

The VIOLIN Project

Empirical Approaches to Verbal Violence against Migrants in German Institutions

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OBJECTIVES

1. To understand how verbal violence (VV) occurs, especially in an indirect way in institutional contexts
2. To explain the relationships and differences between VV and other related phenomena such as verbal aggression (VA) and social discrimination
3. To demonstrate through interdisciplinary work that these emerge from social interaction and interpretation processes

TOOLS

1. Theoretical framework about verbal violence and aggression (Bonnachi 2017, Havryliv 2017), as well as the Speech Act Theory (Searle 1975, 2012)
2. Collection data with the Critical Incidents Technique (Butterfield et al. 2005): interviews with Spanish native speakers from Latin American countries who live in Germany
3. Abductive coding process according to the Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM, Glaser 2010, Strübing 2014)
4. Narrative Analysis (De Fina 2021) for the analysis of structuring functions within the critical incidents

[Click here for an example of the difference between VV and VA](#)

CODING

WHAT do participants perceive as problematic?

Using MaxQDA, a software for qualitative analysis, we code segments about actions, situations, or aspects of specific phenomena that the interviewees considered problematic. This way, we built a map about the challenges that migrants face.

[Click here to see map with codes](#)

IN WHAT CONTEXTS did these experiences occur?

Sections of critical incidents are marked as a large code, memos are added to summarize the main features of the setting, and these incidents are organized in subgroups.

[Click here to see map with codes](#)

WHAT EFFECTS did they report within their narratives?

Segments about effects are coded and distributed in one of the following groups: one referred to inner sphere/states (EMOTIONS) and other about consequences in practical sphere (DISADVANTAGES, beyond speech acts).

[Click here to see map with codes](#)

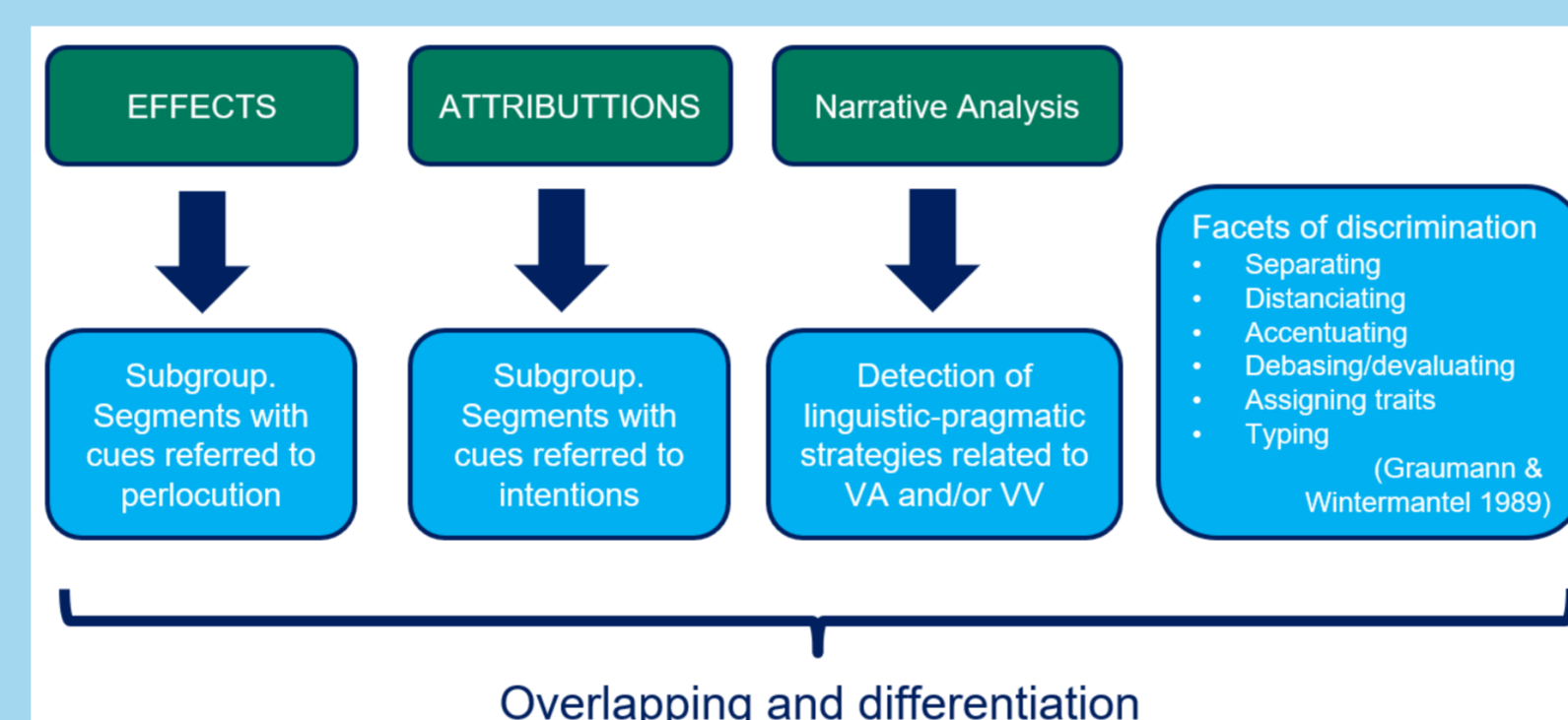
WHAT ATTRIBUTIONS AND/OR INTERPRETATIONS are made about behaviour?

