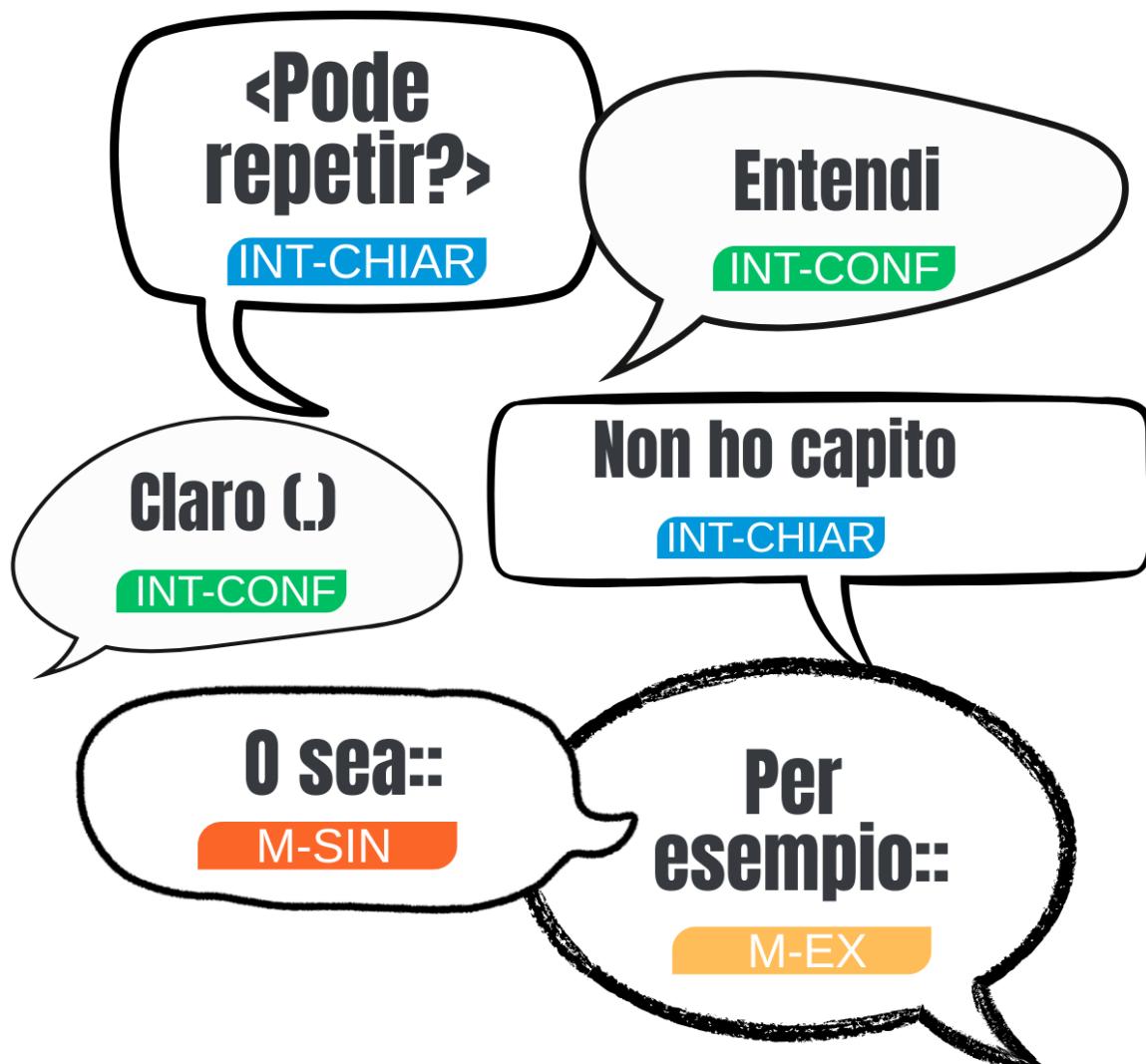




THE OIIC ANNOTATION SYSTEM

Observing Oral Interactions in InterComprehension



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The OIIC Annotation System

This report presents an annotation system applied to Oral Interactions (OI) in intercomprehension (IC) within academic and disciplinary contexts (see Cervini, Zucchi 2022). The aim of the system is to capture the full range of linguistic, pragmatic, and multimodal strategies employed by participants in oral interactions to understand each other, and namely to negotiate meaning, manage comprehension problems, and co-construct understanding across languages.

Building on existing models of interactional analysis and intercomprehension frameworks (Andrade et al. 2015; De Carlo et al. 2015; Varonis, Gass 1985), the proposed system integrates multiple dimensions to provide a comprehensive view of plurilingual communication in action, without claiming to be exhaustive.

Intercomprehension is a form of communication in which each interlocutor uses their own language and understands that of the other, without necessarily having learnt/studied it before. Nowadays, most researchers propose the term *interproduction* to indicate:

the linguistic and communicative competence that is activated in contexts of plurilingual interaction. It enables speakers to use the language they prefer and make themselves understood by their interlocutor(s), taking into account their common linguistic and cultural repertoire, so as to allow the co-construction of meaning (Capucho 2018: 161).

The aim of this annotation system is to provide the scientific community and students with a tool that could be usefully employed in similar contexts of interactional data analysis. For further information on the development of the annotation system and on the research in which it has been used, see Cervini, Zucchini 2024; 2025; Cervini, Paone 2024; 2025a; 2025b.

The annotation scheme is articulated in 5 levels:

1. Incomprehension sequences
2. Lexicon and lexical strategies
3. Conversational dominance
4. Pragmatic and interactional dimension
5. Non-verbal dimension

Table 1 offers a summary of the annotation levels and sublevels, indicating for each phenomenon the corresponding label¹.

