

Building Alliances in Political Discourse: Language, Institutional Authority, and Resistance*

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Abstract

This paper addresses the construction of institutional authority and interactional hegemony in public political discourse. The arguments are based on the detailed analysis of one case from a town council meeting in the city of Vigo, in Galiza (Spain). It is argued that authority-building is achieved through a basic conversational mechanism: the *tactical constitution of local power alliances* between interactants. A number of discursive resources are mobilized by institutional figures to crystallize such alliances and to strive for local hegemonic control of the space of talk: reported speech, language and register, prosodic code, turn distribution, rhetorical templates, and the manipulation of indexicals, identity terms and spatial referential expressions. These tactics, in turn, encounter audiences' oppositional, disaffiliative moves. The conversational power underlying authority-building thus inherently consists of a confrontational, dynamic relationship between interactants bound by local configurations of alliances.

1. Introduction

In the unveiling of "power", "hegemony" and "authority", the works of Bourdieu, Giddens, Gramsci, Voloshinov, and Foucault have been iterative points of reference in some recent social critique of language and microanalysis of talk (see, for example, Alvarez-Cáccamo 1993, 1996; Blommaert 1992; Gal 1987, 1989; Heller 1992; Helsloot 1989; Woolard 1985, 1992; Woolard & Schieffelin 1994). The polyphony of notions is at times confusing, even imprecise. But it does show that what can be called the *harmonious paradigm* of talk-in-interaction is insufficient or fully inadequate to explain everything that goes on in social encounters.

Albeit not always readily visible, hegemony-building mechanisms seem to be common practices in daily life. At times, parties ally with or against co-present participants or absent characters through voice manipulation in reported speech; other times, interactional boundaries between participant constellations are

quickly drawn and redrawn as topics are skillfully steered by hegemonic participants toward favorable grounds. Specifically, what I will call *symbolic alliances* are established, for example, through quotation of someone else's words. For their part, *material alliances* are based on co-presence, and may emerge from explicit mentions to co-participants (either for coopting or for turn distribution purposes), from topic management tactics, etc. This notion of 'alliance', I believe, reflects the dynamic nature of conversational alignments more transparently than comparable notions such as 'teams', 'parties', or the CA term 'constellation of participants'.¹

As emphasized in Gumperz's work on discourse in institutional contexts (Gumperz 1982, 1992a, 1992b; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz 1982), institutions in modern bureaucratic society are *strategic sites* in which to observe the manifestations of social inequality and social control, particularly in multiethnic or multilingual settings. In my data from public discourse in bilingual Galiza,² an administratively 'autonomous community' within the kingdom of Spain where both Spanish and Galician Portuguese are spoken, political figures often effect tactical realignments with other professional politicians or with the 'people' at large based on their ability to come across successively as 'Mayors' or 'council members' and as 'citizens'. Institutional authority may thus be reinforced by one's ability to also *not* invoke one's official identity, that is, by one's ability to relocate oneself and others within diverse social and symbolic spaces ('formal' and 'informal') where particular identities become relevant.³ Language choices, as can be imagined, are pivotal elements in invoking and making relevant such identities in reference to social spaces.

In brief, at issue in political institutional discourse is the articulation and display of an *authoritative voice* as a tool for hegemonizing the space of talk in reference to the juridical framework, political and linguistic ideologies, and shared typifications about expected communicative behaviors. To employ a trite etymology, 'authority' refers not only to the act of authoring one's own words (cf. Bourdieu 1990a) and, thus, of becoming a socio-interactional subject. Authority, I claim, rather than an invested institutional attribute, is *the process and outcome of building hegemonic control over the space of talk* — that is, the reinforcement and legitimization of one's figurative position within the exchange. This manipulation of discourse for hegemonic control takes place at two general levels. In its Foucaultian sense (Foucault 1972), 'discourse' stands for an internally coherent constellation of ideological statements.⁴ In its textual sense (most commonly employed in conversation analysis) 'discourse' refers to the sequential organization of talk. Consequently, the analysis of political discourse must be carried out in several, co-occurring dimensions: grammatical (syntactic and se-

semantic), pragmatic, prosodic, sequential, socio-interactional, rhetorical, and ideological (for a similar point, cf. Wodak 1989a:140).

The previous issues will be explored in detail through the analysis of an episode taken from a council meeting in Vigo in February 1987. During the turn of a socialist council member, which was encountering the audience's uncooperative and restless response, Mayor Manoel Soto, also a socialist, intervened temporarily to address and reprimand the audience for its disaffiliative behavior. The Mayor produced an elaborate and forceful speech in defense of '**democratic principles**',⁵ urging the audience to show '**respect**' for the '**elected representatives of the people**'. The Mayor's speech lasted merely two and a half minutes, but to me (and, presumably, to the audience as a whole) it felt like an eternity. Likewise, during the meeting I was under the impression that the Mayor had been justified in his attempt to prevent the audience from 'interrupting' his fellow socialist council member. I also perceived the audience's reaction as one of passive compliance — like a class of intimidated students being reprimanded by their schoolteacher. Upon reviewing the tapes and studying the detailed transcript, I found out that the Mayor had been technically unjustified in his reaction to the supposed 'interruption'; and that the audience had indeed displayed subtle tactics of resistance. Why had I been fooled by the Mayor's discursive display of authority?

2. Council Meetings as Territories

Before discussing the episode in detail, it is necessary to lay out some facts which will explain the dynamics of council meetings as territories where relationships of authority and (in)subordination are played out. Council meetings are strategic social spaces to be managed and occupied by the political and conversational parties involved in local decision-making.

In May 1984 I set out to observe my first council meeting in Vigo. While I was waiting for the doors of the locale to open, I was surrounded by a restless crowd, mostly made up of men. Something was in the air. Asking around, I found out that the men were local shipyard workers. Well after the scheduled time for the meeting, municipal policemen were still keeping the doors closed.

When the doors finally opened, the crowd materially burst into the auditorium, dragging me along. The Vigo working class took sudden possession of the locale. The compact audience started chanting not-too-polite slogans against the Mayor and the Socialist Party. The trade unions were protesting the drastic economic policy of the Spanish socialist government against certain traditional sectors of production. *Reconversión industrial* and *modernización* were the two terms brandished by the government to justify its decision to close down a num-

ber of unprofitable, state-subsidized heavy industries, particularly steel and machinery manufacturers in Euskadi, Galiza, and other parts of the state. In the Vigo area alone, between 4,000 and 10,000 workers lost their jobs in the course of a few years.

