have for the other. In regards to the first consideration of maximizing goal achievement, Weinstein (1966) proposed that the actor

> has his interpersonal tasks...but he is also involved with other actors each with their own purposes and associated preference orderings which, in all likelihood, are somewhat different from his...[A]ctor, in seeking to achieve his own goals in the encounter, must also keep the others bound in the relationship (p. 395).

The actor is expected, then, to select a line of action that will facilitate the pursuit of his/her goals and promote and maintain relationships congruent with those goals. For example, in order to have control over a classroom interaction, a teacher would want to establish an authority relationship and manage the structure and content

of the interaction. According to Weinstein, any line of action selected to maximize goal achievement must have goal related strategic consequences and define an appropriate relationship for the actor and the other.

Weinstein (1966) next addresses the consideration of whether or not maximization suggests conscious rationality in the actor's selection of lines of action:

> Who cannot recall thinking ahead to an upcoming encounter, focusing on just what might be the best impression to convey, the best tone to strike, the best tack to take to achieve our purposes? But a good deal of [strategies] are not consciously selected. Many lines of action, well designed to elicit task responses from others are used, not because we are aware of their [strategic] advantages but because we have learned they are situationally appropriate. (p. 397)

Weinstein maintains that the selection of a line of action by the actor constitutes a planned purpose which may or may not be consciously conceived. Specifically, some strategies may be unconsciously applied as part of a routine while others are chosen with conscious attention to their ability to maximize goal achievement (Brown & Levinson, 1978).

For any line of action multiple behavioral displays (tactics) exist. Weinstein argues that the problem lies in selecting behavioral displays that are most suited to obtaining a desired response from the other. The optimum choice is to select behavioral displays that have the desired strategic consequence and that clearly communicate that strategic consequence for the other. Weinstein's solution for the implementation of lines of action was the application of the fundamental theorem from the symbolic

interactionist tradition of Mead (1934) and Goffman (1959) that, communication with significant symbols gives rise to consensus which allows for coordination to occur. According to Mead (1934), "significant symbols are behavioral displays indicating the same future phases of action to actor and other" (p. 39). According to Goffman and Mead, the actor attempts to influence the other's responsive behaviors in line with the actor's goal(s) in the interaction (social influence attempt). When the actor makes a claim to pursue certain types of interpersonal tasks (e.g., choosing the topic of conversation) and employs particular lines of action in pursuit of that task (e.g., interrupting or changing the topic), the actor chooses his/her behavioral display primarily on the basis of the shared meaning s/he believes the other will attach to it.

The other uses a similar process of communication with significant symbols to assign meanings to the actor's behavioral displays. When the actor and the other interact, then, the other first "takes the role of the actor". Meaning is assigned by assuming that if I (myself) as the other had said something like "Let's pursue this other aspect.", the utterance would be the significant symbol of a permission directive and the other would be attempting to manage the topic of the conversation and would expect an on-topic response from the actor. The other further assumes that as members of the same speech community, the actor would assign that same meaning, ad

infinitum. In the accompanying example presented above, it is necessary that the other recognizes at some level that the actor is using a permission directive, but it is not enough. The other, at some level, must also recognize the strategic consequence of the action. Through this communication with significant symbols the actor and the other have a shared meaning as to the line(s) of action being employed in the interaction.

In summary, Weinstein's ITT provides the following explanation of social influence attempts in interaction. The first major premise is that actors have goals they want to accomplish in social encounters. Given the fundamentally interdependent character of social life, however, the accomplishment of many of these goals is dependent upon receiving the desired response from others in the social encounter. Actors select a line of action that will maximize the likelihood of obtaining that desired response from others. Actors select a behavioral display to communicate this chosen line of action primarily on the basis of the shared strategic meaning they believe others will attach to it.

Empirical work by Weinstein and his colleagues (Weinstein & Deutschberger, 1963; Weiler & Weinstein, 1972) has focused on the means of promoting and maintaining relationships as appropriate lines of action. For example, Weinstein and Deutschberger (1963) proposed altercasting, which is defined as creating an identity for the other

congruent with one's goals, as a basic line of action. In this study, students worked with a confederate to construct a questionnaire that accounted for ten percent of their grade in a course. Based on videotapes of the interactions, raters coded: (a) the actions of the students relevant to casting the confederates into goal maximizing relationships of authority, status, social-emotional distance, support, autonomy, and freedom; i.e., the significant dimensions of altercasting; and (b) the frequency of pronoun usage. The results supported the use of the altercasting dimensions listed above, the use of the pronoun "we" with projecting an interdependence relationship, and the use of the pronoun "you" with attempts to impose restrictions. The hypothesis that the high frequency of the pronoun "I" would be related to claiming superordinate status was not supported. Weinstein and Deutschberger concluded that altercasting is a line of action for promoting and maintaining relationships through selected behavioral displays.

Although the Weinstein and Deutschberger study does provide support for altercasting as a basic line of action for social influence attempts in social interaction, the concepts involved in the theoretical relationships are not clearly operationalized. First, it is unclear what the students' goals are in the experimental situation. For example, to get a good or passing grade, to get the confederate to do all the work, or to impress the teacher are all possible goals. Without clearly articulating the

goals, it is also difficult to assess if or why altercasting is the most appropriate line of action for the students to use to accomplish their goal(s). Finally, no clear criteria or rationale is provided for the use of the pronouns "I", "we," and "you" as the behavioral displays of altercasting. These shortcomings are also shared by the Weiler and Weinstein (1972) study. Together the work that has been done by Weinstein and his colleagues indicates that there has not been a rigorous test utilizing Weinstein's theory.

Theoretically, ITT provides a clear formulation of how social actors chose lines of action and behavioral displays in pursuit of their goals in social interaction. Empirically, work on ITT has been hampered in two ways. First, research utilizing the theory has focused on relational expression as a line of action to the virtual exclusion of other viable lines of action such as impression management, reciprocity, or interaction management. Second, rigorous tests of the theory have not been made. For instance, let's consider an example similar to the experimental situation used in the Weinstein and Deutschberger study. Suppose two students have to conduct and analyze an experimental study for a research methods course. Student A has a very poor grasp of statistics and would like to have Student B do all of the analytical work. Unlike the subjects in the Weinstein and Deutschberger study, Student A has a clear and recognizable goal. Student A now has to select a line of action for accomplishing the

goal and behavioral displays to operationalize the line of action. Possible lines and displays could include (a) creating appropriate relational identities - convincing the partner that the partner is more analytically competent than the student, (b) reciprocity - offering to do all the library research, keypunching, and typing in exchange; or (c) interaction management - structuring the interaction to encourage the analytical contributions of the partner. Weinstein would expect Student A to attempt to create appropriate relational identities but would provide no conceptual rationale for why this would be the best line of action for Student A to use to accomplish interactional goals in this particular situation. Weinstein's work has suffered from this lack of a clear conceptual rationale for deciding which goal an actor is pursuing in a particular situation, which line of action would best accomplish that goal, and which behavioral displays would operationalize that strategy. Without this conceptual rationale, it is difficult to then develop hypotheses that would provide a rigorous and critical test of Weinstein's ITT. Equally as important, the generalizability of the theory is inhibited by the adherence to one line of action. Although Weinstein's work has come a long way in predicting how social actors attempt to influence others into doing their bidding in social encounters, it suffers from the lack of clear conceptual rationales for and operationalizations of the goals, lines of action, and behavioral displays for the

particular situations in which actors find themselves.

In conclusion, both Weinstein's ITT and the work on interaction management could be advanced by studying them in tandem. The ITT could profit from a more rigorous test of the theory that clearly satisfies four requirements. First, the goals of the actor must be clearly specified for a particular social interaction. Second, lines of action must be identified that will maximize the likelihood of the actor accomplishing those goals in the specified interaction. Next, clear criteria must be developed for identifying the behavioral displays that communicate the chosen line of action. Last, a line of action, other than those previously studied, must be employed to increase the generalizability of the theory. As previously mentioned, the main problem with the work on interaction management is a lack of theoretical integration. The work on interaction management, in turn, could profit from the theoretical integration and explanation provided by ITT to explicate how social actors strategically use interaction management for social influence attempts in social encounters.

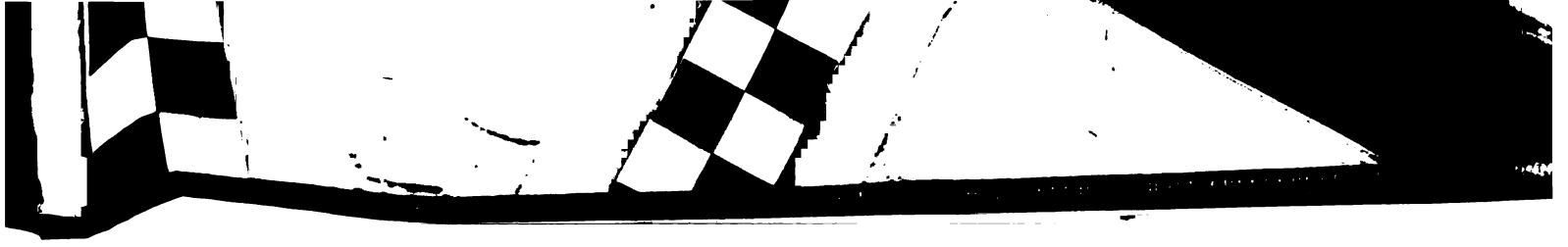
Combining the work on ITT with the work on interaction management provides some clear directions in which to proceed: (a) the goals of social actors in a specified social interaction need to be identified, (b) interaction management needs to be defined and a rationale provided for selecting interaction management as a line of action relevant to the actors' pursuit of those goals in the

specified interaction, and (c) rationale and criteria need to be identified for selecting the behavioral displays that operationalize interaction management as a line of action. The dual goal of this study, then, is to provide a rigorous test of the ITT using interaction management as a line of action that is appropriate in a specified social interaction.

Conceptual Integration of the Interpersonal Tactics Theory and Interaction Management

Across and within interactions, social actors have interaction specific goals they want to accomplish (Street & Cappella, 1985). The first task is to specify an interaction. Since all or even a significant portion of the goals can not be examined in this study, the second task is to clearly define the dominant social goal in the specified interaction (Clark & Delia, 1979). Lastly, the achievement of the goal should be capable of being maximized through the use of an interaction management strategy.

One promising situation with clearly articulated goals is a disputatious social interaction. At the beginning of this paper it was stated that disputatious interactions are a fact of social encounters. As will be shortly demonstrated, disputatious interactions can also be clearly defined. Since, disputes exist when actors are engaged in meeting goals that are perceived as, or actually are, incompatible, these opposing goals also provide a clean test of the ITT. Because of their pervasive presence and



definitional specificity, disputatious interactions are a good situational genre for use in this study.

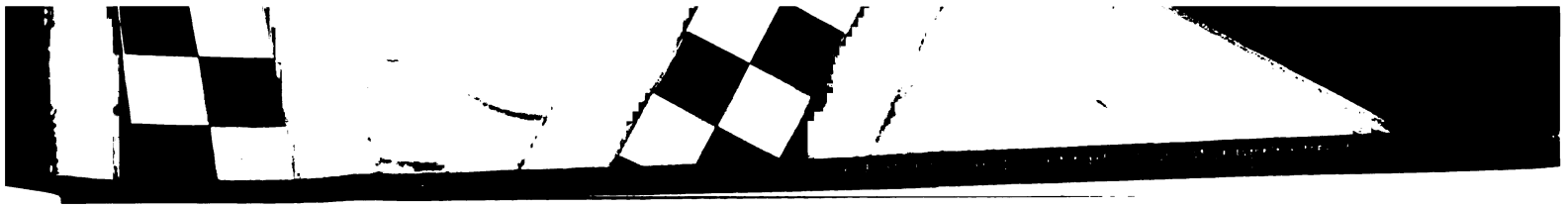
The disputatious social interaction can be characterized as one in which two or more social actors with opposing views discuss (talk over) their differences. According to Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, disputatious is defined as a discussion marked especially by expression of opposing views. Social interaction, in this study, implies the presence of two or more social actors, that talk/conversation occupies a central place, and what Goffman (1963) has called focused interaction: "the kind of interaction that occurs when persons gather close together and openly cooperate to sustain a single focus of attention." (p. 24)

The goal of the actors in a disputatious interaction can be defined as an attempt to reach a settlement of their differences that is more favorable to one's own goals than to the other's. The ability of the actor to achieve his/her goals is thought by many researchers (Brown & Levinson, 1968; Duncan, 1983; Goffman, 1969; Street & Giles, 1983) to be dependent on the actor's knowledge/employment of the lines of action (strategies) and behavioral displays (tactics) that are available for social influence attempts.

While Weinstein identified three considerations for the selection and implementation or strategies, research in interaction management suggests that these considerations should be more formally specified. The use of lines of

action and behavioral displays in ITT parallels the discussion of strategies and tactics in interaction management but the latter set will be defined and used in this study since they are more commonly found in the literature. According to Bell and Daly (1984), "the term strategy describes an abstract category of largely symbolic behaviors that, when enacted, are expected to lead to [attainment of a personal objective]. Nested within a strategy are tactics, those specific behaviors that operationalize a strategy." (p. 93). For example, if an actor has the social goal of attempting to influence another interactant by creating a favorable impression, s/he could select a strategy of sounding intelligent and operationalize the strategy by using big words. Researchers investigating the strategies and tactics of interaction management have concluded that the strategy chosen by the social actor to achieve his/her goal(s) must meet a number of requirements: (a) be a significant symbol, (b) be purposive, and (c) maximize the achievement of the specified goal. In other words, Weinstein identified the issues relevant to the selection of strategies and tactics without taking a stand whereas the interaction management researchers have specified the exact nature by which these issues must be resolved.

According to a number of scholars (Bell and Daly, 1984; Schelling, 1960; Street & Cappella, 1985; Weinstein, 1966) the chosen strategies must provide symbolic significance



beyond the content of the interaction. Symbolic significance, according to these scholars, means both that the strategy utilizes symbolic acts -conversational actions performed through talk - and that this communication creates a meaning that is broadly shared by the interactants.