Table 1 – Annotation levels and sublevels

Level	Sublevel	Phenomenon	Label
1. INCOMPREHENSION SEQUENCES		Resolved	INC-R
		Not resolved	INC-NR
2. LEXICON AND LEXICAL STRATEGIES	2.1 Lexicon	Specialized vocabulary	L-SPEC
		Idioms	L-IDIOMS
	2.2 Lexical strategies	Calques	L-CALCO
		Code-switching	L-CODE SWITCHING
		Anglicism	L-ANG
		Translation	L-TRAD
	3.1 Participatory dominance	Competitive overlap	P-COM-OVERLAP
		Cooperative overlap	P-COOP-OVERLAP
		Competitive interruption	P-COM-INTER
		Cooperative interruption	P-COOP-INTER
4. PRAGMATIC AND INTERACTIONAL DIMENSION	4.1 Interactional	Asking for clarification	INT-CHIAR
		Verifying interlocutor's understanding	INT-COMP
		Confirming understanding	INT-CONF
		Expressing agreement	INT-ACC
		Expressing disagreement	INT-DIS

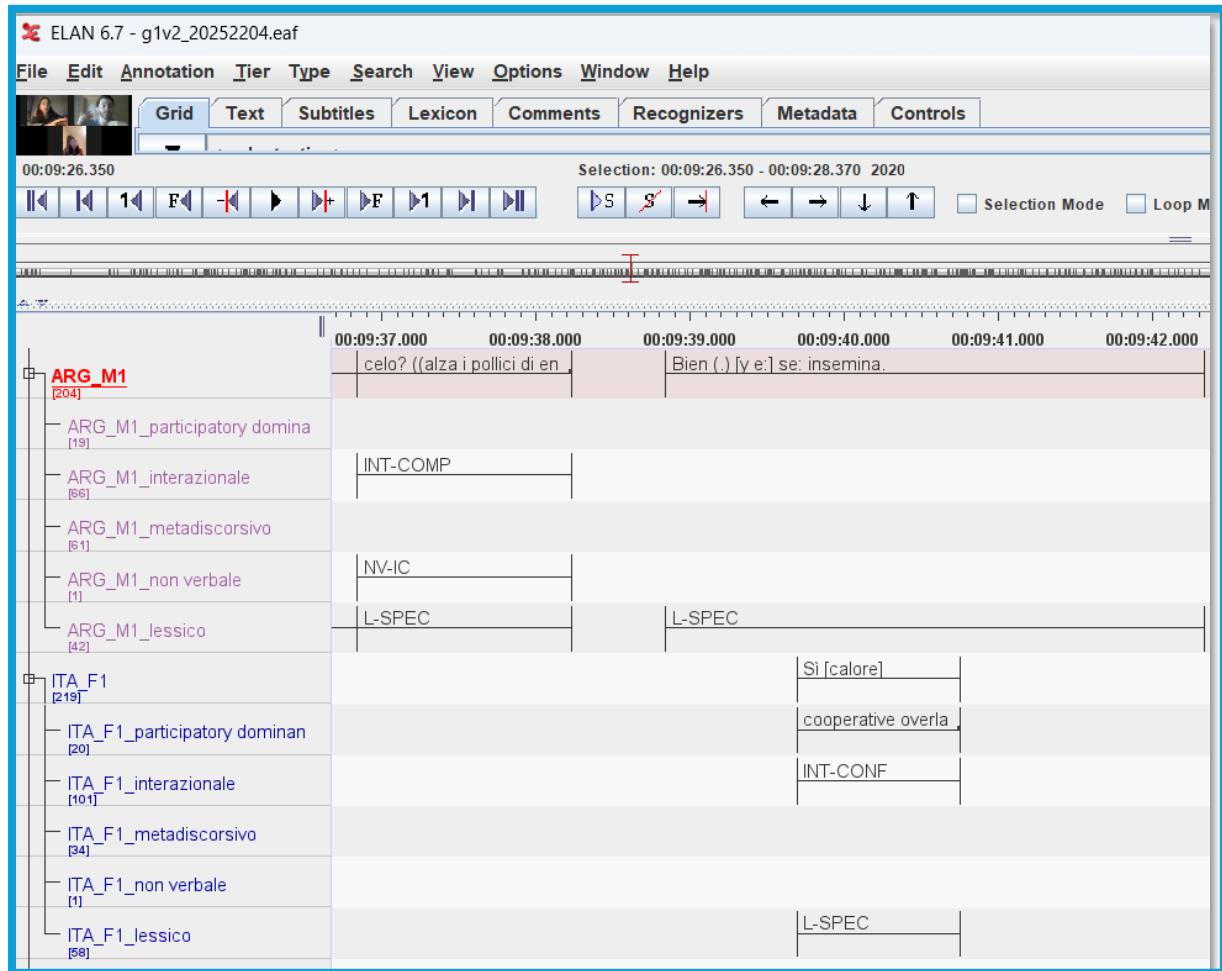
¹ The labels used in the annotation scheme are largely derived from Italian terminology, with occasional use of English terms.

4.2 Metadiscursive		Verifying interlocutor's agreement	INT-VER-ACC
		Encouraging act	INT-INC
		Evaluating act	INT-VAL
	5. NON-VERBAL DIMENSION	Introducing	M-INTRO
		Closing or summarizing	M-RECAP
		Reformulating by synonym or paraphrase	M-SIN
		Reformulating by expansion or exemplification	M-EX
		Metalinguistic reflections	M-META
		Slowing speech rate	NV-RALL
		Emphasis/stressing words or syllables	NV-ENF
		Onomatopea	NV-ONO
		Iconic gesture	NV-IC
		Deictic gesture	NV-D