We coded segments in which motivations, possible causes, key factors are perceived as salient and, therefore, mentally organized as relevant.

[Click here to see map with codes](#)

DATA INTERPRETATION

Through these coding processes based on the GTM, we identify patterns and make relevant subdivisions within stabilized groups of codes. Parallel coding procedures made by a team of trained students are performed for credibility and for reaching the expected saturation point.



The advantages of these work plans are (1) the conduction of an analysis compatible with other forms of qualitative analysis beyond Linguistics (e.g. our Codebook is the basis for our Verbal Violence scale, forthcoming), (2) our findings are based on empirical data, (3) and the perception of VV, VA and/or discrimination can be better understood if the interplay between interpretation and social interactions has a key role in the study.

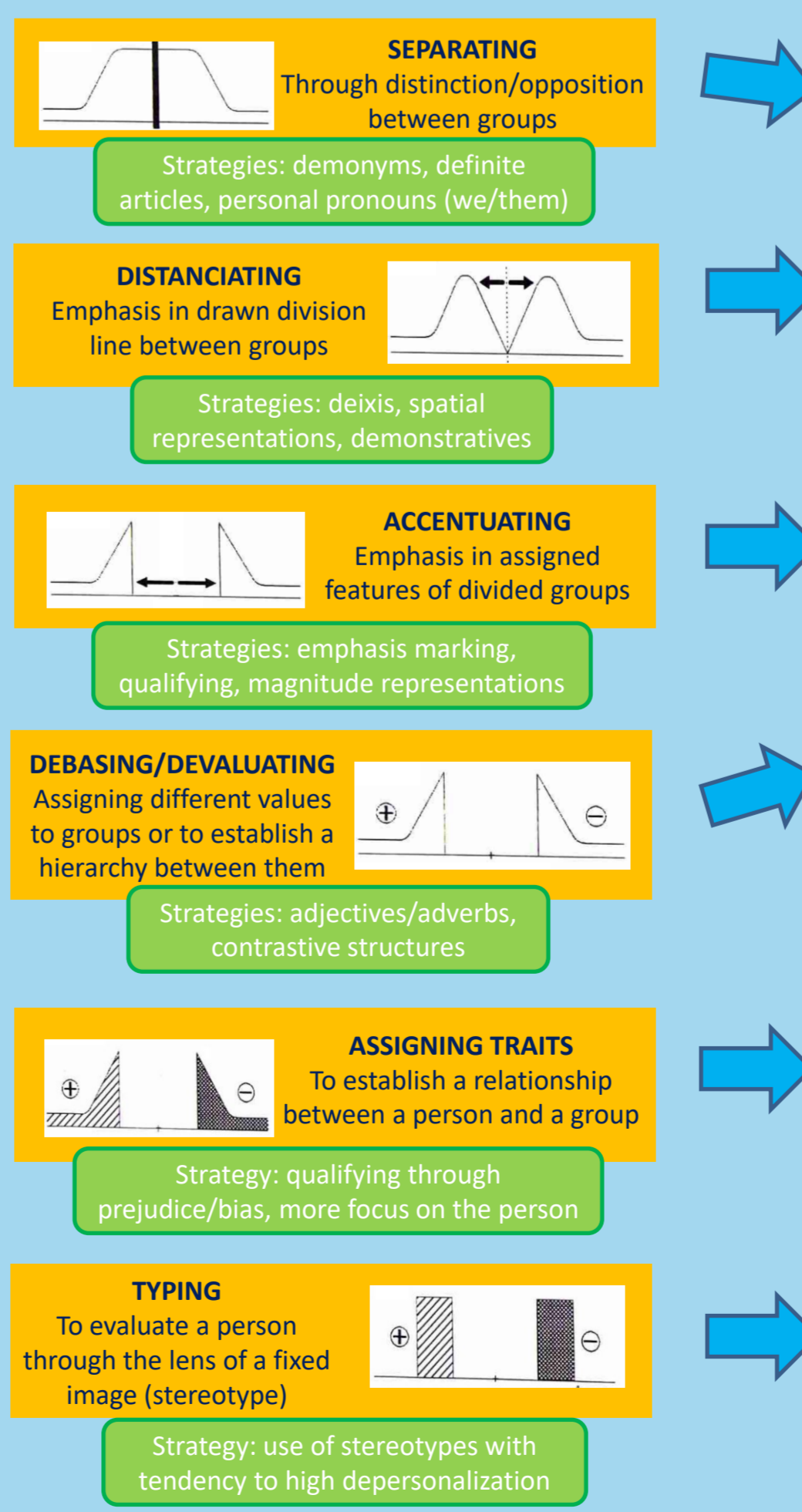
The Speech Act Theory was used as a starting point to analyze the roles of performative (verbal) acts and paraverbal cues as well as face-damaging and face-protection (Goffman 1967) in social interactions, specifically those characterized by power imbalances. For these purposes, it is also necessary to distinguish between VV, VA, and social discrimination. We illustrated this point using the selection of coded and analyzed extracts shown below.

EXAMPLES

FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION (Graumann & Wintermantel 1989)