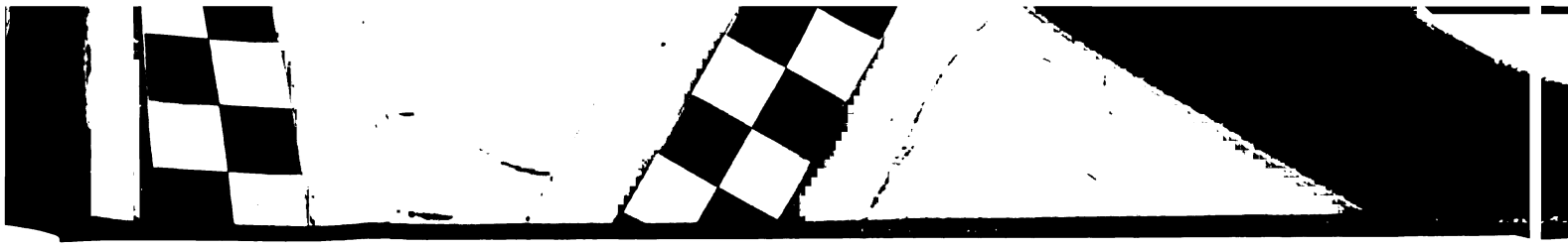
The second issue identified by Weinstein in the selection of a strategy is whether or not the strategy is or needs to be purposively selected. The central question in defining this requirement is, "Must an actor intentionally and consciously implement strategies designed to achieve a particular goal?" The current answer in the communication literature (see discussions by Berger, 1980; 1986; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984), as regards the intentionality issue, is affirmative; strategies are intentionally enacted by a social actor to fulfill objectives relevant to the goal. However, intentional selection does not always imply conscious selection. There is also increasing evidence and agreement in the current literature that it is unrealistic to assume that actors always or typically are highly conscious of their communication behavior. Consciousness or awareness is more currently viewed as existing on a continuum from least awareness in routine, habitual or highly scripted interactions to most awareness in interactions where uncertainty is aroused by novel conditions or violated expectations (Berger, 1986; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). These current interaction management views of intentionality (i.e., selection must be intentional) and

consciousness (i.e., it is an irrelevant issue) are adopted in this study as the second requirement for the selection of strategies. Again, this is particularly apparent in a disputatious social interaction where strategy selection is highly intentional (Goffman, 1969).

The last requirement for the selection of strategies, according to interaction management researchers, is that the selected strategies permit the actor to maximize the likelihood of obtaining the dominant goal in a specified social interaction. Thus, the chosen strategy must also have strategic significance or consequences for the interaction (Goffman, 1969; Smith, 1985). In order to maximize the likelihood of goal attainment, then, the chosen strategy must provide a clear advantage in achieving a specified goal.

To recap the three requirements for the selection of a strategy: (a) it should utilize symbolic acts in a way that has strategic consequences for the social interaction, (b) be used intentionally but with varying degrees of awareness, and (c) it should maximize the likelihood of obtaining a specified interactional goal.

One strategy that was proposed to meet these requirements in disputatious social interactions is interaction management. As previously stated, the goal of social actors in a disputatious social interaction is to reach a settlement of their differences that is more favorable to one's goal than to the others'. To accomplish



one's goal, an actor could attempt to influence the other's views by making sure his/her own views are brought out in the discussion, they are clearly understood and they receive favorable attention. Simultaneously, the actor wants to ensure that the other's views are not brought out in the discussion, are not clearly understood, and receive unfavorable attention. The actor would want to use a strategy of social influence that would constrain the discussion in such a way that serious consideration of the actor's views are maximized while serious consideration of the other's views are minimized. One strategy that is available to the actor to accomplish this "maximin" goal is to manage the structure of the interaction so that s/he is in control of the discussion (Weimann, 1985). In managing the discussion the actor also has some control over the amount and type of attention various issues receive. Strategically, then, management of the interaction comprises an attempt to advantageously influence the discussion such that the outcome which is eventually reached in a disputatious social interaction is a settlement of the issues which is favorable to the actor. The selection and utilization of a strategy of interaction management maximizes the likelihood that the settlement of the actor's and other's differences will be more favorable to the actor than to the other. These social influence attempts can be stated more formally in terms of a strategy of interaction management. Adapting the definitions of control proposed by

Weimann and Kelly (1981) and Wilmot (1986), interaction management is defined as attempts to manage the interaction structure in ways that advantageously limit the next possible actions or statements that are available subsequently to the other(s). Given this definition of a strategy of interaction management, the next task is to provide rationale/criteria for the selection of tactics to implement this strategy.

Tactics were previously defined as the communication behaviors that implement a given strategy. Several requirements exist that should be noted about tactics: (a) they are observable, (b) they operationalize a strategy, and (c) multiple behaviors are considered. For Bell and Daly (1984) and Kolb (1983), to meet the first requirement the tactics must be observable in the traditional sense of being a concrete behavior. To operationalize a strategy is to choose those communication behaviors that reflect an underlying construct which is itself meaningful to people's common interpersonal motives (Street & Cappella, 1985). In other words, most people would recognize a given tactic as having a particular strategic value. According to Kolb (1983) and Smith (1985), this approach requires that the tactics chosen be analyzed and interpreted within the context of the particular strategy of which they are a part. Street and Cappella (1985) also contend that implicit in this approach is the suggestion that multiple behavioral features of the strategy receive attention rather than a

single behavior isolated from others. The complex behavior that interaction is requires the study of a complex of behaviors if it is to be fully understood. The tactics that are available for a social actor to use for social influence attempts in an interaction, then, should be studied as multiple, concrete behaviors that tactically implement a given strategy.

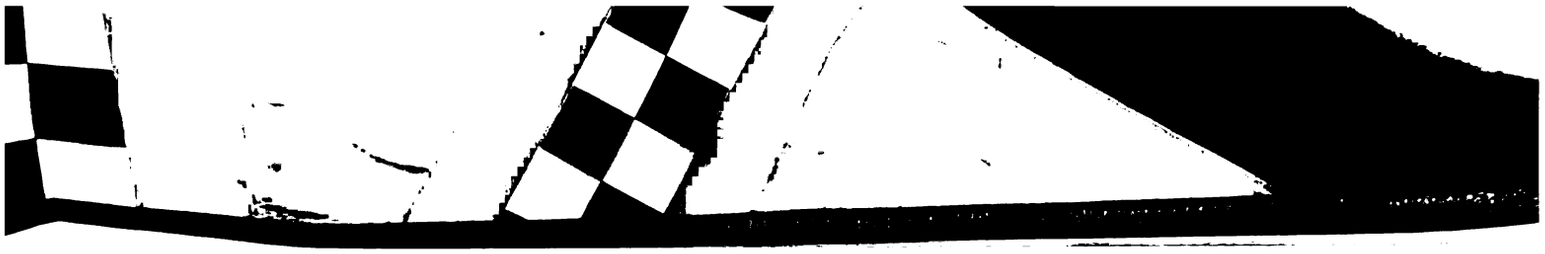
Given the tactical requirements specified above, the selection of tactics to operationalize an interaction management strategy should focus specifically on the behavioral features that provide a strategic advantage for the management of social interaction (Smith, 1985). Street & Cappella (1985), among others, maintain that the ability to manage interaction depends upon the existence of selected linguistic and conversational resources that can be exploited for strategic ends by one or the other social actors. Street and Cappella (1985) conclude that acquiring or maintaining control over the interactants or during interaction is generally accomplished by behaviors such as turn-taking sequencing, gaze patterns, speech loudness and rate, use of gestures, facial expressiveness, style shifting, long floor holdings, and non-reciprocal touch. From the previous discussions on interaction management, the use of declaratives, questions, and terms of address and reference can also be added to this list. This brief review clearly specifies, then, some concrete behaviors that actors manage in their

conversations. What remains unclear and confounded, however, is the strategic consequence of this management; to emerge as dominant in the interaction, to attempt to exercise control over the interaction, or to maintain coherent interaction (Orcutt & Harvey, 1985). If the tactics which operationalize a strategy of interaction management are to meet the second requirement for the selection of tactics, these strategic consequences for interaction management must be considered separately. Argyle (1969) suggests that this is a possibility:

> to be effective in most social situations it is essential to be able to control the social interaction. This does not always mean being the 'dominant' person in the ordinary sense, but keeping the initiative, and exercising influence over the relationship, the emotional tone, and the content of interaction (p. 328).

Orcutt and Harvey (1985) claim that it is also necessary since research on the behavioral features that are available for social influence attempts has been hampered by their interpretation in most contexts as expressions of power or dominance relationships or as violations of coherent social interaction. In conclusion, rather than viewing the use of certain features of talk/conversation as associated with certain relationships or as disruptions of smooth interaction, research should focus in some programatic way on these features as tactics for an interaction management strategy for social influence attempts.

The general rationale for tactic selection that emerges from the previous discussion, is that the actor would want to select the linguistic and conversational features that



provide more rather than less of a strategic advantage for managing the interaction. Based on the previous review of the features actors manage in their conversations, three general classes of tactics are distinguished: (a) conversational organizing tactics, (b) minimizing tactics, and (c) directive tactics. Conversational organizing tactics, in general, are used to constrain or encourage the conversational participation of the other in a social encounter. Encouraging or constraining the conversational participation of the other provides a tactical advantage in structuring both the topic(s) pursued in a conversation and the attention they receive. Tactics in this category include the following:

(1) MIRROR RESPONSES
Repeating all or part of what the previous speaker said.

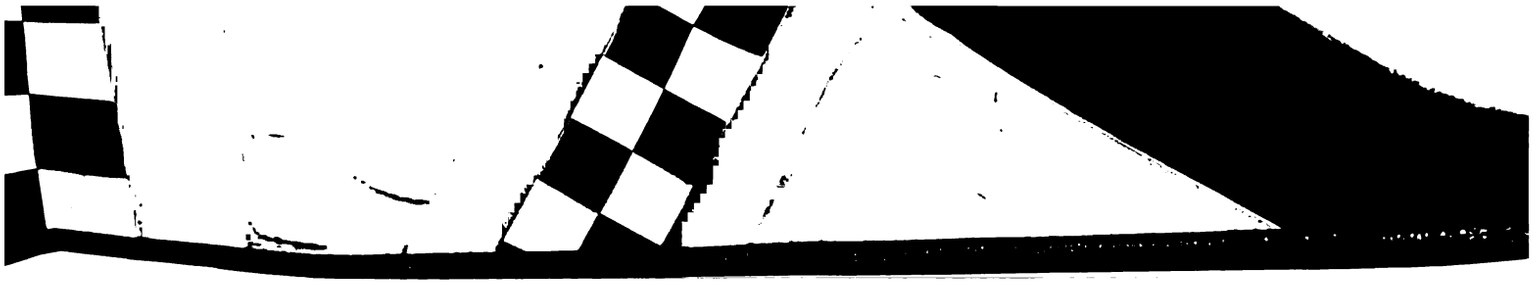
H: Yeah, I'm gonna tell - don't stop me.
M: OK
H: OK

Mirror Responses are used to demonstrate agreement with the other about what is currently under discussion (Goodwin, 1981). Their use should encourage the other to continue the development of a topic.

(2) POSITIVE BACK CHANNEL CUES
Positively acknowledge the current speaker's remarks without interrupting the current speaker's turn at talk.

Mm hmm, yes, true, really, yeah, ok, right, exactly

Positive Back Channel Cues are used to reinforce another's verbal contributions (Bruner, 1979; Goodwin, 1981; Yngve, 1970). Their use has been found to encourage the continuation of a topic's development (Duncan & Fiske, 1977).



(3) NEGATIVE BACK CHANNEL CUES
Indicate disagreement with the current speaker's remarks and do not interrupt the speaker's turn at talk.

Un uh, no, sure, right, etc.

Negative Back Channel Cues are used to negate the other's verbal contribution (Eakins & Eakins, 1978; Gumperz, 1982). Their use should discourage the continuation of a topic's development.

(4) AGREEMENT RESPONSES
Current speaker positively acknowledges a previous speaker's question or assertion at the beginning of his/her own turn at talk.

Yes, OK, yeah, right, etc.

W: ... and that's how I see things.
M: OK, and how about you George?

Agreement responses are used to display continuing interest in a topic's development (Bruner, 1979; Eakins & Eakins, 1978). Their use has been found to control the progress of a conversation (Ragan, 1983).

(5) DISAGREEMENT RESPONSES
Current speaker negatively acknowledges a previous speaker's question or assertion at the beginning of his/her own turn at talk.

No, that's not true, right, sure, etc.

Disagreement responses are used to counter the content of a previous turn at talk. Their use should discourage or modify the development of a topic.

(6) INTERRUPTIONS/TALKOVERS
The previous speaker's turn at talk is cut off before an assumed point of grammatical completeness by the current speaker's turn.

W: Yeah well I think you're
H: Now wait a minute here, all I said was

Interruptions and Interruptive Talkovers are used to claim the other's turn at talk (Weimann, 1985; Zimmerman & West, 1975). Their use has been found to have a subduing effect on the conversational

participation of the other (Zimmerman & West, 1978) which results in topic failure (Fishman, 1978, 1980) or change (Hirschman, 1973; Schegloff, 1972).

(7) CEDING THE FLOOR
Current speaker is unable to complete a turn at talk to a point of grammatical completeness.

H: I used to drink a lot
W: He thinks he's real macho
H: I used to drink a lot when I was young
W: He used to

Ceding the Floor is used to relinquish the turn at talk (Pearson, 1986). Their use should allow the other to regulate the topic of the conversation.

These conversational organizing tactics, then, provide more or less of a tactical advantage for managing the interaction by managing the conversational contributions of the interactants.

Minimizing tactics are the use of softening/forceful, mitigating or qualifying words or phrases. The use of these phrases suggests more or less of a readiness to defer to any opposing view or sudden objections which provides more or less of a tactical advantage in structuring the process of conversational interaction. Tactics in this category include the following:

(1) DISCLAIMERS
Linguistic features which soften an assertion.

I believe, I think, I mean, I suppose, I recommend, I suggest, etc.

Disclaimers should be used to encourage confirmation of ideas from the other. Since their use allows for comment from the other, they should encourage the other to manage the course of the interaction.

(2) POSITIVE TAG QUESTIONS
One word tags which function as a means of seeking agreement.

This is your street, right

Positive Tag Questions are used to request approval or confirmation of ideas from the other (Eakins & Eakins, 1978; Ragan, 1983). Since their use calls for comment from the other, they should allow other to manage the course of the interaction.

(3) NEGATIVE TAG QUESTIONS
One word tags which function as a means of gaining information.

You did kill Ms. Jean Brody, didn't you?

Negative Tag Questions are used to challenge the other's ideas (Ragan, 1983). Their use has been found to gain a confirming response from the other (Eakins & Eakins, 1978).

(4) HEDGES
Linguistic features marking the absence of certainty.

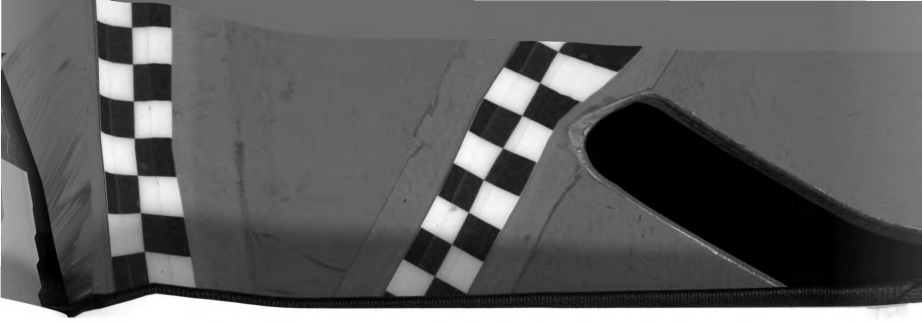
Sorta, sort of, kind of, you know, perhaps, maybe, hesitate, not sure, but, etc.

