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## Face issues in L2 tutorials via videoconferencing: the role of smile as a co-verbal semiotic resource.

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Synchronous online language teaching involves the simultaneous employment of a range of techno-semio-pedagogical competences (Guichon, 2012). Indeed, teacher-student interaction is made particularly dynamic due to the flexibility and versatility of digital tools and the Internet (Develotte & Drissi, 2013). Among the necessary professional skills and strategies for online synchronous teaching, this paper will focus on the specific dimensions of affective competence (Saarni, 1988 ; Mikolajczak, 2014) and the social need to maintain a climate of comfort during one-to-one online tutoring interactions (Denis, 2003 ; Quintin, 2008 ; Garrot-Lavoué et al., 2009 ; Dejean-Thircuir et al., 2010 ; Guichon & Tellier, 2017).

In this paper, we focus on a particular social phenomenon that is strongly linked to emotions and their social regulation: face work (Goffman, 1955, 1967, 1973 ; Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987). Applied to CALL, our aim is to observe how this social practice is manifested in an interactional environment where the perception of the other is mediated by a videoconferencing platform.

We propose to study this question by examining interaction data from the VADIM (*Visioconférences pour l'Apprentissage de la langue, Dispositif Interculturel et Multimodal* - Videoconferencing for language learning, Intercultural and Multimodal project) project which brought together in Spring 2019, 34 trainee teachers of French as a foreign language and 34 learners of French L2 (CEFR levels A1 - C2) in Denmark and Italy. Online synchronous interactions were conducted in pairs via the videoconferencing platform *Adobe Connect* over an eight-week period. This data source is complemented by written sources that formed part of the learning design (teachers' logbooks, pedagogical reflexive reports) and research data (questionnaires and interview data).

Employing multimodal interaction analysis (Norris, 2004), multimodal transcriptions of interaction data from two sessions allowed us to annotate participants' facial expressions and co-verbal gestures using ELAN (Sloetjes & Wittenburg, 2008). We will present a sequential analysis of two video extracts that focus on the trainee-teacher - learner collaborations to negotiate the meaning of French idiomatic expressions.

Our initial results outline that shared smiles between participants play a specific role in a series of 4-5 types of face work with respect to face threats, the main function of smiles is to signal, soften or even cover intercomprehension breakdowns in order to maintain conversation balance. Smile is also employed to express empathy and share emotional episodes. In the latter, we noticed that smile exchanges are integrated into the larger and complex phenomenon of interactional synchrony. The latter could be interpreted as a semiotic co-verbal strategy employed to overcome the physical distance and the fact that it is impossible to have full access to the other participant's physical interaction space.

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