The meeting never took place at the scheduled site. The council members from the conservative opposition were already seated when the doors opened, but the Mayor never showed up. He decided to reconvene the local government in another room of the City Hall, in the presence of the press but without public attendance.

In the auditorium there remained the opposition council members, the workers, and a few journalists. A leader of the communist-led trade union **Comisións Obreiras** launched a speech, clearly addressed to the press. The leader explained the position of his trade union and the workers toward the government's policy. He also complained about the local government's apathy and lack of commitment regarding the workers' uncertain future. They had already been out of work for a number of months, and, reportedly, neither the state, regional, or local governments were doing anything substantial to alleviate their situation and put them back to work.

In his address to the press, the leader used Galizan — the Galiza variety of Portuguese, which in recent years has been undergoing symbolic and material appropriation by the political and intellectual elites, as is characteristic of language-revival processes. Switching to Spanish, the state language, the leader then addressed the opposition council members. He urged them to do something, given their connection with the regional conservative government, and he emphasized, in metaphorical style, that this was a serious matter which involved the entire city of Vigo: *'If we die, here we all die; and if you don't help us, you are also going to suffer; because if we are in need, we'll go and steal your jackets'*. In a final speech directed at the trade-unionists, the leader also used Spanish, except when he called to order a defiant, Galizan-speaking worker. Thus, symbolically, the Vigo working class ('Galiza') was speaking Spanish (the language of the State) through the voice of one of its leaders.

Incidents such as the one just described are not totally uncommon in Vigo's political life, whether involving social collectives or individuals defending their economic interests. Due to the public nature of council plenary sessions, local organizations or neighborhood associations at times gather massively in council meetings to witness the development of discussions. However, since interaction between audiences and council members is not permitted, the former may resort to banners or chants in order to make their social voices heard. In these cases, the ambiguity as to what constitutes the audience's permissible behavior is in turn

situationally interpreted by the Mayor so as to allow or disallow the audience's conduct.

In a few words, council meetings, as spaces where local life is managed and sectorial interests defended or challenged, can be *actual territories* that teams occupy not only metaphorically, or through words, but very materially, through mass invasion or physical action. It is not surprising, then, that 'keeping order' (even conversational order) is held at high stake, particularly when heated controversy looms in the air.

3. A Case from a Council Meeting

Given this context of organizational restrictions, in 1987, another tense confrontation took place over gaining occupation of the interactional territory of the meeting — this time through words. The episode is the piece of data I will examine.

3.1 *The context*

The main point in the 1987 meeting agenda was the discussion and approval of a controversial new plan for urban development, the **Plan Xeral de Ordeamento Urbano**.⁶ Like other issues in local politics, the Plan was highly contested — among other reasons, because some neighborhoods were affected by the reclassification of municipal lands from 'rural' to 'urbanizable', that is, lands for development and construction.

In this episode, socialist council member Jorge Parada is replying to a number of questions about the proposed Plan that some neighborhood associations had raised in the local press. The associations were particularly concerned with the local government's decision to draft the Plan by consensus among the socialists and the conservative opposition. At the time of the meeting, the socialists were ruling the 27-seat Vigo City Council with a minimal 14-13 majority. During this mandate, the Socialist Party would often pass local regulations based merely on this exiguous majority, which would, in turn, lead opposition members and the Vigo public in general to refer critically to this tactic as "the 14-13 steamroller" (**o rodilho 14-13**). With regard to the Development Plan, however, supported by all parties in the Council, the divorce between professional political elites and the public surfaces unmistakably as the latter's rejection of representation by the former in a serious matter that involved the people's material living conditions.

The confrontation with the audience starts when Parada, in his reply to the neighborhood associations, attempts to quote some words from the late socialist mayor of Madrid, Enrique Tierno Galván. Tierno Galván was among the most respected figures in recent Spanish politics for his reputed honesty, integrity, and

- 93 .. pois fazer uma advertência →
 94 ... advertência que fago (=faço) já agora .. pública e
 [colectivamente ↑↑
 95 A (éhhum)
 96 M em segundo lu*gar ↑
 97 A (áhhum)
 98 M se a: {[hi] interrup*cião } →
 99 A (áhum áhum)
 100 M procedera (=proceder) de uma pessoa (=pessoa) per*fectamente (=perfeitamente)
 localizada ou localizable (=localizável) →
 101 .. {[lo] seria .. e:xpulsada da sá (=sala) } pola (=pela) policia municipal ↑
 102 <1.5>
 103 M e se ainda isto fora: (=for) pi*or →
 104 .. {[lo] que dios } não o queira →
 105 .. e- fora um *grupo de per'sonas os que *não permi'tiram →
 106 discu'rrir (=discorrer) →
 107 em *paz →
 108 demo*crática →
 109 a sessão da cor'poração →
 110 .. teríamos que: 'interrumpir o {[hi] pleno } →
 111 A (ahúm)
 112 M [.. pra .. que as pessoas (=pessoas) abandonassem este recinto ↑↑
 113 .. e persegui:r- {[ac] prosseguir } o {[hi] pleno } →
 114 .. em lugar oportuno →
 115 .. diante dos médios de comunicação → isso si (=sim) ↓
 116 A [(ah-ah-ah-ah-ám)
 117 M [.. {[ac][lo] pra que lhe deram conta ao povo de vigo de todo o que sucedia } ↓↓
 118 A (ahúm ahúm)
 119 A (ahh-ahh)
 120 M de spois (=depois) de fazer →
 121 A [(ahúm) (ahúm ahúm ah)]
 122 M todas essas advertic- ah a:dvertências ↓
 123 A (ehúm ehúm) ↓
 124 <1>
 125 M {[st] 'às que me obriga } 'a *lei ↑
 126 .. {[lo] naturalmente } .. cabe-me .. pregar-lhes
 encarecidamente a [todas e a todos] →
 127 A (ahum) (ahum ahum)
 128 .. {[hi] 'que } nos ajustemos à legis [lacião vigente] →
 129 A (ahúm) (ahúm ahúm)
 130 M .. num estado democrático {[lo] e de direito } ↓↓
 131 A (ahhhúm)
 132 M ... {[lo] coma (=como) no que estamos } ↓↓
 133 A (ahm ah)
 134 M se [nhor parada →
 135 A (ahhúm ahhám)
 136 A (ahh) [um ahum)
 137 M desculpe pode seguir → [no uso da palavra] ↓↓
 138 A (ahúm ahúm)
 139 <1>
 140 P estaba: e:h intentando dar una contestación →
 141 a- → a unas preguntas que se hacía una asociación de vecinos →