Hedges are used to indicate that the speaker is not adamant about his/her point of view but is willing to accept the other's point of view (Eakins & Eakins, 1978). Their use should encourage the expression of the other's point of view.

(5) QUALIFIERS
Linguistic features which soften the assertion.

I believe, I think, I mean, I suppose, I recommend

Qualifiers are used to evade issues or dilute expressions of opinion by the speaker (Ragan, 1983). Their use should encourage the expression of the other's point of view.



(8) POSITIVE ADVERBIALS OF DEGREE
Linguistic features that understate the degree to which things are important.

A bit, a little, a little bit, tiny, single, only, borrow, a sec, etc.

I have a little problem I need help with.

Positive Adverbials of Degree are used by the speaker to note the lack of importance of the speaker's ideas (Eakins & Eakins, 1978). Their use should encourage the expression of the other's point of view.

(9) NEGATIVE ADVERBIALS OF DEGREE
Linguistic features which overstate the degree to which things occur or trivialize the degree to which things are important.

Never, always, just, quite, tiny, little, etc.

So what's your little problem today?
You always interrupt me.

Negative Adverbials of Degree are used by the speaker to note the importance or lack of importance of idea(s). Their use should encourage the development of the speaker's own point of view.

(10) REASONS AND JUSTIFICATIONS
Reasons that the speaker gives for imposing on the other.

Can you give me change for a dollar? I'm late.

Reasons and Justifications are used to excuse, explain, or request understanding or forebearance by the speaker (Eakins & Eakins, 1978). Their use has been found to give the other a choice of how to respond (Ragan, 1983).

These minimizing tactics, then, provide more or less of a tactical advantage for managing the interaction by making statements more or less tentative and absolute which encourages or discourages conversational contributions from the other.

Directive tactics vary in the degree to which they impose belief, agreement or obedience on others. Using directive tactics provides more or less of a tactical advantage in structuring the interaction by varying the implied obligation imposed on another to respond in the directed way. Tactics that can be included in this category are the following:

(1) NEED STATEMENTS
Statements that imply that the speaker has a right to ask the other to comply.

I need that book.

Need Statements are used to seek a specified change in the other's behavior (Erwin-Tripp, 1978; Fisher, 1969; Kramarae, 1981). Their use has been found to structure the progress of a conversation (Ragan, 1983).

(2) IMPERATIVES
Statements that give a command or make an accusation.

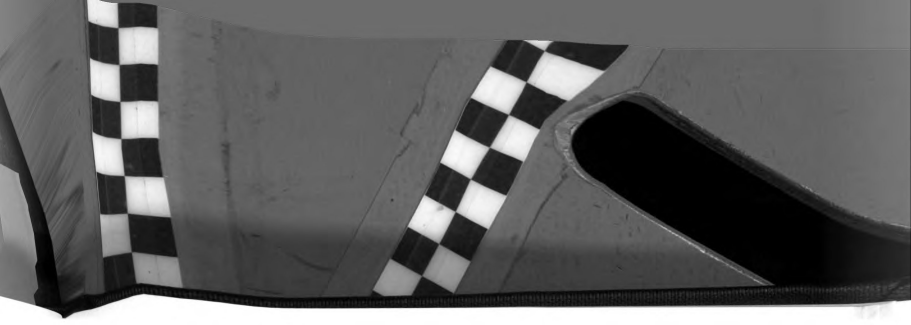
Get me that book.
Don't take that book.
Open the window.

Imperatives are used to seek a specified change in the other's behavior (Erwin-Tripp, 1978; Fisher, 1969; Kramarae, 1981). Their use has been found to structure the progress of a conversation (Ragan, 1983).

(3) IMBEDDED IMPERATIVES
Commands that are preceded by a formal addition.
Contains one of the modals can, could, will, would
Subject clause is the addressee
Predicate describes an action physically possible at the time

Can, could, will, won't you open the door.

Imbedded Imperatives are used to create the appearance of giving options while obligating another to comply with a request (Ragan, 1983; Shimanoff, 1983). Their use has been found to



control the structure of conversations (Ragan, 1983).

(4) PERMISSION DIRECTIVES
Statements that appear to ask permission, but which require action on the part of the other.

Modal (can, can't, could, couldn't, and may) + beneficiary + have/verb
Focus is on the speaker's or recipient's activity

May I see that for a minute?

Permission directives are used to give the other the choice of ignoring the implicit request (Kramarae, 1981; Treichler, Frankel, Kramarae, Zoppi, & Beckman, 1984). Their use should make it less likely that the speaker obtains the action or response s/he is seeking from the other (Pearson, 1986).

(5) QUESTION DIRECTIVES
Statements that appear to ask a question but that can also be taken as a request for action on the part of the other.

Is there any coffee left?
How about one last drink?
What are you laughing at?

Question directives are used to give the other a choice of ignoring the implicit request (Kramarae, 1981; Treichler, et al., 1984). Their use should make it less likely that the speaker obtains the action or response s/he is seeking from the other (Pearson, 1986).

(6) HINT DIRECTIVES
Statements which require the work of filling in the request since it is merely alluded to by the speaker.

It's raining out	hint for a ride to school
I have a problem	hint for assistance

Hint directives are used to give the other the choice of ignoring the implicit request (Kramarae, 1981; Treichler, et al., 1984). Their use should make it less likely that speaker obtains the action or response s/he is seeking from the other (Pearson, 1986).

The use of these directive tactics by actor, then, provides more or less of a tactical advantage for managing the interaction by constraining the response options available to the other.

Each of the three categories of tactics discussed above contain linguistic and conversational features that provide an actor with more or less of a strategic advantage in managing the interaction. For example, negative tag questions provide more of a strategic advantage than positive tag questions because the latter allows the actor to manage the course of the interaction while the former relinquishes this interaction management to the other. The strategic advantage distribution of all of the tactics discussed above is presented in Table 1.

Based on the previous discussion it is expected that a social actor in a disputatious social interaction will attempt to achieve his/her goal of resolving the issues in his/her favor by choosing a strategy of interaction management and implementing it through the use of related tactics. A recent investigation by Donohue and Weider-Hatfield (1986) found that the more interaction management tactics an actor employed the more likely s/he was to obtain a favorable settlement of the issues. In a disputatious social interaction, however, there are at least two actors, each trying to obtain the most favorable settlement of the issues and each using interaction management tactics to accomplish that goal. Since their goals are in opposition

Table 1

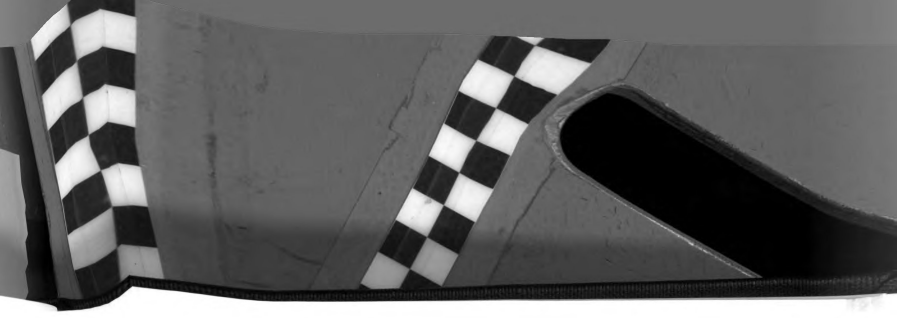
Distribution of Linguistic and Conversational Features Associated with Interaction Management

Strategic Advantage	Strategic Disadvantage
DIRECTIVE TACTICS	
Need statements	Permission Directives
Imperatives	Question Directives
Imbedded Imperatives	Hints
MINIMIZING TACTICS	
Negative Adverbials Degree	Positive Adverbials Degree
Negative Tag Questions	Positive Tag Questions
	Qualifiers
	Hedges
	Reasons and Justifications
	Disclaimers
CONVERSATIONAL ORGANIZING TACTICS	
Disagreement Responses	Agreement Responses
Negative Back Channel Cues	Positive Back Channel Cues
Interruptions/Talkovers	Ceding the Floor
	Mirror Responses

the actor and the other should devote more of their time and energy to trying to manage the interaction so that they can structure it to obtain their own goals (Diez, 1987; Moore, 1986). This focus on interaction management can generally have one of two consequences for the outcome of a disputatious interaction.

Two actors with opposing goals will not only attempt to manage the interaction but will do so in a more overt and directive way (Moore, 1986). The actor who is more active and assertive in managing the interaction should be more successful in obtaining a favorable settlement than the actor who is more passive or nonassertive in managing the interaction (Kochan & Jick, 1978; Moore, 1986). One possible outcome in disputatious interactions is that the actor who exercises the most interaction management will obtain his/her preferred outcome.

Goffman (1969) and Weinstein (1966), among others, expect that the more time the actor and other devote to managing the interaction in pursuit of a personally favorable settlement, the less time they can devote to accomplishing other tasks like reaching a mutually acceptable agreement. Young (1972) also predicts that in such disputatious situations the use of such aggressive tactics may lead to rigidities which impede progress toward reaching a settlement. The findings of a study conducted by Lewis and Fry (1977) provide further support; dyads who reached agreement avoided disruptive tactics. Not reaching



an agreement is another possible outcome to disputatious interactions where the focus is on interaction management. Based on this discussion the following two general propositions are proposed:

Proposition 1: The more interaction management tactics employed in the disputatious interaction the less likely the interactants are to reach agreement.

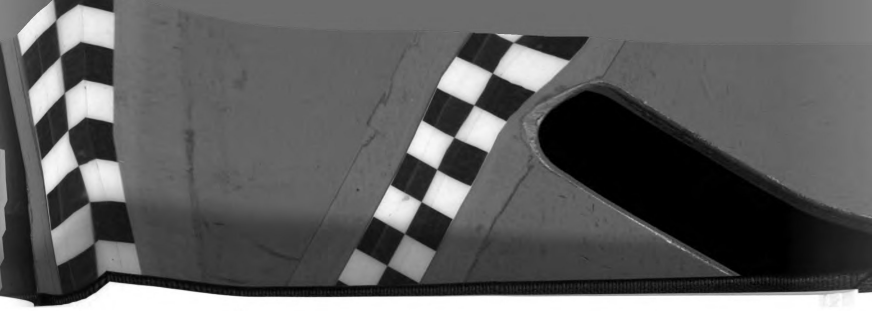
Proposition 2: The more interaction management tactics a social actor employs in a disputatious interaction, the more likely s/he is to obtain a favorable settlement when an agreement can be reached.

These general propositions can be applied to specific instances of disputatious interactions such as ones requiring third party intervention.

Disputatious interactions are characterized by the presence of two disputants, each of whom wishes and hopes to extract an agreement that is more favorable to themselves than the other interactant is willing to provide, and on occasion, an inability or unwillingness to reach agreement of their own accord (Rubin, 1980). It is this type of interaction that can require third party intervention and more and more that intervention takes the form of mediation (Pruitt & Kressel, 1985). The use of an interaction management strategy as it is exhibited by both the disputants and a mediator in a mediated disputatious social interaction needs to be considered.

According to Moore (1986), "Mediation is the

intervention into a dispute or negotiation by an acceptable, impartial, and neutral third party who has no authoritative decision-making power to assist disputing parties in voluntarily reaching their own mutually acceptable settlement of issues in a dispute" (p. 14). The goal of the disputants in mediation is to resolve the dispute in a way that is favorable to their own interests. The goal of the mediator, on the other hand, is to effect a mutually acceptable agreement (see sample agreement in Appendix A). For the mediator to accomplish this goal requires that s/he have both strategic flexibility and the opportunity to intervene. In terms of strategic flexibility, the mediator needs to be able to analyze and assess the interaction and design effective intervention strategies to enpower the disputants to bargain with one another and move closer to an agreement (Donohue, Allen, & Burrell, 1985; Moore, 1986). Equally as important, the mediator needs to be able to regulate the interaction among the disputants so that s/he can gain access to the interaction and implement the selected intervention strategies (Fisher, 1983; Wall, 1981). Some evidence in support of the position stated above has recently been presented by Donohue & Weider-Hatfield (1985). They found that mediator control over the course and structure - frequency and direction of talk and the frequency of interruptions/talkovers - of the mediation interaction was critical in accomplishing the mediator's goal of formulating a mutually acceptable agreement. These



results also provide support for the contention that the mediators must have not only control over the interaction but more control than the disputants. One key to reaching a mutually acceptable agreement in mediation, then, is for the the mediator to manage the interaction and manage it more than the disputants. This discussion, in turn, suggests the following general propositions:

Proposition 3: The mediator must control the interaction through the use of interaction management tactics if a mutually acceptable agreement is to be reached in mediation.

Proposition 4: The mediator must use more interaction management tactics overall than the disputants if a mutually acceptable agreement is to be reached in mediation.

These propositions will now be applied to the specific situation of divorce mediation in the form of hypotheses.

Hypotheses

Based on the previous discussion it is expected that both the disputants and the mediator in a mediated disputatious social interaction will attempt to achieve their goals by reaching a final agreement on the issues that is more favorable for themselves than for the other interactants; for the disputants this means that the final agreement coincides with their preferred agreement and for the mediator this means that the final agreement is mutually acceptable to the disputants. The disputants, then, will want to choose a strategy of interaction management so that

they can structure the interaction to gain acceptance for their proposals (Rubin, 1980). The mediator will also want to manage the course of the mediation in a way that is productive for the mediation to accomplish it's goal of reaching a mutually acceptable agreement (Haynes, 1981). The disputants and the mediators will each want to manage the interaction in pursuit of their goals. Both the disputants and the mediator should choose a strategy of interaction management to accomplish their goals and activate that strategy through the use of the related tactics. Based on previous discussion, it is expected that the more interaction management tactics implemented in mediations the less likely it is that the interactants will be successful in reaching a mutually acceptable agreement. These propositions can be stated more formally in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 Those mediations which have higher levels of interaction management across all parties will less frequently result in an agreement than those mediations which have lower levels of interaction management across all parties.

Several reseachers (e.g., Donohue and Weider-Hatfield, 1986; Barsky, 1983; Saposnek, 1983) have also proposed that mediation is more likely to result in a mutually acceptable agreement when the mediators have access to the interaction and can regulate the interaction management of the disputants. It is more probable, then, that the mediator will achieve his/her goal of reaching an agreement that is

acceptable to both disputants when the mediator exercises more interaction management than the disputants, who in turn, exercise equivalent levels of interaction management with each other. It is also expected that the mediation will not result in an acceptable agreement when the mediator exercises less interaction management or vies for interaction management with either or both of the disputants or the disputants vie for interaction management with each other.

Hypothesis 2: Those mediations using lower levels of interaction management displayed by the mediators than by the disputants will result less frequently in agreement than those mediations in which higher levels of interaction are displayed by the mediators than by the disputants.

