Media dialogical networks
and political argumentation

Ivan Leudar and Jiří Nekvapil

In this paper we provide a synopsis of our research on *dialogical networks* in media (Leudar 1998; Leudar and Nekvapil 1998; Nekvapil and Leudar 1998; Nekvapil and Leudar 2002a, 2002b, Leudar, Marsland and Nekvapil 2004, Nekvapil and Leudar in press). We outline the concept, provide an example of analysis with that concept, and summarize constitutive properties of these networks. The analysis uses materials from both Czech and British newspaper articles and television debates, all of which relate to politically sensitive events. The Czech materials in particular concern inter-ethnic problems which were acute between 1992–1995, first in the now dissolved Czechoslovakia and then in the Czech Republic.

Keywords: mass media, dialogical networks, language of media, Czech and British media, Roma, political argumentation, dialogicity, intertextuality, sequential structures, adjacency pairs

Introduction

Mass media are not often studied as dialogues. Lena Jayyusi, for instance, wrote the following:

> "one of the salient features of media texts is that they are addressed not to a specific person or sets of persons with known properties, relevancies and beliefs, but rather to a 'public at large' which could include a general distribution of professional affiliations, political and religious beliefs, skills and 'knowledge' of substantive matters, interests, and experiences."

and she continued

> "a second salient feature of media texts is that they are not dialogic: responses, problems, corrections, clarifications cannot be produced spatio-temporally to coincide with the text or with each other as in an ordinary conversation." (Jayyusi 1991)

Other more recent studies (cf. Clayman and Heritage 2002; Greatbatch 1998; Hutchby 1995) found, however, that mass media have their own kind of dialogicity, and we ourselves have formulated the concept of 'dialogical network' to provide for this (e.g. Nekvapil and Leudar 1998). The concept can be pre-defined as follows: politicians and other individuals speaking on a theme in the media frequently address others who are not present. The media are networked in that newspapers report what has been said on the radio or television, and people 'on the air' refer to newspaper reports. Both political events and their reports are often duplicated, and this makes political challenges made in the media more likely to be noted and responded to. In dialogical networks, "even opponents who do not wish to be seen meeting face to face can argue in public" (Leudar and Nekvapil 1998:44). In general, the concept of 'dialogical network' highlights the inter-textual character of talk in media. Participants are sometimes involved in two 'conversations' at the same time — with those present and those absent. The concept may also clarify the way journalists compose their articles — the settings into which they put happenings need to be understood in terms of participants' relevancies. The term 'network' is, of course, not new and it has recently been used in a variety of disciplines. It appears in 'actor network theory' (Law and Hassard 1999) and elsewhere in sociology (e.g. Fisher 1982); in the study of literature (Kittler 1990) as well as in cognitive and computer sciences and psychology (Bechtel 1991). The salient feature of *dialogical networks* is that they are not models of something invisible — the concept is a tool which turns the analyst's attention to dialogical properties of media texts and to their distributed character. As a result, the elements and the connections between them in such networks are always concrete social happenings.

Extract (1) summarizes one evolving dialogical network, analyzed in detail in Nekvapil and Leudar (1998).

(1)   "**Put stop to Sudetans** (*Svobodné Slovo* 13/1/1993)
       Praha (fra) — The chairman of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party L.
       Dvořák *welcomed the statement* of the Czech Premier V. Klaus, that his
       government does not intend to negotiate about further restitution *de-*

mands of Sudetan Germans. He *said* that the CSP considers the question of the transfer of Sudetan Germans as solved. He *characterized* as completely uncivilized ruminations about possible terrorist actions in the Borders, which were *mentioned* in the Sunday TV debate by the chairman of the newly established Democratic Party of Sudetenland.

At the yesterday's press conference, also the proposal of the law concerning the restitution of the church property was discussed." … (our italics)[1]

The journalist may not have used our term 'network', but he presented the happenings as dialogical events using verbs of communication to represent individual actions, organizing them in pairs (e.g. claim-assessment; demand-rejection). Taking the events in their temporal order, 'Sudetan Germans' produced 'demands'. Klaus rejected the 'demands' and Dvořák 'welcomed' this rejection, 'characterizing' the talk about terrorist violence as 'uncivilized ruminations'. All these events, however, did not take place in the same setting and at the same time — Dvořák spoke at a press conference, 'the ruminations' took place in a TV debate and the other happenings somewhere else altogether. Note that the actual locales and times of these events are not relevant — the journalist brings together actions which are dialogically contingent. He does not do this arbitrarily but because of politicians' own obvious and expressed relevancies. What matters to the journalist is who reacted to whom, how, and why; what is not necessarily relevant is whether these exchanges were face to face or not. There are two important points to take on board. One is that the journalist highlights the relevancies between the happenings and so presents them as coherent social proceedings. The other is that the journalist reproduces publicly dialogical events and in doing so he amplifies their reach and possibly their effect.