- 142 y decía que (xx) una de ellas →
 143 si era acertada la decisión de: del grupo: →
 144 <1>
 145 P e:h .. de {[hi] consensuar } →
 146 e:h el plan ↑
 147 A [(AHHUM AHUM)]
 148 P [(xx xx) decía] una frase →
 149 A [(ahm)]
 150 P {[hi] d [e u] no de los últimos discursos de: } →
 151 del profesor tierno galván →
 152 .. en el que decía que todos tenemos →
 153 A [(ahm) (ahum ahum)]
 154 P [.. una casa que es n uestro hogar particular →
 155 .. y una ciudad que es nuestro hogar colectivo ↓↓
 156 ... en este sentido ↓
 157 en el sentido del hogar colectivo →
 158 que debe tener para todos la ciudad ↑
 159 .. en ese sentido de - allí donde *todos vivimos y todos nos reunimos →
 160 eso fue lo que nos 'impul*só →
 161 al grupo [municipal 's] ocialista →
 162 A [(ahm ahm)]
 163 P a que r:almente lleváramos adelante →
 164 un plan consensuado ↓↓

The Mayor's Speech. English Version

P: Mr. Parada, socialist council member. A: unspecified member(s) of the Audience. A1: a recognizable member of the Audience. M: Mayor.

- 1 P These neighborhood associations were wondering,
 [several lines omitted]
 21 P they say, "Was the decision (to elaborate)
 22 a Plan by consensus by the Council Executive Committee appropriate?"
 23 <2>
 24 I think that, well, this -
 25 was clearly answered in my previous turn.
 26 Now, I think that, (regarding) whether it was dec-
 27 (whether) our decision was appropriate or not, ...
 28 A (uhum)
 29 P ...we could remember
 30 <1.5>
 31 a a sentence by the late Mayor of Madrid,
 32 by Enrique Tierno Galván,
 33 which went ...
 34 A Oh!
 35 A Come on!
 36 A No, come on!
 37 P ... "We all have ...
 38 A [(murmuring)]
 39 P ... a ...
 40 <2>
 41 P ... a private home, which is our house ..."

42 M **Please, Mr. Parada, please.**

43 **Just a minute.**

44 <2>

45 M [gazing at Audience] **Listen, in case (you) don't have insuffi- uuh ...**

46 A (ukhm ukhm)

47 M **... (in case) the ladies and gentlemen of the public (don't have) sufficient information,**

48 **I must tell you**

49 **– once more –**

50 **that in all the**

51 **democratic ... systems ... of the world ...**

52 A1 (ahum-ahum)

53 <1.5>

54 M **– and I'm referring,**

55 **let me always clarify,**

56 **to western democracies – ...**

57 A1 (ahum-ahum)

58 <4>

59 M **... in all of those- [fem.] in all of those democratic systems,**

60 **in order to guarantee**

61 **the freedom**

62 **of action by the representatives of the people**

63 A (uhum uhum uhum)

64 **it is not allowed, according to each country's legislation**

65 **– including our country – ...**

66 A (ugh-um)

67 A (uhum)

68 M **... it is not allowed for interventions by the audience to take place ...**

69 A (ugh) (ugh-uhm ugh-um)

70 M **... in any direction:**

71 **neither to applaud**

72 **nor to reject ...**

73 A (ugh-um)

74 M **... the performance**

75 **by the representatives**

76 **of the people,**

77 **so as**

78 **not to coerce them**

79 **with expressions**

80 **of approval**

81 **or disapproval.**

82 A (uhum)

83 <1.5>

84 M **I'm warning (you) about this for– for whoever might not be aware of it;**

85 **and I'm also warning (you) that the legal duty ...**

86 A (uhhm)

87 M **... of the President of the Council (=the Mayor) ...**

88 A (uhum) (uhum)

89 A (uhum)

90 M **... if uh someone tries to interrupt**

91 **a speech by any of the council members who are intervening**

92 **would be: Firstly,**

93 **well, to issue a warning**

94 **– a warning that I am issuing now, publicly and collectively; ...**

95 A (agh-hum)

96 M **... secondly,**

97 A (uhhum)

98 M **... if the interruption ...**

99 A (uhum uhum)

100 M **... came from a clearly identified or identifiable person,**

101 **(he or she) would be expelled from the room by the City Police;**

102 <1.5>

103 **and if (the situation) were even worse**

104 **– may *God* prevent this –**

105 **and it were a group of people who didn't allow**

109 **for the session of the council**

106 **to continue**

108 **in democratic**

107 **peace,**

110 **then we would have to interrupt the plenary ...**

111 A (ugh-umm)

112 M **[... so that those people would leave the locale,**

113 **and (we would have) to prosecut– proceed with the plenary**

114 **in an appropriate place**

115 **– in the presence of the press, of course ...**

116 A (ugh ugh ugh ugh ugh)

117 M **[... so that (the press) could inform the people of Vigo of everything that were taking**

place.

118 A (uhum uhum)

119 A (ugh-ugh)

120 M **[After making ...**

121 A (uhum) (ugh-um ugh-um)

122 M **... all these warn- uh, warning remarks ...**

123 A (ahum ahum)

124 <1>

125 M **... to which I am obliged by Law**

126 **naturally ... I cannot but earnestly request from**

[all of you (women and men) ...