Additional questions that will be addressed by this research are the differential use of interaction management across time in divorce mediation. Current research in mediation (e.g., Rubin, 1980) suggests that different behaviors are required at different times in the mediation process but Donohue, Diez, and Weider-Hatfield (1985) concluded that very little conceptual effort has been devoted to determining what kinds of communication acts prevail during any specific time period. Work on the stages/phases of mediation provides a starting point from which to research both the time periods and the related communicative acts.

Vanderkooi & Pearson (1983) in their review of the

divorce mediation models conclude that,

> Most writers view mediation as a progression of stages. Generally, these include: (1) setting the stage by providing a neutral setting , introducing oneself as a mediator, establishing ground rules and gaining the disputant's commitment to mediation; (2) defining the issues by eliciting facts and expressions of needs, desires and feelings; (3) processing the issues by managing emotions, encouraging empathy, narrowing differences, exploring solutions and maintaining positive momentum; and (4) reaching a settlement and assuring its implementation (p. 558).

Gulliver (1979) and Bryant and Patton (1987), on a less optimistic note, add, respectively; that phase two is also characterized by disagreements over the issues as well as clarification and that in phase three the outcome will be either a consensual agreement or a declaration of a major impasse which can not be resolved through mediation. Inclusion of these statements in Vanderkooi and Pearson's review provides a more complete, although less positive, description of the phases of mediation; mediation begins with a phase where information is gathered and the issues are clarified, moves to a phase where preliminary demands and offers produce an emphasis on differences, and moves to the final phases were the narrowing of differences results in an emphasis or stalemate on agreement.

Further support for these phases of mediation is provided by their similarity to the phases found in the work on small groups; an initial stage marked by defining the situation and task, a middle phase marked by differences and confrontation, and finally a phase marked by agreement (see Hare, 1973 for a review). There is also support

(Kessler, 1978) for the contention that the optimum movement is to systematically progress through the phases. Fisher (1983) in his work on small groups maintains that the decision point is the critical bottleneck in this progression. Gulliver (1979), coming from a mediation perspective, also expects the transition from phase two to phase three to be the most problematic because it involves a shift from opposition and hostility to coordination and even cooperation.

Based on this discussion, it is expected that the emphasis on differences in the middle phase should lead to the use of more interaction management by the disputants and the mediator both in mediation sessions were a mutually acceptable agreement is reached and where it is not reached. It is further expected, however, that in the mediation sessions where a mutually acceptable agreement is reached, the level of interaction management should decline in the third phase as the mediator is able to manage the interaction and move the disputants closer to agreement. Based on this discussion the following additional hypothesis is advanced:

Hypothesis 3 Those mediations which have higher levels of interaction management during Phase 3 than during Phase 2 will less frequently result in agreement than those mediations which have lower levels of interaction management during Phase 3 than during Phase 2.

Finally, work needs to be done to determine what kinds of

communicative acts facilitate the reaching of a mutually acceptable agreement.

Additional Questions

Although the actual linguistic and conversational tactics used by the participants in mediation should coincide with their choice to communicate a strategy of interaction management, it is also of value to determine which of the interaction management tactics are most important to reaching an agreement in mediation. Given that mediators can only focus on a limited number of tactics at any one time, it is important to determine which tactics are related to the creation of mutually acceptable agreements. Mediators can then be taught to recognize and implement the most useful tactics. Since there is little theoretical or empirical rationale for predicting what pattern of directive use tactics, minimizing tactics, or conversational organizing tactics will be the most useful choices, the following exploratory hypothesis is advanced:

Exploratory Hypothesis 1: What subset of interaction management tactics are most associated with mediations in which agreement is reached?

CHAPTER II

METHOD

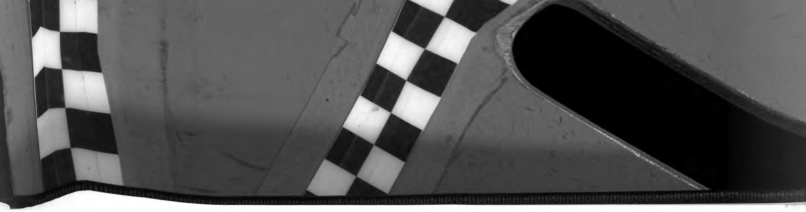
Sample of Interactions

In order to examine how participants structure interactions, criteria to determine clear examples of appropriate interactions need to be identified and met by any sample interaction. For the purposes of this study, it is necessary that the sample encounters are social interactions where the participants are involved in face-to-face interaction with talk as the primary resource. Second, it is important that the participants have divergent aims, motives, or interests on which it is imperative for them to reach an agreement. These criteria will be met in the use of transcriptions of actual divorce mediation sessions.

In divorce mediation there are at least three participants; two divorced or divorcing spouses and one or a team of mediators. In the cases that are analyzed in this study, the spouses (parents) are typically living separately and are differing over custody arrangements for their children (Pearson & Theonnes, 1984). More specifically, the parents' arrangements are mutually exclusive (i.e, both want sole custody or the children on Christmas day). The immediate goal of each parent, then, is to have his or her

custody arrangement accepted (Dibble, 1984; Pearson & Thoennes, 1984; Saposnek, 1983; Rosanova, 1983). The goal of the mediator is the development of an agreement that is acceptable to each parent and best for the children (Rosanova, 1983). In attempting to resolve their differences, the parents and the mediator meet face-to-face to discuss their differences. Since the ultimate authority in mediation belongs to the parents themselves and does not arise from the legal system, talk/conversation is the primary resource available to the participants to use to reach an agreement. Thus, the sample interactions meet the first criteria.

Fulfilling the second criterion, the parents enter into mediation because they have been unable to reach an agreement on their own. The mediator, in turn, wants to help the parents reach a mutually beneficial and agreeable solution which may put his/her goals at odds with the goals of either or both of the parents. Although the parents are under no legal requirement to reach an agreement through mediation, it is imperative that an agreement is eventually reached in some manner. The decision the parents need to make, then, is whether to settle in mediation where they retain some control over their decisions or take their chances in court. Kelly (1984) provides evidence to suggest that one attraction of mediation to the disputants is their control over issues so that reaching an agreement through the mediation process can be considered as imperative to the



parents. Hence, divorce mediation provides an ideal context for the use of interaction management as a social influence attempt.

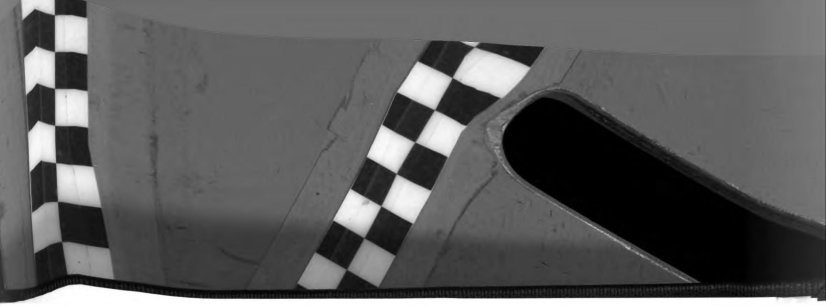
Twenty transcriptions of pre- and post-divorce custody/visitation sessions (ten in which agreement was reached and ten in which agreement was not reached) were used in this study. The transcriptions were made from audiotaped mediation sessions of approximately one hour. Each session took approximately twenty-four hours to transcribe following the rules of transcription presented by Schenkein (1978). In addition, any references to last names and cities were blacked out to ensure the anonymity of the parties.

The audiotapes were selected from the corpus of 80 collected by the Divorce Mediation Research Project (1981-1984), funded by the Children's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Health & Human Services (90-CW-634) and administered by Jessica Pearson, Director of the Research Unit of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, in Denver, Colorado. The twenty sessions used in the present study were selected because the recordings were intelligible for the most part and the number of participants (husband, wife, and a mediator) was equivalent. These particular sessions came from the various branches of the Los Angeles Conciliation Court. The format of the mediation service at this court, the sources of user satisfaction, and the user evaluations of the mediation

outcomes are discussed in Pearson and Thoennes (1984).

Measures

The measures identified and defined to test the hypotheses were designed to (a) examine, as a group, the tactics that operationalize the strategy of interaction management and (b) better capture the 'interactional' nature of the language and conversational features used in the mediation sessions. Three categories of linguistic and conversational features were specified as indicators of the use of interaction management tactics. The three categories of interaction management tactics that operationalize the 'minimax' strategy are directive tactics, minimizing tactics, and conversational organizing tactics. As previously indicated (see Table 1) the tactics that relinquish the strategic advantage in managing the interaction include, respectively: question imperatives and hints; ceding of the floor when interrupted or talk is simultaneous, positive back channel cues, and repetitions; and hedges, positive tags, qualifiers, positive adverbials of degree, and reasons and justifications. The tactics that promote the strategic advantage in managing the interaction include need statements, imbedded imperatives, and imperatives; negative back channel cues, interruptions; and negative tags, and negative adverbials of degree. The tactical choices that relinquish interaction management were coded as a -1 and the tactical choices that enhance interaction management were coded as a +1. The score across



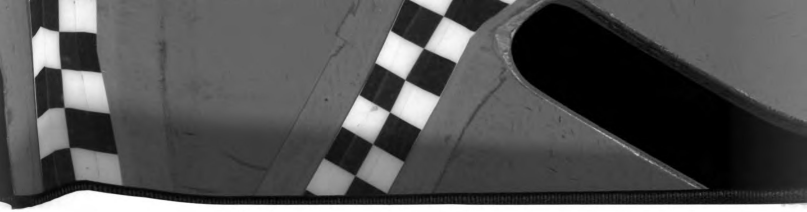
the three subcategories of interaction management was the sum of these values. A positive score indicated the use of the more advantageous interaction management tactics and a negative score the use of the less advantageous interaction management tactics.

The second concern in coding interaction management is how to best conceptualize and measure the structural patterns of the language and conversational features used in divorce mediation. Koper, Donohue, and Stahle (1985) utilized an actional view of communication (i.e., communication as a transmission of a message from a sender to a receiver) in their study on the effects of mediator communication strategies on the disputants' levels of language intensity in divorce mediation. A composite measure of language intensity was used which indicated the total amount of language intensity one participant used in the mediation sessions. The results indicated that successful mediators mark their utterances with significantly less intensity in successful mediation sessions than in unsuccessful mediation sessions. The actional view of communication utilized by Koper, Donohue, and Stahle (1985) suggests that the structural patterning of the language and conversational features used in divorce mediation is best captured by investigating how participants communicate to each other. Language and conversational features are thought to have a one way effect in the interaction. Later research by Donohue and his colleagues

has utilized a more interactional view of communication.

An interactional view of communication would assume that the structural pattern of the language and conversational features used in divorce mediation is best captured by investigating how participants communicate with each other. Following this view, Donohue and Weider-Hatfield (1986) investigated the language features the mediators and disputants used to negotiate control issues in divorce mediation sessions. The amount of control was operationalized as the exchange of interruptions and talkovers between the husbands and the mediators, the wives and the mediators, and the mediators and the disputants. Donohue and Weider-Hatfield (1985) concluded that the mediators were less successful in reaching agreement when they allowed one disputant (the husbands) to control the allocation of floor time. Since the speaker-to-participant variable was not completely crossed in the study, it is unclear whether the mediators were also controlling the allocation of floor time with the husbands or the husbands with the wives. What is needed is a way of measuring language and conversational features which is based on the same interactional view of communication that is assumed in the studies.

The interactional view is taken in this dissertation. It is assumed that interaction management functions in divorce mediation by the way in which the interactants communicate with each other. To better capture the



'interactional' nature of interaction management, each tactic was assigned one of six codes for speaker to addressee/referent; mediator to husband, mediator to wife, husband to wife, husband to mediator, wife to mediator, and wife to husband. When a communication code choice was judged as addressed to two participants, the speaker to addressee/referent code was assigned twice, once for each of the addressee/referents.

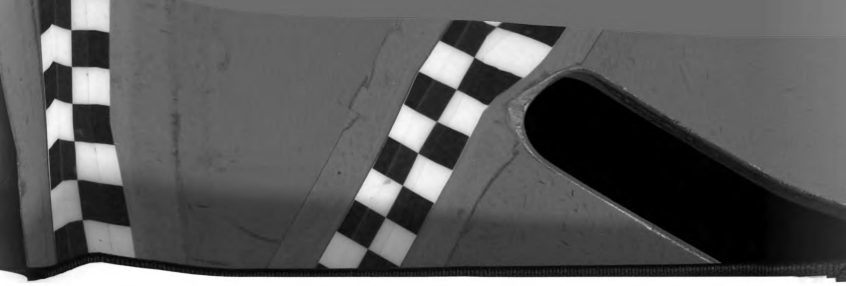
Each numbered turn at talk in the transcripts was content analyzed for the interaction management tactics by speaker to addressee/referent it contained. Five teams of coders were trained to identify each occurrence of a tactic as well as how to assign that tactic to a category (see the coding instructions in Appendix B). One transcript section containing two hundred and sixty-nine turns at talk was used to assess the unitizing and interpretive reliability of the coders. The unitizing reliability was .87. This unit reliability for the recognition of the linguistic and conversational features that comprise interaction management indicates consistent identification across raters. The inter-rater reliability for the twenty-two coded tactics were computed using percent agreement (Folger, Hewes, & Poole, 1984). The inter-rater reliabilities for the thirty tactics are presented in Table 2. Clearly, the language and conversational features that comprise interaction management can also reliably be categorized by trained coders.

Table 2

Inter-rater Reliabilities for the Coding of Interaction Management

Tactics	Percent Agreement
Directives	
Need Statements	.99
Imperatives	.98
Imbedded Imperatives	.94
Permission Directives	.98
Question Directives	.96
Hints	.97
Minimizing Tactics	
Hedges	.99
Qualifiers	.99
Positive Adverbials of Degree	.89
Negative Adverbials of Degree	.90
Disclaimers	.95
Reasons/Justifications	.98
Positive Tag Questions	.96
Negative Tag Questions	.92
Conversational Organizing Devices	
Positive Back Channel Cues	.98
Agreement Responses	.96
Mirror Responses	.99
Negative Back Channel Cues	.99
Disagreement Responses	.97
Interruption/Talkovers	.95
Gains Floor with Interruption or Talkover	.98
Cedes Floor	.98

In order to allow for meaningful comparisons between sessions varying in length, the score for each utterance was divided by the total number of words in the session. In this way, each utterance is viewed as contributing a zero or greater proportion to the distribution of interaction management in the session. Weighting each utterance's score proportionate to the length of the session means, then, that the longer the session, the less weight was given to the use of an interaction management code choice in that utterance.