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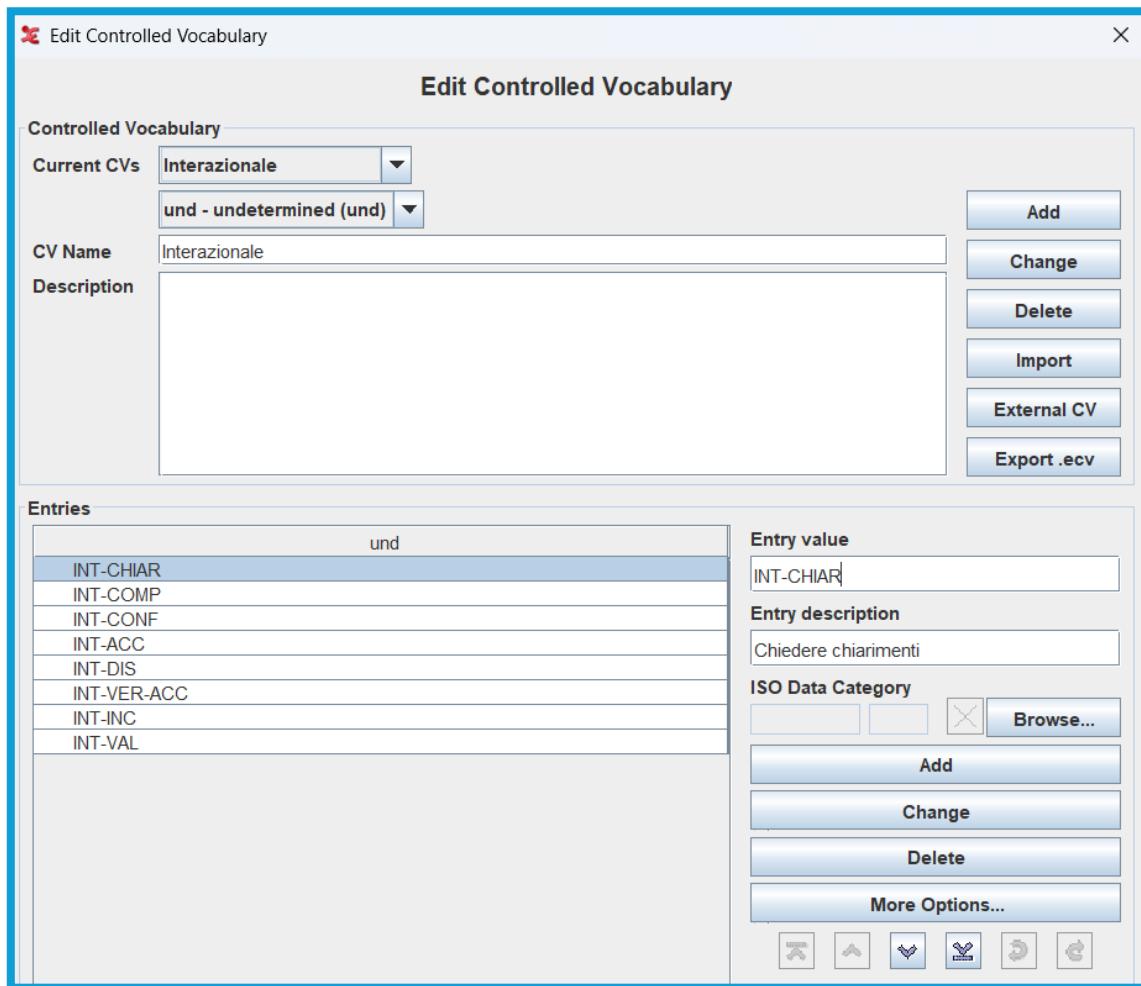
The annotation scheme was operationalized in ELAN through a hierarchical tier structure (see Figure 1) and the systematic use of controlled vocabularies (see Figure 2).

Figure 1- Screenshot of the ELAN interface showing the hierarchical organization of speaker tiers and dependent annotation tiers, with examples of coded phenomena.



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Figure 2- ELAN controlled vocabulary editor showing the interactional sublevel, with the set of predefined labels used to annotate interactional moves



In the following sections, the annotation tiers are described in detail and illustrated with examples extracted from the OIIC corpus², with English translations provided in the footnotes³.

To represent phenomena typical of spoken interaction, selected transcription conventions (Jefferson 2004) were adopted. In particular:

- overlapping speech is indicated by square brackets [];
- a slowing down of speech rate is marked by angle brackets < >, while acceleration is indicated by > <;

² The first release of the OIIC corpus is available on NoSketchEngine at this address: <https://bellatrix.sslmit.unibo.it/noske/public/#dashboard?corpname=oiic>

³ These translations are intended solely as an aid to make the content more accessible to readers who are not familiar with the languages involved and do not aim to provide stylistically polished or fully idiomatic renderings. Given the nature of intercomprehension interaction, which often involves simplified or non-standard linguistic structures, some of these features may also be reflected in the English translations. We therefore ask readers to excuse any infelicities of form.

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- a hyphen - marks a truncated word;
- vowel lengthening is represented by colons (::);
- rising intonation is indicated by a final question mark ?;
- transcriber comments, such as ([laughs]), appear in double parentheses;
- pauses longer than one second are annotated in round brackets with their duration in seconds (e.g. (1.2));
- finally, the symbol xx indicates an unintelligible segment.

Level 1- Incomprehension sequences

Sequences of incomprehension are stretches of interaction in which understanding is not immediate and misunderstandings arise, making it necessary for participants to negotiate meaning in order to achieve mutual comprehension (see Cervini, Paone 2024). To analyze such sequences, the annotation scheme draws on the model of negotiation of meaning proposed by Varonis and Gass (1985), which has been widely applied in intercomprehension research (see Garbarino, Leone 2022).

According to this model, each negotiation sequence consists of **four functional moves**:

1. **Trigger** – the element that causes the negotiation to begin, typically a lexical item or utterance that leads to incomprehension/misunderstanding;
2. **Indicator** – the move that signals a lack of comprehension;
3. **Response** – the speaker's attempt to address and resolve the comprehension problem;
4. **Reaction to response** – the phase in which the listener confirms understanding or indicates that the problem persists.

These moves are used as reference points in the annotation to trace how participants identify, manage, and resolve comprehension difficulties during multilingual interactions. Each sequence, which is annotated from the trigger to the reaction to response, is coded as **resolved** or **not resolved**, depending on its outcome.

➤ A sequence is coded as **resolved** when the indicator is followed by one or more responses that lead to comprehension being successfully re-established (example 1).

(1)⁴

ITA_F_2 H. voi avete invece il concetto di stabulazione fissa? [TRIGGER]

ARG_M ¿Fissa? [INDICATOR]

ITA_F2 Ehm stabulazione ehm ferma (.) o stabulazione (.) cioè quando gli animali invece sono legati sono legati:: sono legati in un posto fisso (.) devono stare lì e solo lì (.) No? [RESPONSE]

ARG_M Ah que están solo en un corral ahí fijo [REACTION TO RESPONSE]

ITA_F_2 Esatto (.) Avete?

ARG_M Sí sí sí (.) Hay algunos establecimientos así

10

⁴ (1)

ITA_F_2 H. do you have the concept of a tie-stall system? [TRIGGER]

ARG_M Tie-stall? [INDICATOR]

ITA_F_2 Uh the tie-stall system uh or tied housing, that is when the animals are tied, they're tied they're tied in a fixed place (.) they have to stay there and only there (.) right? [RESPONSE]

ARG_M Ah so they're kept in a fixed pen tied in place. [REACTION TO RESPONSE]

ITA_F_2 Exactly (.) do you have that?