127 A (uhum) (uhum uhum)

128 M **... that we abide by current legislation ...**

129 A (uhum) (uhum uhum)

130 M **... in a democratic state of Law.**

131 A (ugghum)

132 M **Such as the one we live in.**

133 A (ugh-uh)

134 M **Mister Parada, ...**

135 A (uhhum uhum)

136 A (uhhum uhum)

137 M **... excuse me, you may proceed with your turn now.**

138 A (uhum uhum)

139 <1>

140 P *I was, uuh, trying to reply*

141 *to– to some questions posed by a neighborhood association,*

142 *and I was saying that (xx) one of them*

143 *(was) if it was appropriate the decision by the the (Executive) Committee ...*

144 <1>

146 P *... uuh, to (elaborate) the Plan*

- 145 *uuh, by consensus ...*
 147 A [(UHUM UHUM)
 148 P [(*xx xx*) *saying a sentence ...*
 149 A (uhm)
 150 P ... *from one of the latest speeches by*
 151 *by Professor Tierno Galván*
 152 *where he said that we all have ...*
 153 A [(ughm) (uhum uhum)
 154 P [... *a house which is our private home,*
 155 *and a town which is our collective home.*
 156 *In the latter sense,*
 157 *in the sense of the collective home*
 158 *that must be for all of us our town,*
 159 *in the sense of the place where we all live and meet each other,*
 160 *that was what moved us,*
 161 *the socialist municipal group*
 162 A (uhum uhum)
 163 P *to really go ahead with*
 164 *a consensual Plan.*

After this, Parada proceeds to justify why consensus was the most appropriate way to go about urban planning in '*our collective home*'.

The objective of my analysis will be to break down the 'dialectic of control' in the episode (as Giddens 1984 would call it), revealing the 'discourse ecology' (Agar 1985) of the exchange. And I will do so on three levels. First, on the level of *conversational alignments*, I will explore the *alliances* between social actors present in the various territories of the text. Second, on the *sequential* level, I will examine the significance of the disruption by the audience, and other tactics of resistance. And, finally, on the *linguistic* level, I will look at the linguistic material employed by the Mayor, including his choice of formal Galizan. I am not claiming that these three dimensions are organized in a hierarchical way. It is only for expository purposes that I have thus arranged them.

3.2 *Conversational alliances*

The text reveals a forest of reference terms about social actors organized into a complex network of symbolic arrangements. Practically all living social forces and state apparatuses are represented in this brief universe. The council members, Parada, the Mayor, the audience, the neighborhood associations, the people of Vigo, the Press, the Municipal Police, 'God', (in the translinguistic formulaic expression '*May God ...*') and, of course, the late Mayor of Madrid, Enrique Tierno Galván, are all deployed as characters in real or figurative spaces, and they maintain among themselves an intricate dialectic of alliances and oppositions.

It is worthwhile to examine briefly which identities and alliances are foregrounded at particular points in the text, in a continuous switch from personal to

categorical identifications and involvements which has been found in other samples of political discourse (Wilson 1990:63; Wodak 1989a:150f). For example, Parada refers successively to himself as '*I*' (24), as a member of the Council Executive Committee (22, 27), as a participant in the speech event (29), and as a member of a broader '*we all*' (37). In turn, he is formally addressed by the Mayor as 'Mr. Parada' (42, 134), and he is alluded to as a '**representative of the people**' (62, 75-76), and as '**any of the council members who are intervening**' (91). Tierno Galván is first introduced as '*the late Mayor of Madrid*' (31) and later as a '*professor*' (151). The Mayor presents himself as '**I**' (48, 54, 84, 85, 94, 126), as '**the President of the Council**' (87), as a participant in a legally regulated speech event (110, 113, 128), and as a citizen in a democratic system (132). Similarly, the audience is alluded to through referential expressions such as '**ladies and gentlemen of the public**' (47), '**the audience**' (68), '**whoever might not be aware**' of the regulations (84), a hypothetical rebellious '**person**' (100), '**a group of people**' (105), and '**all of you (women and men)**' (126). When talking abstractly about '**the democratic systems**', the Mayor also generalizes about '**the audience**', but the actual public present is addressed as '**ladies and gentlemen of the public**'.

In a few words, the social actors are selectively and locally designed either as real persons or as archetypical characters who, consequently, ought to narrowly follow normative roles and behaviors. This play of identities gives the Mayor ample leverage to relocate his addressees within the desired territory: either the archetypical, decontextualized realm of the Law that regulates institutional conduct, or the real, indexically grounded space of the council meeting.

As for the Parada-Mayor-Tierno Galván alliance, rich, mutually overlapping internal arrangements of invoked social identities are established through direct mention (reported speech), sequential management tactics (the Mayor's support for Parada), or indexical language choices. Firstly, Jorge Parada and Manoel Soto are co-present interactants, while Enrique Tierno Galván is absent (and no longer alive). Secondly, the hegemonic group splits again along institutional-status boundaries: whereas both Soto and Tierno Galván are 'Mayors', Parada is a 'council member'. Thirdly, the Mayor comes across as 'Galizan' while Parada and Tierno Galván are 'Spanish' by virtue of their respective language choices. Finally, the three are 'socialists', and (as we will see) citizens of 'our country'.

3.2.1 *The 'unifying we'*

There is one dimension of the play of alliances that I consider central to the episode: the management of the indexical identity term '*we*' (*nosotros* or *nós*) — to be sure, the management of the *multiple* '*we*'s' of the text. Who are the specific

referents of the 'we's' in Parada's and the Mayor's words? How do Parada and the Mayor inscribe themselves and others within these 'we's'? By which procedures do they conversationally implicate the referential scope of 'we' as an inherently ambiguous term?⁹

In Parada's turns, the possessive *nuestra* in his mention of 'our decision' to elaborate a plan by consensus (26-27) refers to the decision by the Council Executive Committee, of which Parada was a member. But in his next utterance (29), the *nosotros* represents all the participants in the speech event — speakers, council members, and audience, all bound by co-presence: Parada says '*we could remember <1.5> a- a sentence by the late Mayor of Madrid, by Enrique Tierno Galván*' (29-32). Finally, when Parada reproduces the beginning of the quotation (37, 39, 41), the 'we' is the broadest 'we all', the *todos*, both present and non-present. This broadest 'we' is, then, the urban community (or, rather, the community of urban communities) united around the shared experience of having '*a house, which is our private home, and a town, which is our collective home*' (154-155).¹⁰

In brief, Parada has gradually expanded the scope of the identifier *nosotros*. From the initial distance between himself and the neighborhood associations, treated as an absent 'primary audience' (Brenneis 1986), he later attempts to make '*all of us*' (37, 152) co-participants in the Council's Plan for development and in his own discourse.

Similar points can be made about the Mayor's manipulation of the scope of 'we'. For instance, his inclusive 'we' in line 128, where he '**request[s] ... that we abide by current legislation**' is an ironic one, as the recipient of his directive can only be the disobedient audience, not himself. The next inclusive 'we', when he refers to the '**democratic state of Law. Such as the one we live in**' (130, 132) is, on the contrary, genuine — as genuine as a term referring to an 'imagined community', to employ Anderson's term (1983), can be.