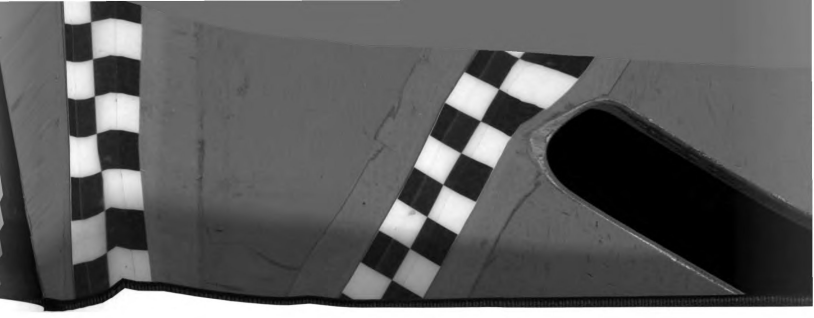
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Tests of the Hypotheses

The first hypothesis predicted that in those mediations which have higher levels of interaction management there would less frequently be agreement. The second hypothesis predicted a patterning of the interaction management among the participants such that those mediations, where the mediators expressed less interaction management than the parents, would less frequently result in agreement. The third hypothesis predicted a relationship between outcome and time, such that those mediations, in which there was more interaction management in Phase 3 than Phase 2, would less frequently result in agreement. Since both the phases (Hypothesis 3) and the patterns (Hypothesis 2) are subsets of the total amount of interaction management; patterns, phases, and the total amount should be correlated. Given that these variables are not independent each hypothesis was tested separately using the appropriate statistics. The results for each of the hypotheses will be addressed in order.

Since Hypothesis 1 contained one continuous (interaction management) and one dichotomous (success of mediation



session) variable, it was tested using a point biserial correlation (Cohen and Cohen, 1966). Successful mediation sessions were coded as 0 and unsuccessful mediation sessions were coded as 1. The decision rule used was if correlation coefficient was significantly greater than zero then the null hypothesis was rejected. The resulting correlation revealed a nonsignificant relationship between the observed level of interaction management used in successful and unsuccessful mediation sessions, $r = .23$, $p < .55$, $df = 21$. In fact, the fairly equal distribution of interaction management across mediation outcomes (successful $\bar{X} = .40$; unsuccessful $\bar{X} = .37$) suggests that the global use of interaction management to either gain or relinquish control of the interaction is not observably related to success in divorce mediation.

Hypothesis 2 was also tested using a positive point biserial correlation as the rejection rule. In relation to hypothesis 2, the results reveal a significant relationship between the amount of interaction management used by (a) mediators in addressing/refering to the husbands ($r = .61$, $p < .05$, $df = 21$) and the wives ($r = .57$, $p < .05$, $df = 21$); (b) husbands in addressing/refering to the wives ($r = .45$, $p < .05$, $df = 21$); and (c) wives in addressing/refering to the mediators ($r = .50$, $p < .05$, $df = 21$) and husbands ($r = .69$, $p < .05$, $df = 21$). A nonsignificant relationship was revealed between the observed level of interaction management used by the husbands in addressing/refering to the mediators ($r = .29$, $p < .05$, $df = 21$). The means

presented in Table 3 indicate that (a) the mediators used lower levels of interaction management with the husbands and higher levels with the wives in successful than in unsuccessful mediation sessions; (b) the husbands used lower levels of interaction management with both the mediators and the wives in successful than in unsuccessful mediation sessions; and (c) the wives used higher levels of interaction management with the mediators and lower levels with the husbands in successful than in unsuccessful mediation sessions. With respect to the results, the data seem to point most interestingly to the level of interaction management used between the mediators and the husbands.

Hypothesis 3 was also tested using the point biserial correlation. The resulting correlation revealed a nonsignificant relationship between the amount of interaction management used over time in the successful (r = .06, $p < .01$, df = 21) and unsuccessful (r .08, $p < .01$, df = 21) mediation sessions. The pattern of means presented in Table 4 reveal that for both successful and unsuccessful mediation sessions, interaction management did not diminish over time; more interaction management is used in Phase two than in Phase one and more in Phase three than in Phase two.

Given the results obtained for Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3, an additional analysis was run to determine if the interaction management used by the speaker-to-addressee/referent (Hypothesis 2) differed over time (Hypothesis 3). To probe the relationship in more detail,

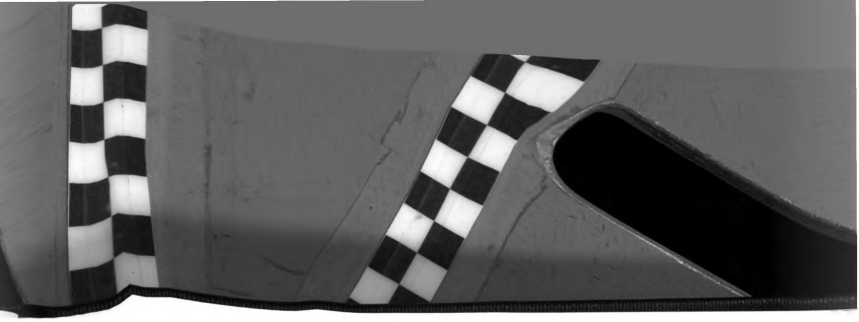


Table 3

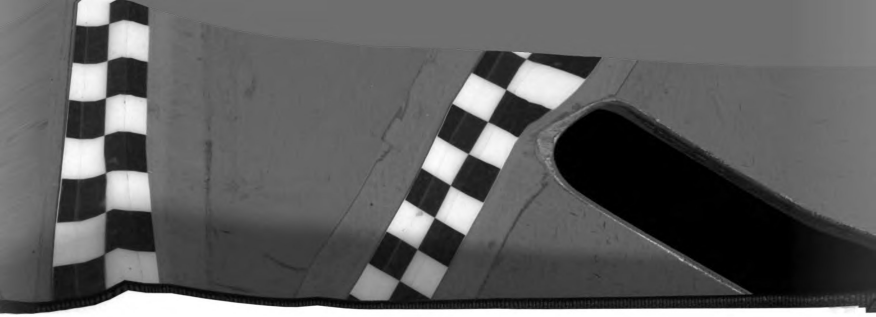
Mean Interaction Management for Speaker to Addressee in Successful and Unsuccessful Mediation Session

	Mediation Session			
Speaker to Addressee	Successful		Unsuccessful	
	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	N
Mediators to Husbands	1.25	393	1.35	287
Mediators to Wives	1.35	364	1.30	248
Husbands to Mediators	1.20	464	1.21	204
Husbands to Wives	1.09	307	1.12	173
Wives to Mediators	1.10	397	.98	302
Wives to Husbands	1.16	364	1.27	293

Table 4

Mean Interaction Management by Time for Successful and Unsuccessful Mediation Sessions

Time	Mediation Sessions			
	Successful		Unsuccessful	
	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	N
Phase 1	1.09	1142	2.18	806
Phase 2	2.10	1177	2.27	815
Phase 3	2.13	1106	2.33	844



the means for each of the speaker-to-addressee/referent codes were computed across the three phases. The results are presented in Table 5. Three clearly recognizable patterns emerge from these results. There is less interaction management in successful mediation sessions than in unsuccessful mediation sessions when the mediators address/refer to the husbands or the husbands address/refer to the wives. There is no decrease in interaction management over time when the mediators address/refer to the wives or the husbands address/ refer to the wives. There is a decrease in interaction management over time when the mediators address/refer to the husbands. These results add further credence to the importance of studying interaction management by speaker-to-addressee/referent.

Exploratory Hypothesis

The Exploratory Hypothesis investigated the relationship between the use of particular subcategories of interaction management and the outcome of the mediation sessions. To test the Exploratory Hypothesis, a discriminate analysis was conducted using successful and unsuccessful mediation sessions as the discriminating groups. Ratios for each of the subscales of interaction management (conversational organizing devices, minimizing expressions, and declaratives) were computed. A stepwise procedure and the method of minimum Wilk's lamda was employed. The resulting equation failed to discriminate the interaction management

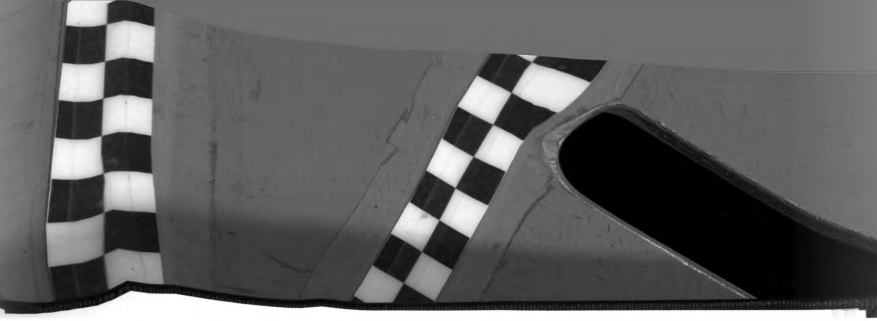
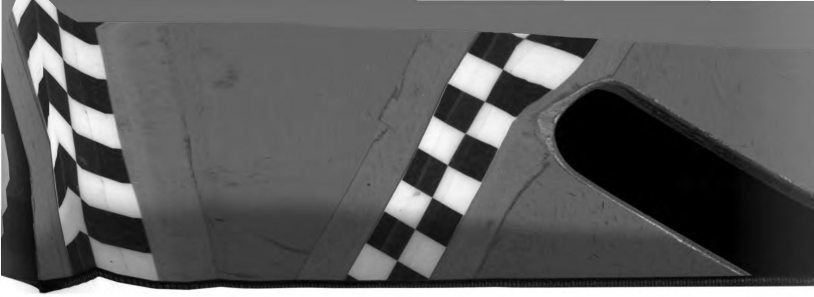


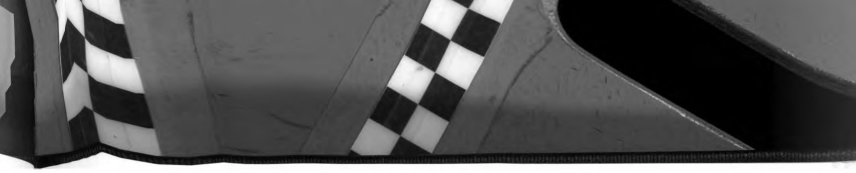
Table 5

Mean Interaction Management By Speaker-to-Addressee and Time

Speaker to Addressee	Mediation Sessions: Successful $\bar{X}$	Successful N	Unsuccessful $\bar{X}$	Unsuccessful N
Mediators to Husbands				
Phase 1	1.23	190	1.26	91
Phase 2	1.00	132	1.17	79
Phase 3	1.06	71	1.37	117
Mediators to Wives				
Phase 1	1.33	142	1.12	94
Phase 2	1.23	137	1.22	57
Phase 3	1.19	85	1.43	97
Husbands to Mediators				
Phase 1	1.10	196	1.03	70
Phase 2	1.16	155	1.09	64
Phase 3	1.08	113	1.20	70
Husbands to Wives				
Phase 1	.95	74	.92	48
Phase 2	.98	126	1.13	82
Phase 3	.94	107	.79	43
Wives to Mediator				
Phase 1	.98	157	1.07	118
Phase 2	1.02	142	1.15	98
Phase 3	.98	98	1.13	88
Wives to Husband				
Phase 1	.98	144	1.14	107
Phase 2	1.04	124	1.22	102
Phase 3	1.02	94	1.08	85



used in successful mediation sessions from that of the unsuccessful mediation sessions (Wilk's lamda = .991, F = 1.03, $p < .94$).



CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

This dissertation had three broad aims; (a) to test a coding scheme for measuring interaction management, (b) to test hypotheses derived from Weinstein's ITT, and (c) to investigate the use of interaction management in divorce mediation. Each of these aims will be discussed in turn.

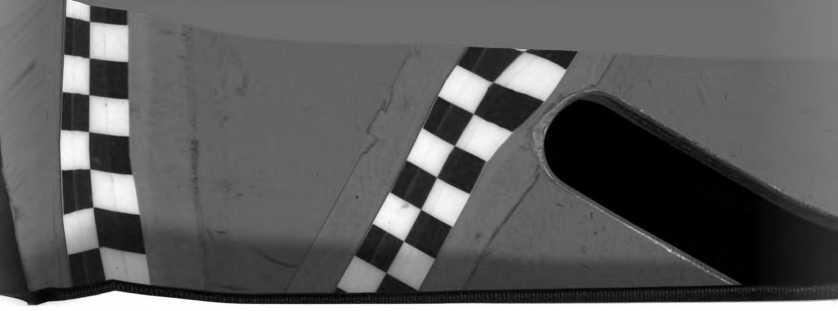
Interaction Management Coding Scheme

The interaction management coding scheme used in this dissertation was constructed to (a) better capture the 'interactional' nature of the language and conversational features used in the mediation sessions, (b) study, as a group, the tactics that operationalize the strategy of interaction management, and (c) provide a further test of Hewes' claims regarding unitizing and interpretive reliability.

The coding scheme developed in this dissertation is based on the assumption that the linguistic and conversational features comprising interaction are best studied as the complex, simultaneous, and sequentially organized phenomena they are. The first goal was to make coherent the complex array of linguistic and conversational features that comprise interaction by studying together

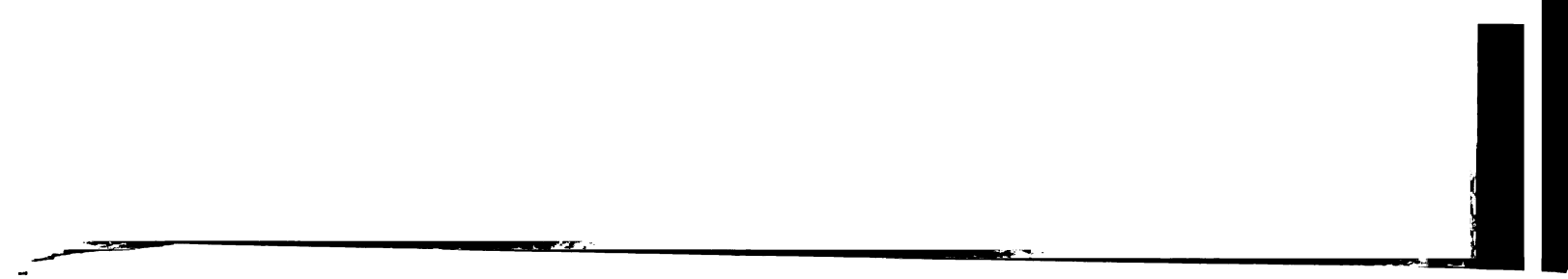
those communication behaviors that serve the similar function of interaction management. Linguistic and conversational features were chosen that had an empirically strong and conceptually significant relationship to interaction management. In this way the measure of interaction management reflects the single combined potency of the linguistic and conversational features. With the employment of this functional grouping, the power of a summary statement by functions is far greater than one based on individual features. This power could be further increased if the measure of interaction management was comprised of differentially weighted scale values for the linguistic and conversational features rather than the equal weightings that were used in the present coding scheme.