The extract (2) documents the intertextual character of another media format, namely a television interview, in this case one broadcast by the British TV station ITV in 1995 (see Leudar 1998). The two speakers in the TV studio directed their utterances not only to each other, or to the TV audience, but also to the others 'outside'. In talking to McGuinness, Dimbleby, the TV moderator, makes relevant what the Secretary of State wants to know from McGuinness. Moreover, McGuinness does not just answer Dimbleby's question, but also targets the Secretary of State, who is, however, not in the studio. Moreover, McGuinness does not speak only for himself but also for a collectivity.

(2)   **McGuinness & Dimbleby (ITV 12/3/1995)**
"D: er (..) Mr McGuinness I want to test (..) your commitment to the

peace process (..) before entering direct talks with you (..) *the Secretary of State (.) wants you to make clear* (.) that you will give him assurances (.) about (.) your commitment (..) to get rid (.) of weapons. *can you give such assurances?* (..)

McG: *well Sinn Fein's position is quite clear* and has been clear for some time. (.) our project is to take the guns all the guns (.) British and Irish (.) out of Irish po- Irish politics that's what we're about. (.) and what people have to recognise and understand (.) is that Sinn Fein have been involved (..) in this process for quite some time not just since the start of the cease-fire (..) but for many ah years before. (..)" (our italics)

So in both TV debates and in newspapers, we can find instances of a clear orientation at what we call a 'network' — in the studio the participants do not talk just to each other but target others elsewhere, in print the journalist brings the network together in a coherent whole, and in doing this in a public space, he provides an opportunity for the network to develop. In the next section we provide an example of how the concept of dialogical network can be used to analyze the flow of media discourse extended in time.

Roma network

A detailed analysis of this dialogical network is available in Nekvapil and Leudar (2002a). Here we present only that part of it which occurred in newspaper articles. Moreover, we select the articles only from the period of 6/1/93–8/1/93. Consider first the following piece:

(3) "**The procurator's office proposes an exceptional migration law** (*České a moravskoslezské zemědělské noviny* **6/1/1993**)
Prague (sot) — The proposed law concerning the extraordinary measures to safeguard public order, which reacts to the unmanageable situation created in some municipalities by the great concentration of Roma inhabitants, was prepared and submitted in the last few days to the Parliament of the ČR [Czech Republic] by the office of the General Procurator of ČR. Initiated by the Interior Ministry, the law reacting to illegal notices of municipal authorities in Jirkov and in Ústí nad Labem would be enacted by the Czech government, in a specific parish and with a limited application. During such a period the user or the owner of a flat would have to apply to a residence registration office for a permit for his visitors (except for direct relatives). In these cases, the duration of stay

could not exceed five days and, moreover, each adult visitor should pay ten crowns per day. In the case of non-payment the illegal inhabitants [lit. 'black dwellers' in the original] would be threatened by a high fine or by an unconditional prison sentence. According to the statute, the taking in of lodgers would also be subject to the agreement of the municipal or parish office. In the interview with ČMZN the deputy General Procurator J. Patočka rejected the view that the proposal of the law is in contradiction with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. 'The use of extraordinary measures during an extraordinary event is common, and the Charter allows it' he said and used as an example the law of ČR concerning fire control."

The article starts by reporting that the General Procurator's office *proposed* a law to the Czech Parliament. The contextualization of this proposal is intricate. The journalist relates it to the situation in some municipalities, and to actions the local authorities took to resolve it. The proposed law is referred to as a 'migration law' since it would have resolved "the unmanageable situation created in some municipalities by the great concentration of Roma inhabitants" by restricting the freedom of movement and residence.