Briefly, in the creation of the 'unifying we' (Crowley 1987) that underlies hegemonic control of the interaction, both Parada and the Mayor strategically inscribe the multiple audiences spatially, although through different re-territorializations. The immediate territory is the constellation of event participants, bound by co-presence; the broader space is the macro-social alliance of urban dwellers in a western democratic system.

3.2.2 *The audience's challenge to symbolic alliances*

Within the fabric of symbolic arrangements of the text, there is one central to the entire episode: this is Parada's attempt to establish a symbolic alliance with Tierno Galván through authoritative quotation.

Notice, to this respect, how Tierno Galván is introduced to the audience (31-32): first his title ('*the late Mayor of Madrid*'), and then his full name. This reminds us of characteristic ways of inviting the audience's affiliative response in public discourse (as explored, for example, by Atkinson 1984). However, in a twist of expectations, the sequential slot usually occupied by applause is here occupied not even by silence, but by a negative, disaffiliative move: the audience's protests (34-36, 38).

In light of this challenge, the Mayor aligns himself with Parada in a material alliance (in this case, one based on co-presence and anaphoric reference). The Mayor's objective is to restore the discursive order necessary for political performance. But, what does the Mayor find so threatening in the audience's resistance?

Symbolically, the audience is disrespectfully denying deceased Tierno Galván to enter the world of the living, to inhabit the space of talk through Parada's voice. In addition, the protest constitutes in itself several *challenges*: First, a challenge to the relevance and legitimacy of Parada's tactic of quotation; second, a challenge to the institutional role of Tierno Galván as the Mayor of Madrid; thirdly, a challenge to the democratic values that the politician embodied; and, perhaps most importantly, it is a challenge to the consensual 'we' in which Parada attempts to inscribe the audience.

The Mayor's resource, then, is to appeal to an even higher voice, the democratic Law itself, of which the Mayor presents himself as a mere servant. I will return to this question later.

3.3 *Spaces*

In relation to the play of referential expressions, how is the articulation of *social and symbolic spaces* (Bourdieu 1990b) in which the various characters and the multiple 'we's' are inscribed? These spaces range from the immediate territory of talk (the City Hall) to the city of Vigo and all cities as a '*collective home*', to the '**democratic system**', and to the '**western democracies**' in general.

As in the play of identity terms discussed above, the theoretical issue is whether covert, non-stated presuppositional information and covert, non-stated referents are smuggled through the "running-board technique" (Holly 1989:123) of conveying ideological meanings in political discourse, particularly by the use of referential expressions triggering existential presuppositions.

Ambiguity, for example, characterizes the Mayor's use of some expressions such as '**democratic system**' or '**our country**' (65), and the realities each refers to. There is no explicit reference to either Spain or Galiza. '**Democratic state of Law**' (130) undoubtedly alludes to the Spanish State. But, given the hierarchical administrative organization of Spain, with a central government and autonomous

governments, '**democratic system**' may refer either to the state system or to the Galizan regional system. '**Our country**' is even more ambiguous. Can such expressions perhaps be used to allude to both Galiza and Spain simultaneously? If so, in what sense would this constitute an ideological contradiction, a form of *ideological complex* (Hodge & Kress 1993)? Can Galiza, which is never mentioned explicitly, be totally absent from the Mayor's speech?

It is at this point that the choice of language rises to prominence. Galiza is referentially absent in the text, but it is ever-present in the near-standard Galizan variety used. We saw earlier how Parada and the Mayor manipulated the referential scope of the indexical 'we'. Now the Mayor plays strategically with the referential scope applicable to the parallel expression '**our country**'.

The systematic ambiguity in the use of the phrases '**our country**' and '**democratic system**', while uttered *in Galizan*, entextualizes the political-ideological position of the Galizan Socialist Party PSdeG-PSOE, which is torn between its Galizan surname and its allegiances to the central party apparatus in Madrid. In what some view as a contradictory attitude on the part of the Socialist Party, allegiance to Galizan or Spanish causes seems to be a matter of its members' political preferences and personal motivations.¹¹

3.4 Discourse organization

3.4.1 The 'interruption'

I will now examine whether the Mayor's disciplinary intervention for the audience's alleged 'interruption' is justified on sequential grounds. Do the audience's comments *count as* an 'interruption' in the technical sense? What are the structural features of the moves by the supposed 'interrupters' and 'interruptee'? How are they contextualized by the Mayor to justify his intervention?

Work on conversation analysis stresses the function of interruptions as strategies for power and control (West 1979; West & Zimmerman 1983). O'Barr (1984), for example, closely following Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974), lists interruptions as one of the four basic procedures for conversational control (1984:268-271). His implicit argument is that control and 'politicking' of turns automatically generates situated power for the speaker. In contrast to 'overlaps', 'interruptions' in daily conversation are often viewed as violations of expectational principles concerning turn-taking and turn-giving. Interruptions have even been labeled the 'conversational equivalent of rape' (Murray 1987) because they directly impinge on the speaker's integrity and violate his or her supposed rights.

The violation of rules, however, is an *a posteriori* matter; rather than 'violated' or 'adhered to', rules are constructed locally. Rules are not necessarily violated when turns are seemingly 'incomplete'. In fact, the notion of an

'incomplete turn' is an oxymoron. Incomplete clauses or phrases typically show truncated intonational contours; but whether incomplete syntactic units are indeed interrupted turns needs to be empirically examined, not taken for granted. Additionally, the principles of turn allocation and the perceptions about what constitutes an 'interruption' are not only culturally specific, but also situationally constrained.¹² For one thing, the canonical structure of unilateral discourse, such as a council meeting, precludes the audience from *effectively* and legitimately taking the turn at any occasion. Public performance of this sort presupposes an unequal distribution of discourse tasks, both accepted by consensus and sanctioned by legislation.¹³

The question is, therefore, can the audience's protest count as an 'interruption' in an attempt to take the floor? There is no internal evidence to believe such is the case. The audience's protests overlap with part of Parada's utterance in line 37, after the name of Tierno Galván is mentioned. The overlap occurs at a point that in ordinary conversation would be *prior to* a possible turn-transition place; in such a case, we might refer to such overlap as an interruption. But the fact is that Parada, after an initial hesitation, does proceed with his quotation (39, 41). In the two-second pause in line 40 no one in the audience moves to occupy the noticeable silence. Thus, the continuation of talk by Parada indicates that he has successfully overcome the stumbling blocks deployed by the audience.