ARG_M Yes yes yes (.) there are some farms like that

- ➊ A sequence is coded as **not resolved** for instance when the interlocutor fails to signal a lack of comprehension and responds incoherently (see example 2), or when the speaker's explanation is insufficiently clear, resulting in the interlocutor's continued misunderstanding.

(2)⁵

BRA_3 Aliás vocês acharam interessante isso do pessoal ir na barbearia e comer e beber lá dentro?

ITA_3 Okay

⁵ (2)

BRA_3 By the way did you find it interesting this thing about people going to the barbershop and eating and drinking inside?

ITA_3 Okay



Level 2- Lexicon and lexical strategies

The lexical level includes phenomena related to vocabulary choice and lexical complexity that may affect comprehension in multilingual interactions. This level captures, in particular, the use of specialized terms, idiomatic expressions and anglicisms that can potentially trigger misunderstanding or require negotiation (see Table 2).

Table 2- Lexicon and lexical strategies

2- LEXICON AND LEXICAL STRATEGIES	2.1 Lexicon	Specialized vocabulary	L-SPEC
		Idioms	L-IDIOMS
	2.2 Lexical strategies	Calques	L-CALCO
		Code-switching	L-CODE SWITCHING
		Anglicism	L-ANG
		Translation	L-TRAD

2.1- Lexicon

- ➊ Examples of **specialized terms** include domain-specific vocabulary such as *stabulazione fissa* (“a tie-stall system”) or *ordeñar* (“to milk”), which may or may not have direct equivalents in the interlocutor’s language.
- ➋ Examples of **idiomatic expressions** include culturally bound phrases *fare le ore piccole* (“to stay up late”), *Tener la mosca detrás de la oreja* (“to be suspicious”), whose figurative meanings may not be immediately transparent across languages.
- ➌ Examples of **anglicisms** include linguistic loans such as *weekend*, *slide*, and *file*, which in most cases have direct equivalents in other languages (e.g. *weekend* – fine settimana, in Italian). This type of anglicism often corresponds to international words that are transparent across many languages, but it can also highlight sociocultural differences in the use of English (e.g. the use of English words in Italian versus French, Spanish, or other Romance languages).

2.2- Lexical strategies

As regards **lexical strategies**, these include:

- **Calques**, that is, lexical units that are created via an item-by-item translation of the source unit (Thomason 2001) (example 3a). This may include cases where the calque results from the borrowing of some phonological and morphological material from the source language (Heath 1984) (example 3b).

(3a)⁶

ARG_M1 No no t- te preguntábamos (.) si tenemos que leerlo **en voz alta**

ITA_F2 Ee::hm vo- volete leggerlo da soli prima (.) o è meglio e:: (.) con **voce:: alta?**
[CALQUE]

(3b)⁷

ARG_F2 En el sentido de que sí (.) de que (2) el **formaje** [CALQUE] se toma una tradición o una receta o una comida (2) se va modificando (2) a lo largo del tiempo

- **Code-switching/code-mixing episodes** are coded when a speaker switches from one language to another within the same conversational turn, or even within the same sentence of that turn (see example 4).

(4)⁸

ITA_F2 Okay (.) e:: non credo che abbiano capito di leggerlo da soli (.) ((ride)) perché ha detto **lénlo ustedes en alta voz**

- **Translation** refers to cases when a speaker translates something he/she has said or someone else has said from one language to another (see example 5).

(5)⁹

ITA_F1 Ho capito (.) **sombra** (.) okay [...] In italiano: (.) è (.) **ombra**

Although calques, code-switching, and translation are not lexical strategies per se, we classified them as such in order to observe their use in clarifying meaning, explaining word meanings, or as an accommodation phenomenon (Giles, Ogay 2007).

13

⁶ (3a)

ARG_M1 No no, we were a- asking you (.) whether we have to read it out loud.

ITA_F2 Uhm do you- do you want to read it on your own first (.) or is it better to read it out loud?

⁷ (3b) ARG_F2 In the sense that yes (.) that (2) the formaje [CALQUE] is taken as a tradition or a recipe or a type of food (2) and it keeps changing (2) over time

⁸ (4) ITA_F2 Okay (.) and I don't think they understood that they should read it on their own (.) ((laughs)) because she said lénlo ustedes en alta voz

⁹ (5) ITA_F1 I got it (.) sombra (.) okay [...] in Italian (.) it is (.) ombra

Level 3- Conversational dominance

Conversational dominance (Itakura 2001) is a multidimensional construct encompassing three dimensions: **sequential**, **participatory**, and **quantitative dominance**. The first dimension refers to a speaker's tendency to control the direction of the interaction and its topic through *initiation moves*, that is, "strong" moves with different illocutionary intents (such as questions, statements, or requests). In our analysis, this dimension is excluded, as we focus instead on the remaining two. This choice stems from the difficulty of applying Itakura's construct, originally developed on the basis of dyadic interactions, to our data, which are characterized by the simultaneous presence of three, four, or more participants. In such a setting, identifying "strong" moves is considerably more complex and, above all, somewhat arbitrary, given the multiple contributions and their effects on other participants.

The **participatory dominance** (see Table 3) dimension refers to the restriction of a speaker's right to participate in the conversation through interruptions and overlaps. In our study, we do not adopt Itakura's distinction between *controlling* and *non-controlling* interruptions, which focuses on the outcome of the interruption (i.e. whether it results in turn yielding). Instead, we differentiate between **competitive** overlaps or interruptions, aimed at preventing the speaker from completing their turn (example 6a), and **cooperative** ones (example 6b), which convey support or engagement (Tannen 1994). Finally, **quantitative dominance** concerns the individual contribution to the interaction in terms of the number of words produced by each participant. This measure is extracted ex post through statistics generated by ELAN or by tools such as NoSketch Engine.

Table 3- Conversational dominance

3- CONVERSATIONAL DOMINANCE	3.1 Participatory dominance	Competitive overlap	P-COM-OVERLAP
		Cooperative overlap	P-COOP-OVERLAP
		Competitive interruption	P-COM-INTER
		Cooperative interruption	P-COOP-INTER

(6a)¹⁰

ARG_M1 No (2) socialmente (.) me parece:: (.) mal.