The interaction management coding scheme used in this dissertation assigns the same equal weight (1 for the use of more advantageous features and -1 for the use of less advantageous features) to every linguistic and conversational feature. For example, a question imperative like 'May I interrupt here?' would receive a score of -1 while 'May I interrupt, please?' would receive a score of -2 (-1 for the question imperative and -1 for the politeness form please). While these weighted scores are an appropriate first step in the measurement of interaction management, work on the politeness function of directives suggests an even more promising direction (c.f., Carrell & Konnecker, 1981; James, 1976).



James (1976) developed a coding scheme to measure the politeness of directives using the paired comparison procedure. Using his politeness coding scheme the question imperative, 'May I interrupt here?' would receive a score of 3.34 while 'May I interrupt, please' would receive a 4.070 and a need statement like 'I need to interrupt here' would receive a score of 0.000 and 'I need to interrupt here because...' would receive a score of 1.081. Although the interaction management function of the directives would probably be the inverse of the politeness function, using the paired comparison procedure would be the first step in improving the measurement of the linguistic and conversational features of interaction management. One way to proceed would be to use the paired comparison procedure to develop scales for each of the three subcategories of interaction management.

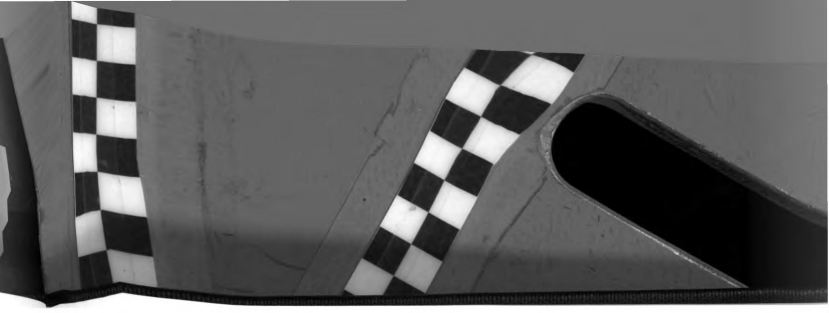
Even an interaction management coding scheme produced by the paired comparison procedure would still have validity problems when measuring an utterance such as 'I think you have to be quiet'. 'You have to be quiet' would be coded as an imperative and might receive a higher directive score like 4.070 and 'I think' a lower minimizing expression score like 1.980. The utterance would receive a composite score of 6.050. A coding scheme using the paired comparison procedure is still not sensitive to the occurrence of linguistic and conversational features in a stream of talk. Is the relationship between the two features simply additive



or does the occurrence of 'I think' before the directive reduce the degree of interaction management of the directive? It is a long term (perhaps lifetime?) goal of the researcher to work on a measurement scheme for interaction management that is sensitive to the interaction management value each linguistic and conversational feature would receive in a stream of talk.

In this dissertation an interaction view of communication is assumed in which the interaction management used by interactants is the result of an exchange of interaction management tactics. To more accurately capture the 'sequentially interactional' aspect of interaction management, the interaction management score that an interactant received was measured as a function of the interaction management between the interactant and a given addressee/referent in the interaction rather than a composite score which reflected his or her interaction management with all the addressee/referents in the interaction. As will be seen in the discussion of Hypothesis Two, measuring interaction management by speaker-to-addressee/referent adds critically to understanding the effect of interaction management in disputatious interactions.

Hewes (1985) suggested that useful, nonarbitrary interpretation requires consistency in both the identification of the units to be categorized or rated (unitizing reliability) and consistency in the labels or



ratings assigned to those units (interpretive reliability). Unitizing reliability answers the question; 'Did the coders all reliably unitize the transcripts into some specific number of interaction management units?'. It provides quantitative verification that we are identifying consistently phenomenon in a text across coders. The unitizing reliability in this dissertation was .87 which is reasonably high. Thus, coders can reliably unitize the transcripts into some specific number of interaction management units. Once we have established that coders can reliably unitize, we want some quantitative assurance that common labels are attached consistently to the units (interpretive reliability).

Hewes (1985) suggests that category by category indices of interpretive reliability be used rather than global indices like Guetzkow's P (Guetzkow, 1950). He claims that the former global indices miss a potential source of systematic bias; the possibility that certain categories may be harder to use or more ambiguous, thus possessing lower reliabilities.

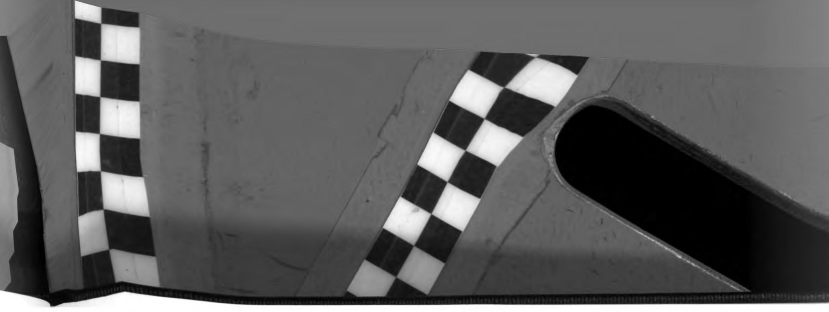
To further test Hewes' claim both Guetzkow's P and category-by-category reliabilities were computed for the data coded in this dissertation. Using the Guetzkow P, the global reliability is .92. Based on this high reliability one would conclude that the overall interpretive reliability for the interaction management coding scheme is quite good. This global rating could obscure, however, lower

reliabilities for particular categories that are in need of more work.

To determine if the conditions that promote category-by-category bias obtain in this data, category-by-category reliabilities were computed using percentage agreement (Folger, Hewes, & Poole, 1984). The resulting reliabilities (as presented previously in Table 2) ranged from .89 to .99. According to Folger et al. (1984), if the number of categories is reasonably large (more than 3) and the reliabilities are reasonably high (.9 or higher), it is very unlikely that there is a serious problem with bias. Since all but one of the categories (Positive Adverbial of Degree , .89) had reliabilities of .9 or higher, it is unlikely that there was a serious problem with bias in the measure of interaction management used in this dissertation.

The results of the more particularistic measure of reliability does, however, point out that there is still room for improvement with particular categories in the interaction management coding scheme; the positive (.89) and negative (.90) adverbials of degree tactics that have the lowest reliabilities. In computing the unitizing reliability, it appeared to the author that one possible problem with coding these tactics was identifying their use in context. Take the following transcript segment as an example:

001 M: Would you think of sharing um the raising of your children where you might live near one another and they would have your two households. Have you considered that?



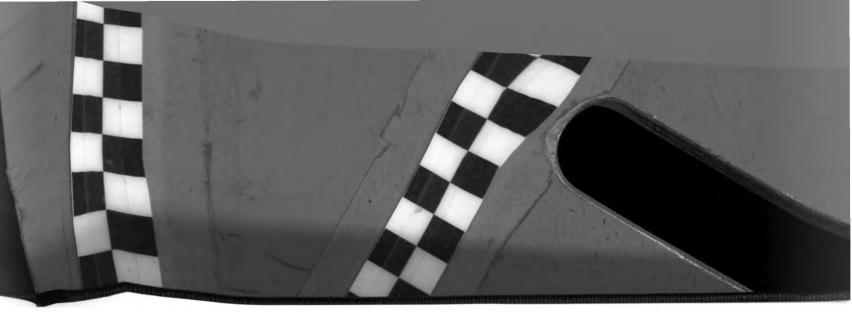
002A W: Well, I have a little problem with that.

002B W: Well, I don't know

003 H: So what's your little problem with THIS plan?

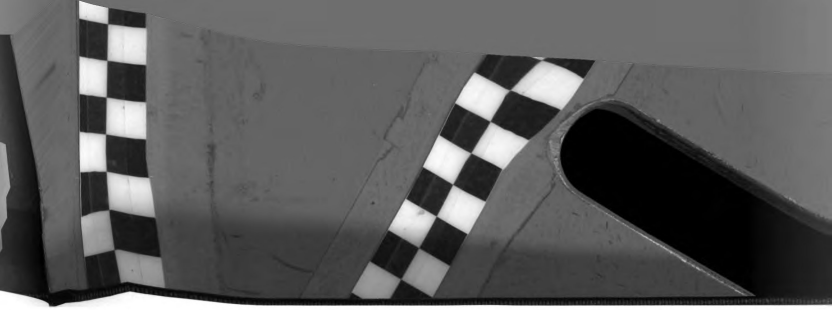
If 'little' is coded as an adverbial of degree without considering the context than it should be coded as a positive adverbial of degree since it functions to minimize the impact of what is being said. If 'little' is coded, taking the context into consideration, in utterance 002A it still functions as a positive adverbial of degree. In utterance 003, however, 'little' should be coded as a negative adverbial of degree since it functions to trivialize the importance of the wife's objection. To ensure higher reliabilities for these categories in the future, coders should be trained to be (a) less global or automatic in assigning adverbials like 'little' to the positive category and responses like 'really' to the negative category and (b) more sensitive to the context in which the adverbials are used.

Given that this research is the first in a series of studies dealing with interaction management in disputatious social situations, future research is indicated using this construct. Most immediately, further work needs to focus on improving the coding reliability for some of the more contextually sensitive categories. Future research will be directed to refining the interaction management scores assigned to the linguistic and conversational features that comprise the interaction management coding scheme.



Validation of a revised interaction management coding scheme might be accomplished through its application in other disputatious communication contexts such as labor - management negotiations.

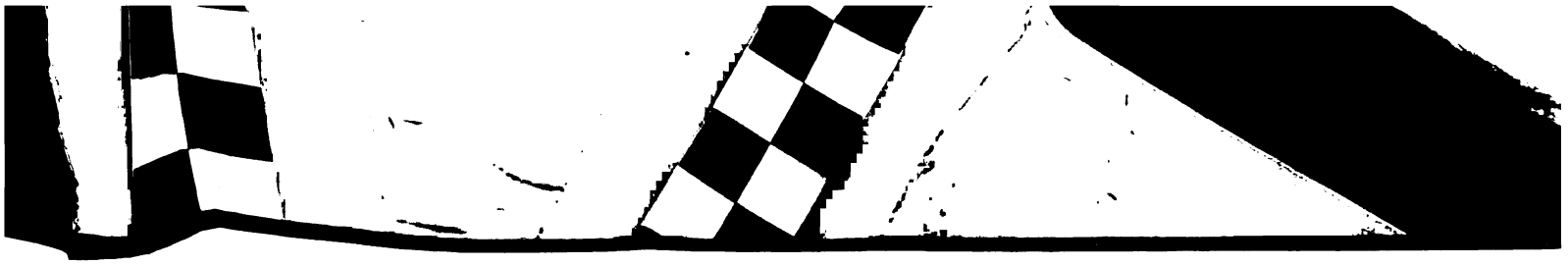
A second goal of this dissertation has been to provide general validation for Weinstein's ITT by providing a more rigorous test of the theory then has previously been conducted; identifying a specific interactional goal and related strategy/tactics to accomplish the goal. It was hypothesized that the goal of actors in disputatious social interaction is to reach a settlement of their differences that is more favorable to one's goal(s) than to the other's goal(s). One way actors can accomplish their goals is to manage the interaction in such a way that the discussion is favorable to their own position and unfavorable to the other's position. The strategy of interaction management is an attempt to influence the discussion in such a way that the outcome that is eventually reached is a settlement of the issues more favorable to the actor than to the others. More specifically, the effect of interaction management on the outcome of the divorce mediation sessions, the disputatious social interaction investigated in this dissertation, was hypothesized to be a function of the overall level of interaction management, the interactants' levels of interaction management, and the level of interaction management used over time. An examination of the results revealed some interesting insights and avenues



for future research into interaction management and ITT.

The results from Hypothesis One showed that the level of interaction management is not a significant predictor of the success of divorce mediation sessions. These results suggest that between the mediation sessions, the interactants are using no particular level of interaction management to either gain or relinquish management of the interaction. Indirectly, these results provide support for the ITT postulate that social actors attempt to successfully achieve their own purposes in relation to others. Management of the interaction is not merely a function of the level of interaction management used but the negotiation of the management of the interaction by the interactants in relation to each other.

The picture of the interactants' interaction management that emerges from the results for Hypothesis Two is that (a) in the successful sessions the mediators and the wives are more actively involved in managing the interaction than the husbands and (b) in the unsuccessful sessions the husbands are more actively involved in managing the interaction than the wives and mediators. In the successful sessions (agreement reached) the mediators use a higher level of interaction management with the wives and lower with the husbands. In the successful sessions it appears that the mediators are able to use interaction management to provide the necessary structure to move the mediation toward a mutually acceptable agreement. An agreement is not reached



in the sessions where the level of interaction management used by the participants is mixed. The parents' attempts at management of the interaction, and the mediator's attempts to manage the interaction appears to sabotage agreement making. These conclusions are also partially supported by the Donohue and Weider-Hatfield (1986) test of their mediator competence model. They conclude that "When the mediator loses control by allowing the disputants to differentially talkover him/her or differentially interrupts the disputants, the mediator is less capable of providing the structure that is needed to reduce conflict intensity." (p. 35). Both the results of this dissertation and the Donohue and Weider-Hatfield study suggest that the mediators' control of the interaction is critical to the success of the divorce mediation sessions.

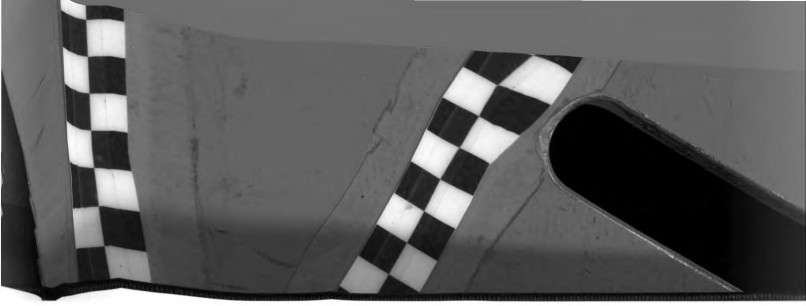
Perhaps the most intriguing question about these findings concerns the levels of interaction management used between the interactants in divorce mediation sessions. In the successful mediation sessions the highest levels of interaction management are used by the wife and the mediator; in the unsuccessful, by the mediator and the husband. The additional results from the post hoc analysis show that over time there is (a) a decrease in the level of interaction management used by the wives to the mediators and the mediators to the wives.

These results suggest that in the successful mediation sessions, the wives and the mediators are negotiating the

management of the interaction and the mediators are able to take control of the interaction. Once the mediators have control of the interaction their level of interaction management decreases as they focus on other mediation concerns that move the parents closer to agreement. In the unsuccessful mediation sessions, all the participants are negotiating the management of the interaction and no one is able to take control of the interaction, including the mediator. The increase of the mediators' levels of interaction management in the unsuccessful sessions may be due to poor mediation skills on the part of the mediators or the mediators attempting to reach an agreement until it is clear that there is no realistic hope of reaching a mutually acceptable agreement.