At this point, it is the Mayor himself who intervenes (42). In purely sequential terms, it is the Mayor who interrupts Parada, not the audience. The Mayor's mitigatory negative politeness toward Parada both in his pre-sequence ('**Please, Mr. Parada, please. Just a minute**', 42, 43) and at the end of his speech ('**Mr. Parada, excuse me, you may proceed with your turn now**', 134, 137) is clear evidence that he has indeed interfered with the council member's speaking rights.

The Mayor then tactically appropriates the sequential-construction function of the audience's moves, and he construes them as a 'possible interruption'. The entire edifice of the Mayor's speech — his rationale to launch an appeal to legal regulations — is based on this assumption.

We could speculate about what sorts of experiences the Mayor was bringing in to interpret the event. For instance, occupations of the meeting locale by resistant audiences, such as the 1984 incident I described earlier, might have counted among these experiences. But it should be stressed that locally and organizationally, the Mayor's intervention seems unwarranted.

The Mayor has succeeded in redefining the situation of talk. When Parada resumes his turn, he recycles the Mayor's interpretation and he asserts that he was

'*trying to reply to- to some questions posed by a neighborhood association*' (140-141). But, somehow, in the confrontation with the audience Parada has also lost some ground: now Tierno Galván is no longer evoked in his political institutional role as a socialist Mayor, but in his less conflictive identity as a '*professor*' (151). Additionally, the quotation is finally introduced in indirect style with a subordinate clause (152), which conveys less immediacy and rhetorical force.

3.4.2 *The audience's antilanguage*

We must also examine what range of permissible behaviors have been left for the members of the audience, since they have been constrained '**neither to applaud nor to reject the performance by the representatives of the people**' (71-72, 74-76).

It would appear that the audience has managed to produce concerted responses throughout the episode without visibly violating the constraints on their participation. These responses operate as a relief mechanism against the Mayor's impositions.

It is puzzling to observe the frequency, distribution, and acoustic properties of the audience's *coughs*. Coughs appear at content-loaded points in the Mayor's argumentation, they gradually increase in number, and practically disappear once Parada completes his quotation at the end.

I cannot claim that all the cough tokens have the same conversational management function and pragmatic significance. However, at least some coughs must be viewed as disaffiliative moves, in light of their timing and distribution in relation to focal points in the speech. For instance, coughs occur at slots where, in informal conversation, back-channel disagreements may have taken place; they symbolically constitute *ironic counter-assessments* of the Mayor's arguments; they also occupy the slot of evaluative moves such as clapping, booing, or disaffiliative gestures. In lines 52 and 57, for instance, what sounds as *enacted* ironic coughs (ahum-ahum) by one member of the audience punctuate the expressions '**democratic systems of the world**' and '**western democracies**' respectively. These coughs could be paraphrased in English as "Sure, sure" or "Su:::re", and they reveal a mistrust in the proposed values of formal 'democracy'. Similarly, in lines 116, 118, 119 and 121, coughs act as counterpoints to the Mayor's ideologically loaded statements about the necessary role of the press in '**inform[ing] the people of Vigo**' [o povo de Vigo] '**of everything that were taking place**' in the council meeting. For the Mayor, '**everything that were taking place**' must thus exclude the audience's reactions, as the '**plenary**' session (113) comprises only the formal debates among council members.

Metaphorically, then, the audience has been unvoiced, de-voiced, devoid of voice — but they have not been totally silenced: they cough. Coughs simply symbolize the *antilanguage*, the absence of verbalization, the deviant grammar of non-verbal moves. The audience's utterances are irregular, a-lingual tokens: neither Galizan nor Spanish, for the subordinate do not speak legitimate languages. Actually, subordinate audiences do not speak, period. Truly subordinate audiences — unlike this one — should just listen, that is, they should (etymologically) 'audit'.

3.5 *The manipulation of linguistic resources*

Finally, we will examine what specific linguistic resources the Mayor employs in his speech. This will be done at three levels: prosody, rhetorical strategies, and language choice.

3.5.1 *Prosody*

The prosodic register chosen by the Mayor is the reportive style typical of political and formal discourse characterized by a slow tempo, short intonational groups, clear diction, and, particularly, rising final junctures prior to the numerous pauses. This style abounds in my data on political discourse, in contrast to prosodic codes channeling informal meanings (Alvarez-Cáccamo 1991), and it is unmistakably identifiable as a marker of public speech in today's Spain.

3.5.2 *Rhetorical structure*

In rhetorical structure, the Mayor's speech approximates that of dry legal prose. The text is designed to give an appearance of solidity; it is primarily held together by disjunctors and by '**if ... then**' logical operators, and it is structured mostly in three-part sequences and two-part contrasts. Both types of templates are characteristic of formal public discourse, and they are typically designed to invite affiliative responses (Grady & Potter 1985); the fact that, in this case, many of the slots for affiliative responses are filled by *disaffiliative* moves must be interpreted, precisely, as a sign of the audience's resistance. Sequences such as '**democratic ... systems ... of the world**' (51) or '**the performance ... by the representatives ... of the people**' (74-76) show a tripartite organization in short breath groups separated by pauses. Contrast templates appear, for instance, in '**neither to applaud ... nor to reject**' (71-72), or in nearly empty expressions such as '**an identified or identifiable person**' (100).

The content structure of the Mayor's speech, while striving for architectonic symmetry, is imprecise and reiterative. Among other phenomena, we find: repetitive contrasts such as '**identified or identifiable**' (100); circular redundancies such as '**I'm also warning you that [my] legal duty ... would be ... to issue a**

warning — a warning that I'm issuing now' (85-93); and *if* clauses (such as **'if someone tries to interrupt'**, 90) that are essentially ironic if we consider that, for the Mayor, the hypothetical condition is indeed present, as the act of the 'possible interruption' has taken place.