Example (sp)	Translation (en)	#
yo creo que ella en verdad no quería ayudarme [la funcionaria] / porque incluso la persona de Human Resources que me ayudó con el trámite y todo eso ehm me dijo como / "ella está haciendo todo lo posible para que te vayas" / o sea sí lo estoy sintiendo yo	I think she [the representative] didn't really want to help me / because even the person from Human Resources who helped me with the procedure and everything eh told me like / "she's doing everything possible to make you leave" / so, yes, I am feeling that too	9
yo le dije: "pero yo te entiendo el alemán" / y me dijo: "tú no entiendes, yo tengo que hablar con tu esposo, porque tu esposo es alemán" / o sea ya lo... estaba como... como enojada de que yo no era alemana y había tenido un incidente / como si [fue] mi culpa yo haber caído a las vías del tren / entonces le dije: "bueno mi esposo está afuera / habla a mi esposo y habla con él" / "hasta que yo acabe mi trabajo le voy a decir a tu esposo"	I told her: "but I understand you when you speak German" / and she told me: "you don't understand, I must speak with your husband because he's German" / so... she was like... upset because I'm not German and I had an incident / as if it was my fault that I fell on the rail tracks / then I told her: "well, my husband is outside / talk to my husband and talk with him" / "until I'm finished... then I will tell your husband"	8
porque siempre dice: "es que el problema contigo es... no es un... no es personal, es un problema del idioma / y siempre le echa la culpa a la forma en la que yo hablo alemán / [...] incluso ha insinuado muchas veces en TODAS las discusiones que hemos tenido que ehm / que deberíamos de ver si hay ALGUIEN que pueda mediar / que pueda traducir lo que yo digo en español a lo... al alemán"	because she always says: "the problem with you is not... is not... is not personal, it's a problem with the language / and she always blames the way I speak German / [...] she has even insinuated a lot of times, in every discussion we had that eh / that we should check if there is SOMEONE who can mediate / who can translate what I say in Spanish... to German"	7
pues que... o sea, cuando llegué la verdad es que estaba un poquito nerviosa porque no sabía / como yo pensé que me iban a dejar [quitar] mi trámite / y pues yo no quería pagar meses en los cuales yo no iba a estar aquí / y no sabía realmente cómo preguntarle / como "oye, me voy a ir, ¿puedo quitar el contrato?" / entonces al principio como me trabé / y ya ella como que desde ahí ya dijo como / "ah, ella no sabe hablar bien alemán, la voy a tratar como se me da la gana" / o sea como que se sintió superior porque ella dominaba más el idioma	well then... so, when I arrived, actually, I was a little nervous because I didn't know / because I thought that they were going to allow me to cancel the contract / and, well, I didn't want to pay for the months I wasn't going to be here / and I didn't really know how to ask / like "hey, I am going to leave, am I allowed to cancel the contract?" / then I stumbled over my own words / and it was like since then she thought / ah, she can speak German well, I'm going to treat her like I want / as if she felt superior because she could speak the language well	6
yo todavía tenía, en ese momento, yo todavía tenía, yo todavía tenía puesto mi anillo de matrimonio / y entonces yo le estaba... yo estaba hablando con él [police officer] / yo le a... / y entonces él me volvió a ver el anillo / y me dijo: "y si usted lo que quiere es quedarse en Alemania / por esa situación le aconsejo que vaya a su país" / había unos alemanes ahí / le volvimos a preguntar / "pero, bueno, dénos un escrito que... que yo vine que... que yo vine a contar lo que pasó" / y fue que no, que no nos ayuda y no, no lo quisó dar	at the moment, I had yet, I had yet my ring / and then I was... I was talking to him [police officer] / and then he look at my ring / and said to me: "but what you want is to stay in Germany " because of this situation I recommend you to return to your country" / some Germans were there / we ask him again / "but, provide us a desk... because I came here... came to tell you what happened / and the no, he didn't want to help and no, he didn't want to provide one desk as space to make a report of family violence "	6
y poco a poco me fui dando cuenta que ni siquiera tenían un interés / para llamar [the Police Station] para corroborar los datos ni nada [Police control, interpreted as racial profiling]. Lines below in the transcription, the interviewee says that the agents intended to give him a hard time [Link to PDF article with narrative analysis of this incident (pp. 95-105)]	and progressively I noticed that they didn't have interest / in calling the [the Police Station] to check my data or anything [Police control, interpreted as racial profiling]. Lines below in the transcription, the interviewee says that the agents intended to give him a hard time	1
		9

of interviews = 52, # of critical incidents (CI) blocks = 190
 # of extern macrostructures (not related to a unique CI) = 32