ITA_F1 Certo

ARG_M1 pero:: (.) también-

ARG_F1 Pero ahí están en el box **[COMPETITIVE INTERRUPTION]**

(6b)¹¹

ITA_F1 i poveri non possono mangiare per esempio tante carne (.) e quindi e:: u- mangiano altre cose (.) c- cioè **[mangiano]**

ITA_F2 [xx] avevi capito cosa aveva detto:: Ana ? **[COOPERATIVE INTERRUPTION]**

¹⁰ **(6a)**

ARG_M1 No (2) socially (.) it seems (.) wrong to me.

ITA_F1 Sure.

ARG_M1 but (.) also-

ARG_F1 But they're in the box there **[COMPETITIVE INTERRUPTION]**

¹¹ **(6b)**

ITA_F1 Poor people can't eat for example a lot of meat (.) and so th- they eat other things (.) th- that is [they eat]

ITA_F2 [xx] had you understood what Ana had said? **[COOPERATIVE INTERRUPTION]**

Level 4- Pragmatic and interactional dimension

The fourth level is divided into two subdimension: 4.1 interactional, that is related to turn management and interactional moves, and 4.2 metadiscursive, that is related to discourse organization.

4.1- Interactional sublevel

As regards the interactional sublevel (see Table 4), this includes a series of moves aimed at monitoring comprehension and managing interaction.

Table 4- Interactional sublevel

1. PRAGMATIC AND INTERACTIONAL DIMENSION	4.1 Interactional	Asking for clarification	INT-CHIAR
		Verifying interlocutor's understanding	INT-COMP
		Confirming understanding	INT-CONF
		Expressing agreement	INT-ACC
		Expressing disagreement	INT-DIS
		Verifying interlocutor's agreement	INT-VER-ACC
		Encouraging act	INT-INC
		Evaluating act	INT-VAL

➤ Asking for clarification

This move can be conveyed verbally or non-verbally (e.g. gestures, facial expressions, prolonged silences). Examples below include different typologies of requests for clarification: **introduced by Wh- words**, like “what?” with interrogative intonation (example 7a), **focalized requests on specific elements** that triggered incomprehension (7b), **requests for repetition of some words** or larger portions of speech (7c); **explicit statements signaling lack of comprehension** (8d), **direct requests for explanation** (7e), **simple repetitions of some words** or expressions used by the interlocutor with interrogative intonation (7f).

- (7a)**¹² Cómo? / Come?
- (7b)** 'Hanno' qué seria?
- (7c)** No scusa (.) puoi ripetere l'ultima cosa? Perché non ho capito tutto.
- (7d)** N-No entendí / Non ho capito
- (7e)** [E:: volete spiegare cosa sono::?]
- (7f)** Estaca?

➊ Verifying interlocutor's comprehension

This move can be expressed both verbally, using different formulations (see examples 8a, 8b and 8c), and non-verbally (8d).

- (8a)**¹³ Barato? (.) Sai cosa vuol dire?
- (8b)** Finora hai capito più o meno (.) di cosa si parla?
- (8c)** Il vitello (2) okay?
- (8d)** Calostro? ((raising both thumbs to make the OK gesture))

➋ Confirming understanding

This move indicates that the interlocutor has successfully grasped the previous contribution. It may be expressed non-verbally, for instance through gestures such as a thumbs-up (9a) and verbally through explicit confirmation, backchannels or acknowledgments (see 9b-9f).

- (9a)**¹⁴ Entendemos ((raising thumbs)) entendemos
- (9b)** Ah ok va bene (.) non avevo sentito bene
- (9c)** Bien bueno

¹²

(7a) What?
(7b) "Hanno" what does that mean?
(7c) No sorry (.) can you repeat the last thing? Because I didn't understand everything
(7d) I- I didn't understand.
(7e) [And do you want to explain what they are?]
(7f) Estaca?

¹³

(8a) Barato? (.) Do you know what it means?
(8b) So far have you more or less understood (.) what we are talking about?
(8c) The calf (2) okay?
(8d) Calostro? ((raising both thumbs to make the OK gesture))

¹⁴

(9a) We understand ((raising thumbs)) we understand
(9b) Ah okay all right (.) I hadn't heard well
(9c) Good well
(9d) Okay
(9e) Yes
(9f) Ah ah

- (9d)** Okay
- (9e)** Sì
- (9f)** Ah ah

➤ Expressing agreement

This move includes verbal or paralinguistic signals through which participants explicitly align with the interlocutor's proposal, interpretation, or opinion. Agreement may be conveyed through full lexical forms (e.g. 10a) or through shorter acknowledgments (10b, 10c), as well as through minimal response tokens (Gardner 2001) (e.g. 10e, 10f), which express alignment without expanding the content.

- (10a)¹⁵** Sono d'accordo
- (10b)** Va bene
- (10c)** Perfetto
- (10d)** Okay
- (10e)** Eh sì
- (10f)** Mh mh

➤ Expressing disagreement

This move encompasses verbal strategies through which participants explicitly or implicitly signal misalignment with the interlocutor's statement, proposal, or interpretation. Disagreement may be expressed in a direct and unmitigated form (e.g. 11a), through contrastive markers (e.g. *pero*, 11b), or by offering an alternative perspective that reframes or corrects the preceding contribution. In many cases, disagreement is softened by hesitations, repetitions, or partial agreement (*sí, pero*, 11c) to maintain interactional harmony.

- (11a)¹⁶** No
- (11b)** Pero ahí están en el box
- (11c)** Sí (.) pero lo q- lo que lo que pienso (.) es (.) que hay (.) otro sistema



¹⁵

(10a) I agree
(10b) Fine
(10c) Perfect
(10d) Okay
(10e) Eh yes
(10f) Mh mh

¹⁶

(11a) No
(11b) But there they stay in the box
(11c) Yes (.) but I think (.) that there is another system

➊ Verifying interlocutor's agreement

This move includes forms used to check whether interlocutors share the same position or consent to a proposed action. Speakers may solicit explicit confirmation of a viewpoint (12a), or seek approval for a procedural choice (12b-12c-12d).

(12a)¹⁷ Quindi siamo tutti d'accordo (.) che secondo noi non è come dice il ministro

(12b) Magari lo le- lo leggiamo:: (.) noi i::n italiano? Cosa dici?

(12c) Léanlo ustedes (.) en alta voz (.) Okay?

(12d) Les parece- están de acuerdo?

➋ Encouraging act

This move, typical of teacher talk (see Diadòri et al. 2007), encompasses verbal strategies used to prompt participation, sustain engagement, or facilitate the progression of the activity. In tutor turns (see 13a-3b), encouragement typically appears as explicit invitations to speak, turn allocation, or prompts designed to guide learners' contributions. Among students (13c-13f), encouraging acts often take the form of supportive cues directed to peers, for example, inviting a classmate to continue, proposing that another group member take responsibility for a task.