Despite any deviations from oratorical canons that may be revealed by close scrutiny, the Mayor's speech appears in its structure as an exemplary piece of modern political rhetoric, characterized by the abundance of "empty formulae, catchwords and stereotypes" (such as **'democratic state of Law'**, **'representatives of the People'**, or **'democratic peace'**) which at the moment "exclud[e] any kind of reflection" by the audience on their ideological content (Wodak 1989a:141). The Authorial Voice thus comes across as neutral and neutered, indexically castrated. In the multilayered structure of voicing, the Mayor can ultimately be said to be performing an act of reported speech: he is uttering the words of the Law.

3.5.3 *The standard language*

Finally, it is significant that the variety chosen for his account of legal directives is formal Galizan; specifically, the Mayor leans toward the literary standard, as shown by the use of lexical variants such as **rejeitar** 'reject' (72), **sá** 'room' (101) or **pregar** 'request' (126). Such variants represent simultaneously the standard language as a norm in formal conversational behavior, and the Standard Language as a *flag* of Galizan democracy. While the audience's a-lingual coughs may be said to constitute an antilanguage in this context, the Mayor's voice comes across as the truest language possible: as *the* 'truth language' (Anderson 1983), 'the given language' (Eco 1986). In a sublime act of ventriloquism, the Mayor speaks the message of a superior actor, and he appears as its mere servant, **'obliged by Law'** (125) or by his **'legal duty'** (85) to warn the hypothetical disruptive individuals and, if need be, expel them from the room. Through these argumentations, the Mayor declines any personal responsibility in the very decisions that render his behavior that of a mayor.¹⁴

To summarize, the Mayor's speech in terms of language choice, prosodic register, and rhetorical style is genuinely formal Galizan. Nevertheless, at a symbolic level, we could say that the Mayor is simply speaking the political language of Spain with Galizan words ... which is not the same, of course, as speaking the political language of Spain with *Spanish* words. That is, in discourse structure and in prosodic style, this Galizan speech practically matches, point by point, the features of Spanish political oratory. Broad discourse convergence is the best evidence that the tacit model for the construction of 'Galizan' as a code of

authority is the Spanish declarative political register, acquired by political figures prior to the recent ideologization of speech behavior in Galiza.¹⁵

Further, ideologically, the Mayor's speech embodies a doctrinal discourse linked to sectorial interests under the guise of emblems such as 'the Law of the Land', 'the Will of the People', 'the Good of the Nation', or any other abstract, higher directive. If the Mayor's message embodies the necessary maintenance of the democratic doctrine, the doctrinal group that controls and administers the discursive resources is the new political class, the 'experts in democracy' in Post-Franco Spain. In a sort of 'chain of authentication' (Irvine 1989) that accompanies the delivery of democratic doctrine, the Mayor is uttering the words of the expert (the Secretary of the Council, seated at the Mayor's right) who, in turn, can read the language of Law.

4. Conclusion

Quoting a reputed politician's words in support of one's arguments, or occupying the territory of interaction through a rhetorically designed disciplinary sermon are not issues merely circumscribed to the time and space of the event. One cannot avoid perceiving that both Parada and the Mayor were attempting to achieve something else with their samples of 'artful talk' (Brenneis 1987) — perhaps to emulate the grandeur of parliamentary debate and, thus, obtain some further gains in terms of image. From other meetings, I gathered that excessive rhetoric could be a double-edge weapon. In one meeting, comments of disapproval from some participants followed a verbose intervention by a council member, who was reminded that 'here we are not in the [State] senate'. This reluctance to see local politics as a mere mirror of state or autonomous politics may explain the audience's resistance to willingly accept Parada's gambit of quoting Tierno Galván.

Yet, such gambits are often used in local politics, as governments of major cities are also platforms for higher political positions.¹⁶ The long-range social effects of 'artful talk' in political performance in terms of personal prestige go well beyond those derived from eventual success in a given speech event (Brenneis 1987; Wodak 1989a).¹⁷ The immediate goal in 'successful performance' may be to pacify an audience, to restore order, or to produce a forceful political argument. But the long-term effects may be to consolidate the speaker's prestige and to improve his or her status, perceived authority, social position, or 'political capital' (Bourdieu 1991:194ff).

Through discourse manipulation and alliances, institutional figures engage in a struggle for the *local hegemony* of the exchange. But this struggle also alludes to macro-social relationships of confrontation, domination, and subordination. As Bourdieu (1982) points out,

linguistic exchanges, which are relationships of communication *par excellence*, are also relationships of symbolic power where the relations of force between speakers or their respective social groups become actualized (1982:13f).¹⁸

Further, council meetings involve relations of power not only among opposing political parties, but also between two collective actors: the institutional representatives, and the audiences. The primary relation which sustains a public event of this sort can be called a *confrontational alliance*; based on mere co-presence, it consists of the ensuing unequal distribution of conversational roles. It is, in brief, an alliance between those who are entitled to speak and those who are only entitled to listen, to laugh, or to cough.

But the space of talk is (or is constructed as) too limited for both sets of participants, speakers and audiences, to have a legitimate voice. Both collective actors represent 'The People', each in its own terms: audiences come from 'The People'; members of the Council are democratically elected 'representatives of The People'. In order for the political institutional machinery to function, both 'peoples' need to be present. But in order for one type of 'people' to have a sanctioned, authoritative voice, the other must be mute.¹⁹

Institutional authority, therefore, derives both *positively* from an institutional figure's linguistic practices, and dialectically, *oppositionally*, from other participants' practices of affiliation or resistance. Thus, a Mayor's speech is disciplinary inasmuch as the audience's protest is locally construed as a verbal act of insubordination; and a Mayor's affiliative alliance with other public figures is practiced to legitimize institutional authority inasmuch as this authority has been perceived as challenged by the audience's protest. A pervading resource in this hydraulic game is discourse, both as material resource and as ideological content, unequally distributed and unequally interpreted according to the social identity of its producer (see Gumperz 1992b). In the production of discourse, the various layers (sequential-grammatical, pragmatic, and ideological) superpose each other like irregular geological strata. My objective has been to excavate these strata selectively and critically, in order to reconstruct the dynamic process of authority-building in political institutional interaction.