#	Example (sp)	Translation (en)
18	ehm me sentí un poquito como decepcionada / no sé si es como frustrada / es más bien frustración / porque me sentí como que me hicieron a un lado / y tal vez... tal vez, eh... como si... como si ella [the representative] tuviera un prejuicio contra mí	ehm I felt a little disappointed / I don't know... like frustrated / actually frustration / because I felt as if they pushed me aside / and maybe... maybe, eh... as if... as if she [the representative] had a prej... a prejudice against me
11	el hombre este [the representative] se levanta / y empieza a los gritos a decirme: "acá se habla solo alemán / si quiere que... si quiere que le ayude tiene que traer una persona que hable alemán" / a lo que yo lo miro y le digo "gracias" en alemán, "dankeschön" / y me voy / estaba totalmente indignada y frustrada y enojada	ehm I felt a little outraged / and began to yell me: "everyone must speak only German here" / if you want that... if you want my help you must bring someone here that speaks German / so I looked at him and said "thank you" in German, "dankeschön" / I left / I was totally outraged and frustrated and upset
11	yo me saca de una clase en la que estaba yo ayudando / y me sienta a hablar y me dice: "¡aquí quien decide quién se queda no eres tú / aquí quien decide hablar y me dice: "no eres tú!" / [he replied] "no es... no es... la señora, la del del" / who decides here about your contract is not you! / [the replied] "but... Geschäftsführer... / "¡yo! / [porque es una decisión pedagógica y quien but... the woman, from the managing department... / "but ME! / decide quién se queda y quien se va soy YO!" / y le digo: "¡WOW, perdón, yo leaves is ME!" / and I said: "WOW, sorry, I didn't know" [surprised] / I signed the contract with this other person / because of that I went to her / I didn't have a clue!	she took me from a class where I was assisting / and she sat me for / and she says: "here who decides who stays or who leaves is not you! / tu contrato no eres tú!" / [he replied] "no es... no es... la señora, la del del" / who decides here about your contract is not you! / [the replied] "but... Geschäftsführer... / "¡yo! / [porque es una decisión pedagógica y quien but... the woman, from the managing department... / "but ME! / decide quién se queda y quien se va soy YO!" / y le digo: "¡WOW, perdón, yo leaves is ME!" / and I said: "WOW, sorry, I didn't know" [surprised] / I signed the contract with this other person / because of that I went to her / I didn't have a clue!
11	y bueno sí, la señora me trató super mal / y yo salí casi que llorando obviamente / porque pues era como mi primera... mi primer contacto con una oficina así [Office for Migration]	and well yeah, the woman treat me very badly / and I went out and was about to cry , obviously / because, well, that was like my first time... my first contact with this kind of office [Office for Migration]
10	fue un momento muy muy incómodo / y la señorita [representative] trató... me hablaba de una forma como muy lenta / como si... si no entendiera yo el alemán / cuando yo llegué y me presentó en... en su idioma, bien, sin problemas / y tenía yo alguien que me acompañara / sentí que me trató... lo tomé yo un poquito personal / sentí que me trató como alguien incapaz de poderme comunicar con ella / y ya después no me hablaba a mí / no sé, fue un momento muy incómodo	it was a very uncomfortable moment / the woman [representative] tried... she talked to me very slowly / as if... as if I couldn't understand German / as I arrived and introduced myself in... in her language, everything was fine / and someone else accompanied me [the husband] / I felt as if she treated me... I took it a little personal / I felt as if she treated me as someone unable to communicate with her / and after that she wasn't talking with me anymore / I don't know, it was a very uncomfortable moment
1	un día una persona incluso me dijo / cuando me preguntó: "¿cuáles son tus planes a futuro?" / yo yo le comenté "pues, quedarme en Alemania, quiero después de estudiar seguir viviendo aquí" / y esta persona me dijo: "ah, no te preocupes, tú no vas a tener ningún problema para... / para quedarte seguro encuentras a un alemán, te casas y ya tienes tu residencia permanente" / y eso me dolió en lo más profundo (laughter) / porque yo vine aquí como una persona educada (laughter) / no vine aquí... a quitarle nada nadie, ¿no? / entonces sentí como si... si yo (estuviera) acercándome de los alemanes / incluso del... de la sociedad alemana / lo es nunca fue mi intención	one day, someone even told me / when I was asked: "which plans do I have for the future?" / and I answered: "well, staying in Germany, after my studies I want to stay here" / and this person told me: "ah, don't worry, you won't have any problems to... / to stay here you will surely find a German, marry him and then you will have your residence permit" / and that hurt me deeply (laughter) / because I came here as a qualified person (laughter) / I didn't come here to take someone something away / then I felt as if... as if I was taking advantage of the Germans / even of... of the German society / which was never my intention
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