As for the parents, the present dissertation finds that in both successful and unsuccessful sessions the wives use higher levels of interaction management than the husbands but the wives use higher levels of interaction management in the successful as opposed to the unsuccessful mediation sessions. The additional results from the post hoc analysis shows that over time there is no decrease in the level of interaction management used by the mediators and the wives to the husbands.

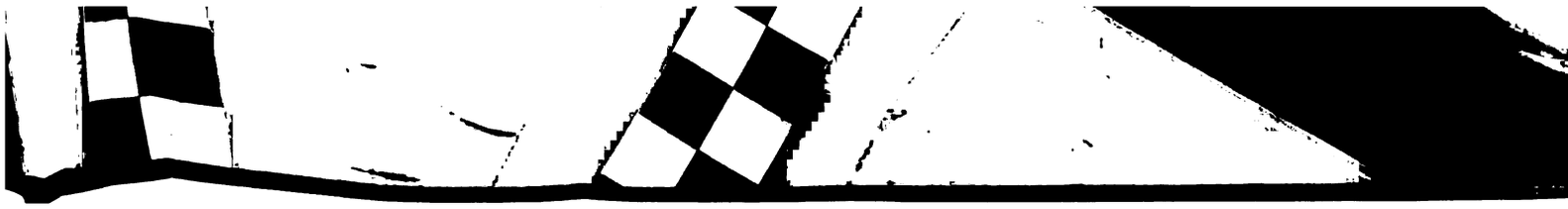
The results are exactly the opposite of those found for the wives and mediators in this dissertation but supportive of those found in the Donohue and Weider-Hatfield study. They found that the wives interrupt and talkover the



mediator significantly less than their husbands in the unsuccessful sessions but the wives used significantly more language intensity. The picture of the wives' involvement in the unsuccessful sessions that emerges from both sets of results is seemingly contradictory. Donohue and Weider-Hatfield (1986) conclude that the wives may be responding to a lack of control over the interaction in the unsuccessful sessions by using more intense language when they do secure a chance to speak. It is also possible that both the level of language intensity and interaction management are a reaction by the husbands and wives to the importance of a particular custody issue under discussion.

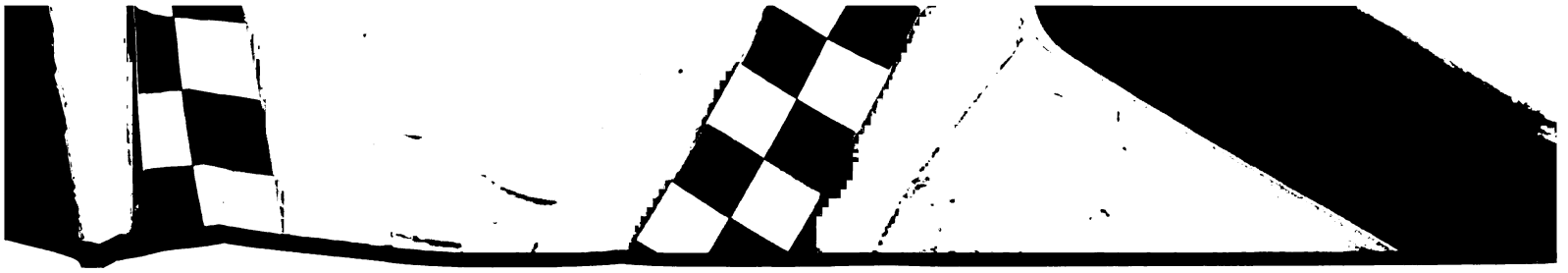
In the successful sessions the husbands' use of lower levels of interaction management suggests that the husbands are (a) being actively crowded out of the discussion or passively left out as the mediators and the wives vie for management of the interaction, (b) capitulating, or (c) allowing the mediators to champion their preferred agreement. The first alternative is an unlikely explanation since Donohue and Weider-Hatfield (1986) found that nearly equivalent amounts of talk were being used by all the interactants across the mediation sessions.

One way to address the other two alternative explanations is to investigate the sequential organization of both the use of interaction management and the movement toward agreement across the mediation sessions. The movement toward agreement could be measured by first



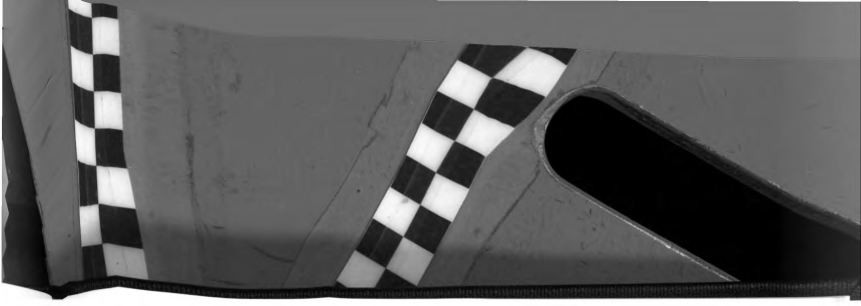
tallying the number of issues open at the outset of the mediation and then tracking movement off the issues, the narrowing of the differences, and the resolution of the issues (Kochan & Jick, 1978). This would indicate what the issues are in the sessions, who is involved in the discussion of the issues, and the outcome of the issues. An accompanying sequential analysis of the interaction management tactics would indicate when certain types of interaction management tactics are followed by other tactics. By comparing the two analyses some judgment could be made as to which issues are generating the most use of interaction management along with the pattern of interaction management being used and the final disposition of the issues. If the husbands raise particular issues and they are not actively considered as potential parts of the custody agreement then the husbands' purposed custody arrangements are being dropped from the discussion. If the husbands raise particular issues that are then championed by the mediators in opposition to the wives, then the other alternative explanation is supported. More importantly, if any of these alternative explanations are supported by later research, then the mediators are not doing their jobs. An agreement is reached in the successful sessions but not a mutual agreement in which each interactant is actively engaged in the process.

Based on Vanderkooi and Pearson's (1984) review of the divorce mediation models Hypothesis Three predicted that the



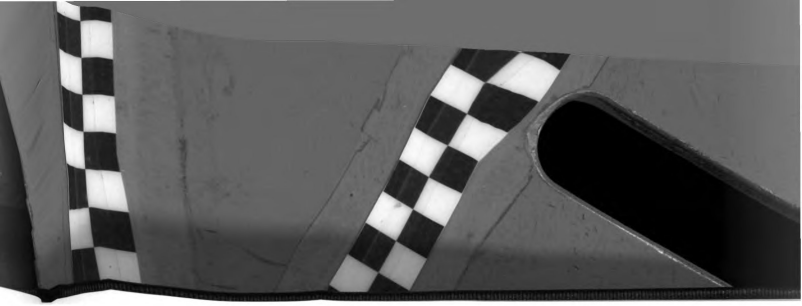
level of interaction management would follow a specific pattern across a progression of stages; setting the stage and defining the issues (less interaction management), processing the issues (more interaction management) and reaching (less interaction management) or not reaching (more interaction management) an agreement. The results showed an increase in the level of interaction management from Phase one to Phase two and from Phase two to Phase three in both the successful and the unsuccessful sessions. The most plausible explanation for this finding is that a phasic model is not appropriate for the study of phenomena like bargaining, negotiating and mediation.[2]

In selecting a phasic model for mediation, Vanderkooi and Pearson (1983) write, "Although some writers characterize mediation as involving cyclical or contingent strategies, ... most writers view mediation as a progression of stages ... This stage/phase approach has been adopted by all the practitioners who have developed and published model approaches to divorce mediation." (p. 558). In reviewing the work Vanderkooi and Pearson cite in support of a phasic model (i.e., Black & Joffee, 1978; Coogler, 1978; Haynes, 1981; Kessler, 1978; Milne, 1978) and more recent work (Blades, 1984) it was evident that the proposed models were based on the writers' own mediation experiences rather than on empirical tests. Combining the absence of empirical support with the lack of empirical support found in this dissertation, leads to the conclusion that mediation does



not follow a phasic model. The questions that still remain are, 'Why?" and 'What model does characterize mediation?' One possible answer is contained in the statement that begins Vanderkooi and Pearson's's (1983) review, "...some writers characterize mediation as involving cyclical or contingent strategies." (p. 558).

Empirical support is available for both a contingent and a cyclical model of development in mediation. Kochan and Jick (1978) developed and tested a model of the mediation process using actual public sector labor mediations. Their results support a contingent model of mediation. Putnam and Jones (1982), using a grievance case role play, found that sessions where no agreement was reached, as opposed to sessions where agreement was reached, exhibited a tightly structured, reciprocal pattern of the use of attack-attack or defend-defend strategies. Putnam and Jones (1982) concluded that the bargaining task (grievance case) was particularly conducive to the creation of attack and defend patterns. Based on her research and a review of the bargaining literature, Putnam (1985) concluded that in small groups the dominant interaction pattern is one of equivalent symmetry whereas in negotiation the dominant interaction pattern is one of competitive symmetry. The conclusion that can be reached from these studies is that very little conceptual effort has been devoted to determining what kinds of communication acts prevail during specific time periods in situations characterized by negotiation and bargaining



(Donohue, Diez, & Weider-Hatfield, 1985) and that research on the interaction phases needs more scrutiny (Putnam, 1985).

Poole (1983ab; 1985) adds direction to the needed conceptual and research effort by calling for studies of how the issues and decisions involved in a task effect the sequencing of interaction rather than more studies on the phases groups must pass through to arrive at decision points. Poole (1983b) views group development as a set of parallel activity strands that evolve simultaneously and interlock in different patterns over time. The activities he proposes are task, relational, topical, control strategies, and conflict management. These activities are best studied by tracing each 'strand' over time and observing the differing degrees of association and coordination between the strands. It appears then that the way to proceed is to begin where the small group decision making theorists began.

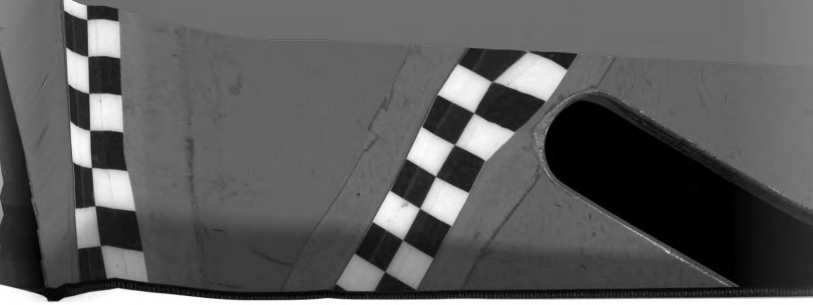
For years small group researchers have attempted to discover or create a classification scheme capable of accounting for systematic differences in the communication behaviors in groups (e.g., Bales 1951, 1979; Fisher 1980). These research efforts began with the systematic observation and classification of the communication acts that occurred during small group meetings. Mediation researchers, then, should begin where the small group researchers began; observation and classification of the communication acts

that occur during mediation sessions.

The clearest practical implication of this research for the practitioners of divorce mediation is that the mediators who eventually use higher levels of interaction management than the parents are able to structure the discussions in a more productive direction. Two remaining questions are 'What aspects of the discussion is interaction management used to structure?' and 'What are the best linguistic and conversational forms for the mediators to use?"

The differences in the use of interaction management when mediations result in agreement or disagreement, could be due to the mediators' use of interaction management to refocus the discussion on the issue of custody or what is best for the children. When the husbands and wives come to mediation intent on pushing for their own disparate goals they are more likely to use higher levels of interaction management to try to gain a tactical advantage in managing the interaction. If the mediators can gain control of the interaction, they can refocus the discussion on an overriding goal like reaching an agreement that is best for the children. The mediators can devote their time to gathering information, clarifying issues and other tasks that help move the couple closer to agreement.

Although the mediators must rely heavily on interaction management techniques, there are also pressures operating on the mediators to keep the exchanges civil and provide an example for the parents of cooperative language use (Blades,



1984). It may be that the practitioners, who are more successful, then, are those who have learned to do things like interrupting while using a directive form that signals the right of the disputant to refuse; for example, "May I interrupt here?" More work would need to be done, then, to discover how practitioners can balance these two demands successfully and the effects of this balance on the outcomes of disputatious situations. Again, the further development and use of an interaction management coding scheme that is more sensitive to the occurrence of the linguistic and conversational features within a stream of talk should provide more useful results.

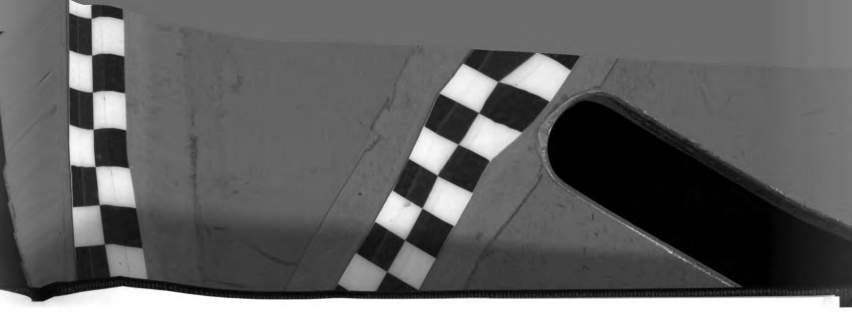
These results would also suggest that the difference between successful and unsuccessful outcomes lies partly in the amount of time the practitioners must spend in managing the interaction as compared to time spent on other tasks - clarifying, gathering information - that help move the disputants toward an agreement. More importantly, when the mediators must spend an inordinate amount of time and energy managing the interaction, an agreement is less likely to be reached. Further investigation needs to be conducted, then, into the use of particular behaviors by the disputants across time in the interaction.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The primary purpose of this research was to test certain hypotheses about the interrelated effects of Weinstein's Theory of Interpersonal Tactics and the strategy of interaction management in disputatious social situations like divorce mediation. These results provide support for the interaction theory presented in this study and also have practical implications for practitioners of divorce mediation.

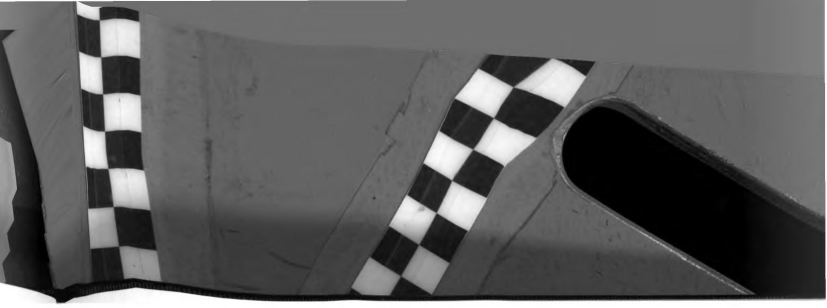
In support of Weinstein's ITT, the results of this study indicate that when the participants pursue their goals of reaching a favorable agreement in disputatious situations, the strategy of interaction management is used to manage the structure of the interaction so the discussion is supportive of the participants' goals. In support of interaction management, its use was found to play a primary but not unequivocal role in disputatious social interactions like divorce mediation. More specifically, the overall use of interaction management is not as important to the success of the mediation sessions as the use of the interaction management between the participants. Successful mediation sessions are more likely when the mediators, as opposed to



the parents, eventually manage the interaction. The mediators and the wives vie for management of the interaction when the mediation sessions are successful and all the participants vie for management of the interaction when the mediation sessions are unsuccessful. The one clear recommendation that can be made to mediation practitioners, based on these results, is that mediators must manage the interaction in order to provide the structure that moves the parents toward agreement.