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Notes

- * An earlier version of this work was presented at a session on Urban Language organized by John Gumperz in the 1990 International Pragmatics Conference in Barcelona. I thank the participants in that session for their ideas and suggestions, and Pedro Lewin-Fischer for his generous discussion of my analyses. I also thank Helga Kothhoff for her comments to this article. The data are part of the on-going project *ADPA — Análise do Discurso Público Actual* (The Analysis of Current Public Discourse), carried out by members of the Department of General Linguistics and Literary Theory, University of A Corunha (Galizan Government Research Grant XUGA10403A 94).
- Helsloot (1989) exhorts linguists to examine specific practices of alliance in order to effectively turn the study of language into a social discipline: "Linguists study, often on too abstract a level, the way social groups are 'articulated' by language practices. Alternatively, they could take up organizing/dispersing practices, struggles for schism and alliance, as part of the way in which human individuals form their lives (their identities/differences) through language" (1989:564).
 - Additional data and discussions can be found in Alvarez-Cáccamo (1991, 1993, 1996).
 - See, in this respect, Irvine's (1979) discussion of formality and informality in public events.
 - It has been argued that internal ideological coherence may be based precisely on an inherent contradiction in regard to which interpreters-readers must align in order to make sense of a given 'form of discourse'; this form of discourse is called an *ideological complex* (Hodge & Kress 1993:157ff). If so, the various treatments that different interpreters may give to ideological statements would be a constitutive part of the process of circulation of discourse.
 - Expressions in Galizan Portuguese will be transcribed in the **bold** font, while Spanish will be represented in *italics*. English translations will use the same fonts, enclosed in single quotation marks.
 - For official names and titles, I will maintain the Galizan spelling system used by the institutions, which greatly resembles Spanish and differs significantly from Portuguese.
 - As an anecdote, one of the objects of common, congenial admiration for Tierno Galván was his welcoming speech in Latin to Pope John Paul II during the latter's first visit to Spain in 1982.
 - I am using the standard Portuguese spelling system for Galizan Portuguese. Some departures from the Portuguese norm are systematic phenomena in conversational Galizan, and they are reflected as such; some standard Portuguese equivalents of Galizan forms or phenomena are provided in parentheses the first time they occur.
 - A discussion of 'pronominal pragmatics' in British and American political oratory along similar lines can be found in Wilson (1990:44-76).
 - Wilson (1990:63) observes shifts from "the personal voice, encoded in 'I', to the institutionalized voice encoded in 'we'" in Thatcher's oratory. In my data, however, the meanings are subtler: for instance, the Mayor's self-reference in third person as '**the President of the Council**' undoubtedly invokes an institutional identity, while in Parada's speech some inclusive 'we's' invoke 'personal' collective identities as 'citizens with a home'.
 - In terms of language usage, for example, the then-Mayor of Vigo spoke Galizan while his co-partisan Parada employed Spanish. The nationalist faction of the PSdeG-PSOE is perhaps a minority, in contrast to more visible attitudes such as that of the Mayor of A Corunha, Francisco Vázquez, who in his many years in office has taken a public stand against Galizan and things Galizan.
 - It may be the case that 'incomplete' turns and 'interruptions' are the expected norm for a given type of interaction. When phatic contact is emphasized, for example, one needs not produce or expect turns expressing complete propositions, but merely turns that contribute to the on-going cooperative flow of communication. These 'incomplete' turns may never be retaken, their content may never be recaptured, and neither the participants nor the analyst may ever know

- what was actually intended by them. For interruptions in an alternative speech exchange system (legal discourse), see Hayden (1987).
- 13 In accepting the denial of one's speaking rights, there must exist some sort of compensatory outcome. In my view, such a compensatory outcome is the confirmation of the participants' expectation that the unfolding interaction effectively disguises, under the ideological emblem of consensual necessity, the intrinsically unequal nature of institutional encounters.
 - 14 There exist certain parallels between the Mayor's performance and impersonal narration in prose. As noted, the Mayor is performing an implicit act of reported speech, and a hypothetical narrative of 'what would happen if', interspersed with metacomments on his own fictional role. He has become something of an 'impersonal narrator [who] enjoys absolute authority for the fictional world' (Ryan 1981:534). As such, his authority derives from 'logical necessity': 'Everything the impersonal narrator says yields a fact for the fictional world ... His lack of personality protects him from any kind of human fallibility ... The absolute authority of the impersonal narrator for the fictional world thus derives from the authority of a puppeteer, who directs every one of his moves from a superior world'.
 - 15 In a related sense, Joseph (1987) observes that one of the tendencies in the standardization of 'low' varieties is to emulate, structurally or lexically, the 'high', prestigious variety. Among the levels on which this 'synecdochic', upward linguistic convergence takes place, prosody is perhaps the most resistant, but prosodic convergence does occur, too. Joseph mentions the significant fact that, for instance, "[t]here is evidence that some members of the Roman cultural avant-garde actually began speaking Latin not with the stress accent that is fundamental to it, but with the pitch accent of Greek" (1987:98).
 - 16 Council member Jorge Parada was later appointed Provincial Governor of Pontevedra, a higher office. Other council members were elected to the Galizan parliament. For his part, Manoel Soto continued in office until he fell in disgrace within his own party; he ceased running for Mayor in the 1991 elections.
 - 17 For Brenneis (1987:502), "[a]rtful talk is socially powerful, not so much for the content it conveys as for the opportunities for display and interpersonal manoeuvring it affords. Successful performance can both serve immediate communicative goals for individuals and enhance their reputation and prestige". Similarly, Wodak (1989a:141) points out that "[t]he speakers employ jargon in order to acquire prestige, but without this prestige being justified by the imparted content of the form".
 - 18 "[L]es rapports de communication par excellence que sont les échanges linguistiques sont aussi des rapports de pouvoir symbolique où s'actualisent les rapports de force entre les locuteurs ou leurs groupes respectifs".
 - 19 On the manipulation of the constructs 'people' and 'popular' in political and cultural discourse, see Bourdieu (1990c).

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Appendix: Transcription Notation

→ ↑ ↓ —	sustained, rising, falling, or truncated intonational group
{[hi]}	higher pitch over segment
{[lo]}	lower pitch over segment
{[f]}	<i>fortis</i> , louder enunciation
{[ac]}	accelerated tempo
{[st]}	<i>staccato</i> rhythm
CAPS	louder volume over short segment
*	emphatic or contrastive accent
'	rhythmic accent
..	short pause (less than 0.5 sec.)
...	longer pause (between 0.5 sec. and 1 sec.)
< >	silence (in number of seconds)
-	truncated sound
:	lengthened sound
[abcd efgh]	overlapping and latching
(ahum)	cough tokens
(xx)	unintelligible syllable
(=)	gloss or clarification of segment
[()]	comment