(13a)¹⁸ Allora adesso ci dov- qualcuno del gruppo due (.) che fa una domanda

(13b) Vedeo c'è Lucia che ha una domanda vero ha già la mano alzata ho visto subito

(13c) Che cosa mangiano? Tanta?

(13d) Però questo lo potreste leggere voi in spagnolo ((laughs))

(13e) Mh (3) vai avanti tu Claudia? ((laughs))

(13f) Tu dimmi stop (.) quando non capisci

¹⁷

(12a) So we all agree (.) that in our opinion it is not as the minister says

(12b) Maybe we re- we read it (.) we in Italian? What do you say?

(12c) Read it yourselves (.) out loud (.) Okay?

(12d) Does it seem okay to you- do you agree?

¹⁸

(13a) So now we shou- someone from group two (.) who asks a question

(13b) I could see there's Lucia who has a question right she already has her hand raised I saw it right away

(13c) What do they eat? A lot of?

(13d) But you could read this yourselves in Spanish ((laughs))

(13e) Mh (3) you go on Claudia? ((laughs))

(13f) Tell me stop (.) when you don't understand

➊ Evaluating act

This move, also typical of teacher talk, is used to offer evaluative feedback on interlocutors' responses, task performances, or contributions to the interaction (14a). In some cases, it is also employed by students to signal positive appraisal of their peers' interventions (14b–14c).

(14a)¹⁹ Grazie M. e grazie A. molto interessante

(14b) Bravissima bravissima bravissima

(14c) [Grande] ((raising the thumb)) bravi

4.1- Metadiscursive sublevel

This subdimension encompasses moves used to structure and guide the unfolding of discourse. These include the explicit introduction, shift, or closing of topics, as well as summarizing statements, reformulations, and metalinguistic comments. Collectively, such moves help speakers manage textual organization and make the interaction more coherent and accessible. Some of these strategies are employed in mediation activities (Council of Europe 2020), where participants explain complex concepts, anticipate or resolve misunderstandings, thereby making their speech more intelligible.

Table 5- Metadiscursive sublevel

Level	Sublevel	Phenomenon	Label
4. PRAGMATIC AND INTERACTIONAL DIMENSION	4.2 Metadiscursive	Introducing	M-INTRO
		Closing or summarizing	M-RECAP
		Reformulating by synonym or paraphrase	M-SIN
		Reformulating by expansion or exemplification	M-EX
		Metalinguistic reflections	M-META

¹⁹

(14a) Thank you M. and thank you A. very interesting

(14b) Very good very good very good

(14c) [Great] ((raising the thumb)) well done

➊ Introducing

In this category, we include moves that open a new thematic segment or signal a transition to a different focus of discussion, as illustrated in (15a-15b).

(15a)²⁰ Otra (.) antes que me olvide (.) el tema de los machos

(15b) Mh posso dire una cosa ? Io penso che in questo:: testo (.) ci sia una premessa
(1.2) che:: è un confronto (.) tra cibo in Italia e cibo in a- e:: Stati Uniti

➋ Closing or summarizing

This category includes moves that signal the end of a topical segment or that synthesize the preceding discussion. Such moves help participants consolidate shared understanding by restating key points or highlighting the main idea. Examples (16a-16b) illustrate how speakers explicitly mark the transition toward a closing statement or a summary of what has been discussed:

(16a)²¹

E:hm (1.5) e:: fine quindi:: (1.3) <la conclusione ((moves both index fingers downward)) (1.4) è che (.) e:: secondo il ministro (.) in Italia i poveri mangiano meglio per quanto riguarda la qualità perché sono (.) materie prime>

(16b)²²

Il (.) riassunto (.) la- il nucleo la cosa imp- il focus qual è (.) è che (.) c'è questo scrittore (.) italiano (.) che (.) in un libro (.) dice (.) che tanti prodotti (.) italiani:: così tradizioni italiane originali italiani (.) in realtà (.) non sono (.) secondo lui (.) così vecchi (.) ma inventati poco tempo fa

²⁰

(15a) Another (.) before I forget (.) the topic of the male cattle

(15b) Mh can I say something? I think that in this text (.) there is a premise (1.2) that is a comparison (.) between food in Italy and food in the U- and United States

²¹

(16a) Ehm (1.5) and end so (1.3) <the conclusion ((moves both index fingers downward)) (1.4) is that (.) according to the minister (.) in Italy poor people eat better in terms of quality because there are (.) raw materials>

²²

(16b) The (.) summary (.) th- the core the imp- the important thing the focus what it is (.) is that (.) there is this (.) Italian (.) writer (.) who (.) in a book (.) says (.) that many (.) Italian products so original Italian traditions (.) actually (.) are not (.) according to him (.) that old (.) but invented a short time ago

➊ Reformulating by synonym or paraphrase

This move encompasses reformulations aimed at increasing clarity or facilitating comprehension, either by providing a **synonym** or by offering a more explicit **paraphrase**. Examples (17a–17d) illustrate both types of reformulation: in (17a) and (17b), the speaker offers **synonymous expressions**, while in (17c) and (17d) the original item is rendered through a **paraphrase** that expands or clarifies meaning.

(17a)²³ A mí me llegó (2) lo recibí

(17b) come volete voi? Voi (.) cosa preferite?

(17c) [Barato:] que cuesta poco dinero

(17d) Los terneros (.) la crí- la cría macho

➋ Reformulating by exemplification or expansion

This move involves clarifying a concept by providing **examples**, **specific details**, or **additional contextual information**. Unlike synonymous reformulation, exemplification and expansion enrich the original utterance, making the meaning more accessible by grounding it in concrete, observable elements. Such reformulations are particularly frequent in intercomprehension settings, where speakers anticipate potential comprehension difficulties and elaborate their contributions accordingly. Examples (18a–18c) show different forms of expansion: specifying material properties (18a), adding situational details (18b), and listing concrete instances within a broader category (18c).

(18a)²⁴ Ehm nel box (2) è:: di metallo (2) di ferro

(18b) Nel box mh: (.) quando è freddo (2) mettono:: le lampade (.) col calore (2) le lampade quelle rosse

(18c) e:: da lì in poi (.) gli danno (.) alimento:: solido (2) mangime:: (.) queste cose qua

²³

(17a) I got it (2) I received it

(17b) What would you like? What do you prefer?