Since this is an initial investigation it is not surprising that this research raises as many questions as it answers. The most puzzling results of this dissertation are that the husbands use lower levels of interaction management in the successful as opposed to the unsuccessful mediation sessions. One possible explanation for these results is that in successful mediation sessions the husbands have given up trying to manage the interaction because they have problems participating or the discussion is favorable to their position. Participation problems can be discounted as an explanation since Donohue and Weider-Hatfield (1986) found that the husbands, wives, and mediators all talked equivalent amounts across the divorce mediation sessions. Further work needs to be done to determine if the discussion of the issues is favorable to the husbands' preferred agreements.[3]

The other equivocal result in this dissertation is that the use of interaction management did not follow the phasic



model of development as predicted. It was suggested that a phasic model might not be as appropriate for negotiating or bargaining groups as it was for decision-making groups. More work needs to be done at a descriptive level to discover the sequential patterns of communication in negotiation and bargaining contexts.

Future research on the strategic use of interaction management in disputatious social interactions should proceed in three clear directions. First, several refinements are needed in the interaction management coding scheme; closer attention to context and the scaling of linguistic and conversational features within the stream of talk. Second, several aspects of the issues that are raised in the mediation sessions need to be investigated; identification of the issues and whose agreement they support, how the issues are dealt with and by whom, and the eventual fate of the issues. This investigation should shed light on the patterning of the levels of interaction management used between the participants.

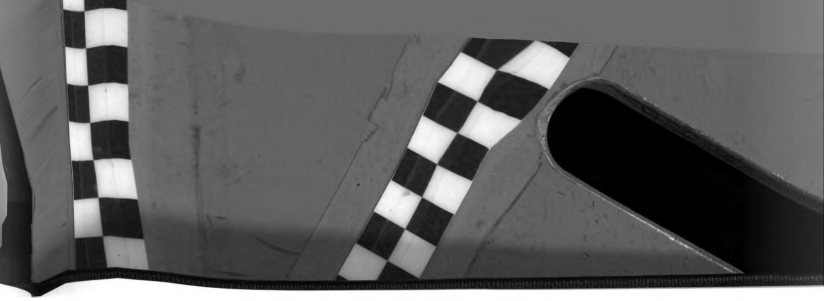
Lastly, work needs to begin on the observation and classification of the communication acts that occur in mediation sessions so that the interaction sequence can be investigated.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Weinstein's Theory of Interpersonal Tactics was abbreviated as ITT because the use of the abbreviations which result from the original title (TIT) produced more titters and snickers than serious consideration of the theory.

[2] There is a relationship between negotiation, bargaining, and mediation such that the work in one of the areas can inform on work in the other areas. According to Rubin and Brown (1975) negotiating and bargaining are synonymous terms; process whereby two or more parties with divergent aims, motives, or interests attempt to settle what each shall give and take or perform and receive, in a transaction between them. Divorce mediation, in turn, is a dispute resolution process for parting spouses in which they negotiate the terms of their divorce settlement with the assistance of an impartial third party, the mediator (Bishop, 1984).

[3] Research in both of these areas has already begun. Stahle and Burrell (1987) have investigated the subtle ways that the mediator can use legislative episodes to encourage or discourage the consideration of an issue in divorce mediation. Donohue and his colleagues are currently at work analyzing the issues that occur in divorce mediation.



APPENDIX A

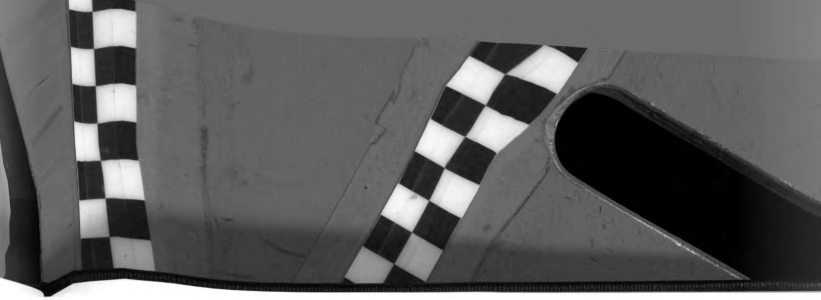
MEDIATION AGREEMENT 12/10/81

Robert and Joan Smith having separated for eighteen months now wish to arrange their affairs and to file for divorce. They therefore agree:

1. That they shall continue to act together as parents to their three children: Ann (17), Roger (16), and Susan (15).

   Both parents shall continue to be involved in all major decisions regarding their children's lives and wellbeing; these decisions shall include, but not be limited to, decisions regarding health and dental care, education, holidays and vacations.

2. The children shall continue to reside as they currently live: the two girls with their mother and the son with the father.
3. The children shall continue to visit freely with both parents at their, the children's discretion. The children, being of sufficient age, will be responsible for letting their parents know where they are.
4. Both parents will continue to carry the children on their work related health insurance policies.
5. Both parents will be pay equally for the children's



APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

CODING INSTRUCTIONS

COLUMN 1 Enter the number of the transcript on the first line of every page. It's not necessary to repeat it for every line on the same page.

COLUMN 2 Enter the utterance number, even if there is no interaction management tactic used in a given utterance.

001 M: I'll begin by explaining why you're here

COLUMNS 3,11,21,30 At the beginning of each major group of language characteristics is a column marked A/R. For each item that is coded, record the number that corresponds with the speaker to addressee/referent of the item as follows:

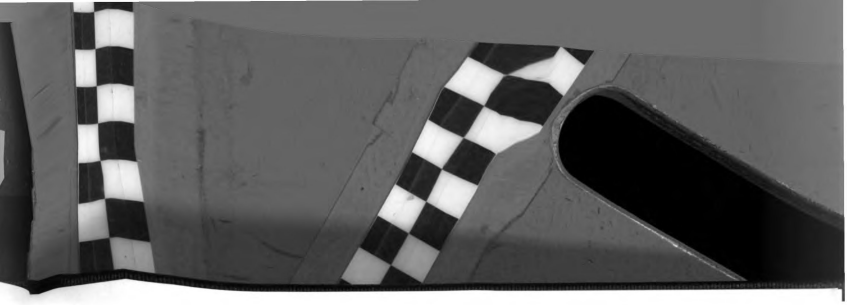
1. M to/about H
2. M to/about W
3. H to/about M
4. H to/about W
5. W to/about M
6. W to/about H

You may need to use several lines - one per addressee or referent - for each utterance you code.

For example:
002 H: Shelly, I think Mr. Jones can

You would need one line to record the wife's name (Shelly) and the (I think) directed to her and another to record the reference to the mediator (Mr. Jones).

OTHER COLUMNS Under each of the major language characteristics, the specific characteristics to be coded are abbreviated and listed following the order in the coding manual. For each utterance record the number of times



a given characteristic occurred in addressing or in reference to one of the parties in the interaction.

Select the characteristics to be coded in the transcript. **TREAT EACH CHARACTERISTIC AS A SEPARATE CHARACTERISTIC TO BE CODED.**

A. For example,

003 H: Excuse me, I think I can handle this.

(Excuse me) would be coded as one characteristic
(I think) would be coded as one characteristic

B. For example,

004 M: Let me just interject here

(Just) would be coded as a separate characteristic. AND
The whole sentence would be coded as a separate characteristic.

Some of the conversational organizing devices are Interruptions and gaining the floor. They are indicated by lines of utterances enclosed in a bracket. TREAT EACH BRACKET AS A SEPARATE UNIT TO BE CODED SKIPPING THE FIRST LINE IN THE BRACKET.

005 M: All right now What kind of um, controls would you uh put on it what uh

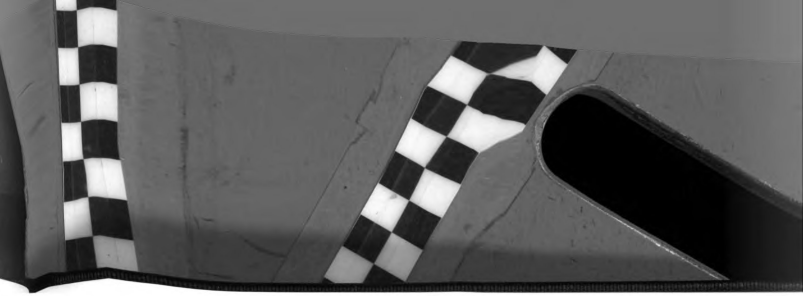
006 W: specified hours and specified days ((PAUSE)) and a telephone call to

007 M: How frequent would that be

008 W: confirm

009 M: What days what hours

BEFORE YOU BEGIN TO CODE: Read through the transcript and become familiar with the (H)usband, (W)ife, and (M)ediator and their case. This is the only way you'll be able to decide if a reference to (George) is the H's name and gets recorded as such or the M's name.



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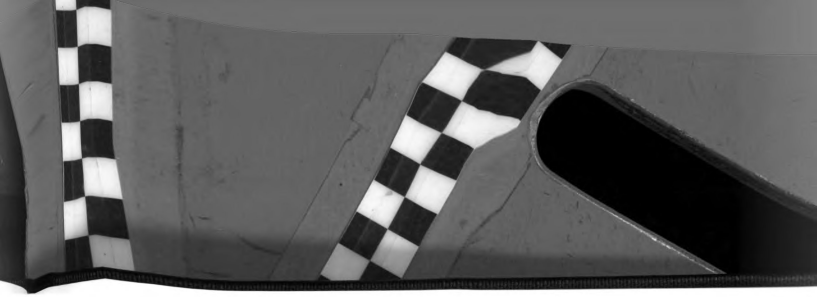

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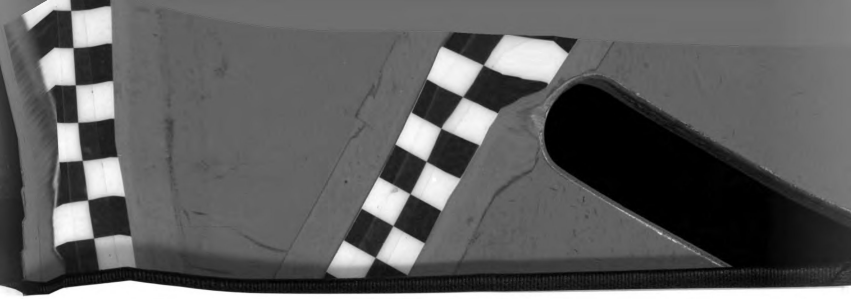

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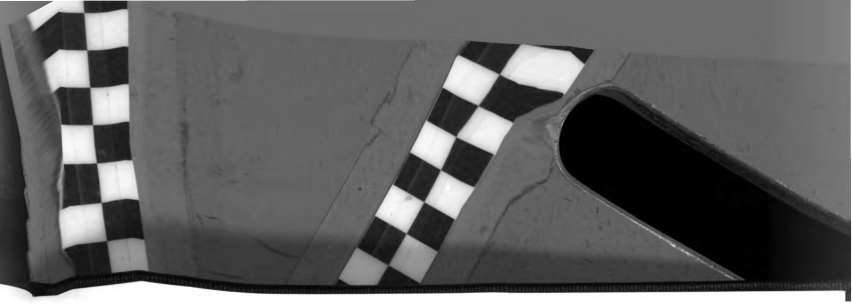

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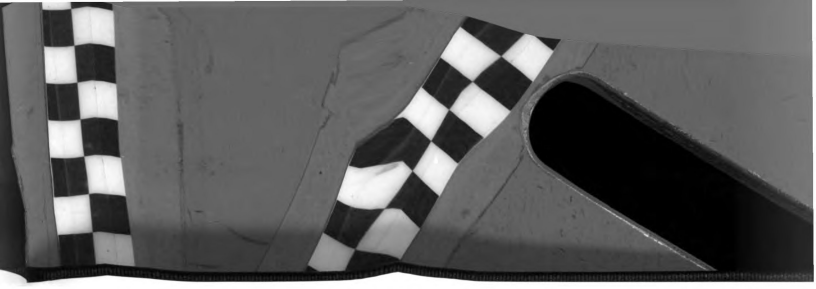

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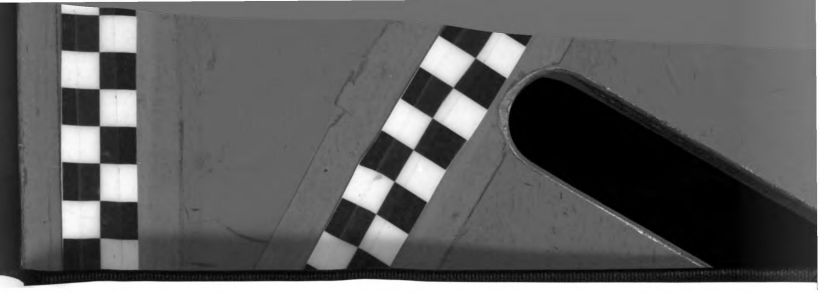

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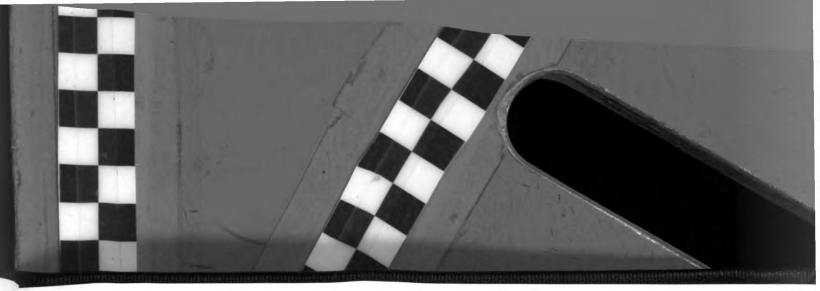

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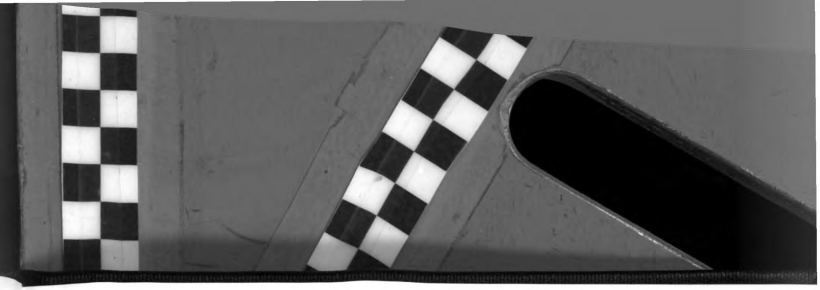

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