(17c) [Barato:] that costs little money

(17d) Los terneros (.) the male calf

²⁴

(18a) Ehm in the box (2) it is made of metal (2) of iron

(18b) In the box mh (.) when it is cold (2) they put the lamps (.) with heat (2) those red lamps

(18c) and from then on (.) they give them (.) solid feed (2) feed (.) these things

➊ Metalinguistic reflections

This move includes utterances in which speakers explicitly comment on linguistic form, meaning, or usage in order to support mutual understanding. It encompasses **metalinguistic explanations** intended to clarify a term or structure (19a, 19b), **reflections on one's own or others' discourse strategies** (19c, 19d), and **cross-linguistic comparisons**, often employed to activate shared linguistic knowledge (19e, 19f).

(19a)²⁵ È un verbo possessivo

(19b) Perché il pomodoro è così importante per gli italiani (.) che pomo-doro è costituito da due parole (.) pomo:: e doro

(19c) Tu mi dici se non capisci qualcosa? E io provo a usare sinonimi e spiegarlo

(19d) E:: de la primera oración entiendo poco

(19e) Il (.) il figlio (.) della vacca (.) come si chiama (.) in spagnolo?

(19f) Simile all'inglese allora tomato.

²⁵

(19a) It is a possessive verb

(19b) Because tomatoes are so important for Italians (.) that pomo-doro is made up of two words (.) pomo:: and doro

(19c) You tell me if you don't understand something? And I try to use synonyms and explain it

(19d) And of the first sentence I understand little

(19e) The (.) the offspring (.) of the cow (.) what is it called (.) in Spanish?

(19f) Similar to English so tomato

Level 5- Non-verbal dimension

This dimension includes a selection of both non-verbal gestures and prosodic features that support explanations or help to facilitate mutual understanding (see Table 6).

Table 6- Non-verbal dimension

Level	Sublevel	Phenomenon	Label
5- NON VERBAL DIMENSION		Slowing speech rate	NV-RALL
		Emphasis/stressing words or syllables	NV-ENF
		Onomatopea	NV-ONO
		Iconic gesture	NV-IC
		Deictic gesture	NV-D

⌚ Slowing speech rate

Speakers may deliberately reduce their speech rate to increase comprehensibility, segmenting discourse into smaller informational units. In the transcription, the symbols < ... > mark stretches of speech produced with a noticeably slower tempo:

(20)²⁶ <Ok (1.1) io penso che in Italia l'accesso al cibo non sia uguale per tutti e:: perché e:: mh persone che hanno meno denaro non possono comprare e:: alimenti di qualità alta che e:: di solito hanno un prezzo più elevato>

⌚ Emphasis/stressing words or syllables

Prosodic emphasis is frequently used to highlight key lexical items or concepts:

(21)²⁷ hai capito dove:: dov'è nata questa idea (1.58) dove:: il **POSTO FISICO** la città

²⁶

(20) <Ok (1.1) I think that in Italy access to food is not the same for everyone and because mh people who have less money cannot buy a high-quality food which usually has a higher price>

²⁷

(21) did you understand where where this idea was born (1.58) where the PHYSICAL PLACE the city

➊ Onomatopea

Speakers may employ sound-symbolic expressions to illustrate actions or support meaning-making, often accompanied by gesture:

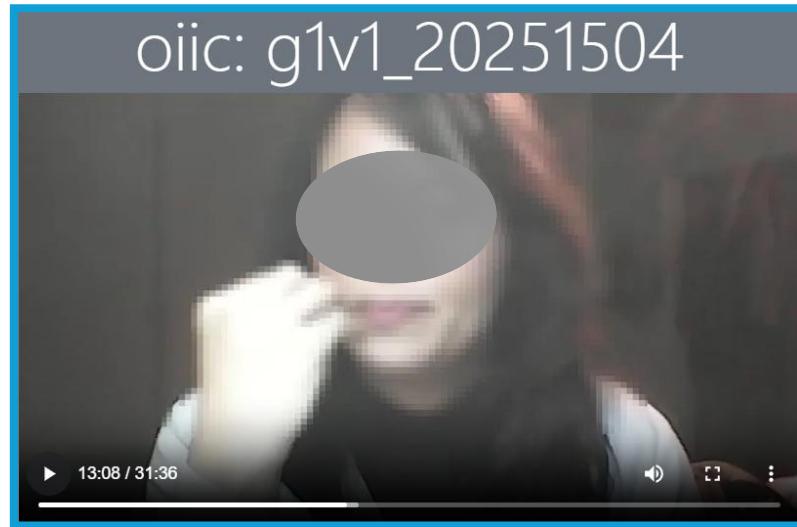
(22) ²⁸ah::: un pool nosotros decimos pool (1.22) y que:: tenés los los tacos largos ((spreads hands apart)) las [las las] pelotitas ((rounds hand to indicate a spherical shape)) y **fiu tac** ((mimes the game))

➋ Iconic gesture

Gestures visually represent semantic content, often providing an analogue depiction of the referent or action (see Figure 3):

(23)²⁹ Mangiare ((mimes the act of eating by closing the hand and bringing it to the mouth)) cibo (.) la cosa che si mangia [si chiama] cibo

Figure 3- Iconic gesture illustrating the act of eating



²⁸

(22) ah a pool we say pool (1.22) and that you have the the long pool cues ((spreads hands apart)) the [the the] little balls ((rounds hand to indicate a spherical shape)) and fiu tac ((mimes the game))

²⁹

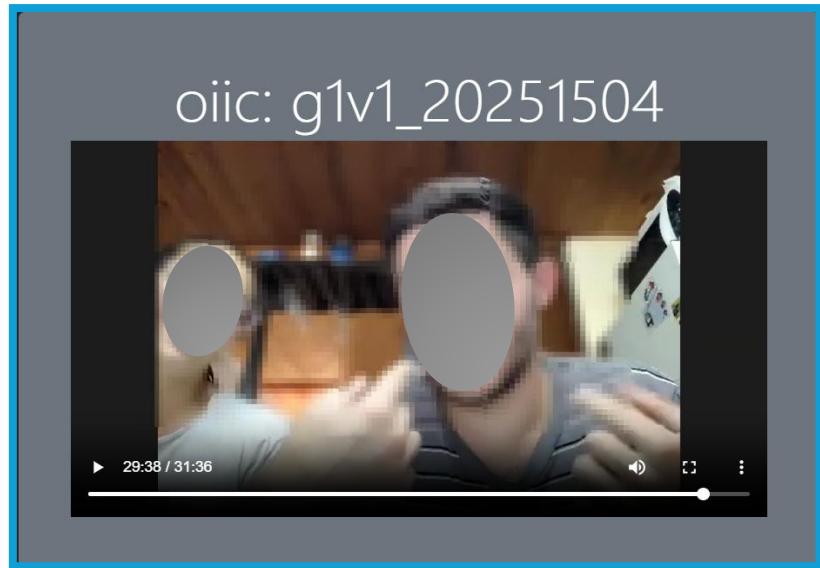
(23) Eating ((mimes the act of eating by closing the hand and bringing it to the mouth)) food (.) what we eat [is called] food

➊ Deictic gesture

Deictic pointing serves to anchor reference in the interactional space or to identify participants (see Figure 4):

**(24)³⁰ Bien (1.1) [e:: entonces] (.) ha- hablamos de Italia entonces? [Nosotros]?
((points to himself with both index fingers))**

Figure 4- Deictic gesture pointing to the speaker himself



³⁰

(24) Well (1.1) [so] (.) do we talk about Italy then? [us]? ((points to himself with both index fingers))

Applying the annotation scheme: analysis of an extract

In this section, the annotation scheme is applied to an extract from the **OIIC corpus**. The extract is drawn from an online lecture of an intercomprehension course for Engineering students, in which tutors and students engage in a discussion of idiomatic expressions and collaboratively negotiate their meanings. This excerpt provides a representative example of how comprehension problems emerge in academic IC settings and how they are addressed through a combination of lexical, pragmatic, and interactional strategies. In the excerpt, tutors are indicated by the letter "T", and students by the letter "S".

(25)³¹

T_BRA_1 pode um poquinho explicar? (2) **[ENCOURAGING ACT]**

S_BRA_4 o o peito aberto quer dizer que você tá disposto a: **enfrentar ou a viver a situação que for da melhor maneira possível sem se decepcionar ou se frustrar** se aquilo não for o que- o que você esperava **[REFORMULATION BY PARAPHRASE AND SYNONYMS]**

T_ITA_1 vediamo se c'è qualche ragazzo italiano di Bologna che ha capito l'ultima frase **[ENCOURAGING ACT] [VERIFYING UNDERSTANDING]**

T_SPA_1 o españoles que hayan entendido **[y]** (.) o esp- argentino porque la **[ENCOURAGING ACT]**

T_ITA_1 **[sì]** esp- **[COOPERATIVE OVERLAP]**

S_ARG_6 claro yo por lo que entiendo es o sea que: que **está dispuesto o predispuesto** a: sería como un **sinónimo resiliente** por lo que entiendo o sea como **que estar abierto y dispuesto a lo que venga y hacerle frente y** (1.38) buscar sobreponerse digamos (.) e: **para construir un mañana que se supongo que es un futuro mejor** **[REFORMULATION BY PARAPHRASES, SYNONYMS AND EXPANSIONS]**

³¹

(25)

T_BRA_1 could you explain a little bit? (2)

S_BRA_4 uh uh peito aberto that you are willing to face or live the situation in the best possible way without being disappointed or frustrated if it is not wh- what you expected

T_ITA_1 let's see if there is some Italian student from Bologna who understood the last sentence

T_SPA_1 or Spanish students who have understood [a::nd] (.) or Ar- Argentinian because the

T_ITA_1 [yes]

S_ARG_6 sure from what I understand it is that that he is willing or predisposed to it would be like a synonym resilient from what I understand

that is like being open and willing to whatever comes and face it and

(1.38) try to overcome let's say (.) to build a future that I suppose is a better future

The negotiation of meaning is triggered by an **idiomatic expression** (*o peito aberto*), which is unfamiliar to part of the multilingual audience. The sequence is initiated by the Brazilian tutor **T_BRA_1**, who produces an **encouraging act** (*pode um pouquinho explicar?*), inviting the Brazilian student to clarify the expression and thereby prompting the negotiation process. In response, **S_BRA_4** provides an explanation through **reformulations by synonymy and paraphrase** (*enfrentar / viver; se decepcionar / se frustrar*), aiming to render the figurative meaning more accessible. The **Italian tutor** subsequently intervenes by encouraging Italian students to make their understanding explicit; this turn is annotated both as an **encouraging act** and as **verifying comprehension**. The **Spanish tutor** then extends this invitation to the other students, broadening the scope of the comprehension check. The **Italian tutor expresses agreement** (*si*) in partial overlap with the Spanish tutor's turn. This overlap is **cooperative**, as it functions to support and reinforce the interlocutor's contribution rather than to compete for the floor.

The negotiation sequence is further developed by the **Argentinian student**, who takes the floor and demonstrates understanding by offering a complex explanation of the expression. This contribution combines **synonyms** (*está dispuesto / predisposto; resiliente*), **paraphrases** (*estar abierto y dispuesto a lo que venga y hacerle frente*), and **expansions** (*sobrepasar digamos (...) para construir un mañana que supongo que es un futuro mejor*). The whole explanation is also supported by a **metalinguistic comment** (*sería como un sinónimo resiliente*), contributing to the successful resolution of the negotiation sequence.

Conclusions

This report has presented and illustrated an annotation scheme designed for the analysis of oral interactions in intercomprehension contexts. As shown through the application to a corpus extract, the scheme proves effective in capturing interactional phenomena across multiple analytical levels, allowing for a fine-grained examination of meaning negotiation processes and other conversational phenomena, without any claim to exhaustiveness.

The annotation scheme has already been applied in various research studies in academic contexts, including the analysis of conversational dominance in peer interactions, the study of metadiscursive and interactional strategies involved in the simplification of technical terminology, the investigation of communicative accommodation phenomena, and the examination of tutors' communicative strategies in online lectures. These applications highlight the versatility of the scheme and its potential to support both qualitative and mixed-method analyses of plurilingual academic interaction.

Future developments may involve further refining and expanding the annotation system to incorporate additional dimensions that are currently less systematically represented. In particular, the integration of a more detailed annotation of non-verbal behavior, such as gestures and embodied actions, would allow for a more comprehensive account of multimodal meaning-making in intercomprehension settings.

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