The author of the article informs the readers of the content of the law, but does not provide his own assessment of it. Instead, he reports the assessment by unnamed other agents, according to whom the law violates human rights. The journalist then reports a reaction to this assessment by the representative of the agency which proposed the law. He thus creates a sequence 'assessment-rejection', which, however, did not take place in a face-to-face conversation but was distributed in time and space. Notice that the author of the original assessment is not specified: it could have been for instance, a Member of Parliament, a Roma activist or somebody else with access to media. In fact, the deputy could be reacting to a widely voiced reaction — as we have shown elsewhere it is not always easy to determine to whom a participant was reacting (Nekvapil and Leudar in press). In fact, there is often not a unique antecedent of second parts of adjacency pair structures.

The rejection of the assessment by the Deputy General Procurator is reported indirectly, but the backing of it is verbatim. The comparison he uses results in a collection which contains two extraordinary events: 'a fire' and 'the great concentration of Roma inhabitants'. The article therefore presents Roma as a source of public disorder and does this in the voice of a state official. What about the journalist's own stance? We have seen that he did not voice his own assessment of the law, but what about his assessment of the problem motivating

the law? The problem for him is the concentration of Roma and not, for instance, Czechs' reactions to them. By reporting this in a narrator's voice, without a comment or attribution of the view to anybody, he presents it as something generally agreed on. The sense in which the presence of Roma is a problem is left unsaid, but it is implicit in terms of the activities which are bound to the category Roma (see Leudar and Nekvapil 2000).

The last important point to note about the Deputy Procurator's rejection is that it was not quite spontaneous — it was elicited by the newspaper. In other words, the newspaper does not just describe the rejection, it participates in it. So we can see that the article (3) both reconstructs and constructs a chain of the following dialogical events:

– the action of municipal authorities in Jirkov and Ústí nad Labem,
– the reaction to their notices by the office of the General Procurator,
– the critical assessment of this proposal by an unknown agent or agents, and finally
– the rejection of this assessment by the Deputy Procurator.

Why did this chain of events not stop with the action of the municipal authorities in Jirkov and Ústí nad Labem, or with the reaction of the General Procurator's Office? One reason is the controversial legal status of the local notices (were they legal or illegal, right or wrong?), then there is the controversial status of the proposed law (was it against the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms?). Even so, it is clear that the network would not have developed without the media. The article reveals that the journalist played an active role in generating the network. He not only summarized others' reactions to some event, but he also interviewed the Deputy Procurator on his own initiative and made his reaction public. The article itself is then a dialogical event in the network in its own right.

Was *České a moravskoslezské zemědělské noviny* (ČMZN) the only newspaper involved in the network at this stage? Clearly not — the events were reported on that day in many Czech national papers and the 'migration law' became a political problem. Some newspapers named the critics of the proposed law, for instance the following:

(4) "**The procurator's proposal. Open Racism** (*Lidové Noviny* 6/1/1993)
Prague (jis) — The chairman of the constitutional committee of the House of Deputies of the Czech Parliament M. Výborný (KDU-ČSL) [Czechoslovak Christian Democratic Party] characterized as inflammatory the General Procurator of the ČR's wording of the law on exceptional

measures to secure public order. 'It contains more errors than it has paragraphs,' Mr Výborný said about the proposed law. According to him, the part of the exposé in which the need for the introduction of the law was connected to the large concentration of Roma population was an open expression of racism. M. Výborný, moreover, said that that sort of law is not necessary and highlighted the fact that there exist many criminal, legal and civil norms which can solve the problems."

The critic is the Chairman of the Constitutional Committee of the Czech Parliament, according to whom the law is flawed and inflammatory, racist. The journalist does not provide the proximal context in which M. Výborný made the critique (was it in the Parliament, at a press conference, speaking to journalists?) — the relevant context is simply that he is reacting specifically to the proposal of the General Procurator. The journalist then presents the reader with a proposal-rejection sequence.

The predicate 'racist' attributed to the law is in fact highlighted by the journalist in the headline 'open racism'; the same assessment appeared in the headline of another article published on that same day in the Czech daily *Mladá fronta Dnes*. Whether the law was indeed racist became a problem which now motivated the development of the network, with subsequent articles reporting reactions to Výborný 's assessment of the proposed law, for instance:

(5)   "**Jiří Šetina defends his law proposal. A well meant provocation** (*Lidové Noviny* **7/1/1993**)
PRAHA (jiš) — The proposal of a law, which the General Procurator J. Šetina sent to the House of Deputies was yesterday rejected as unacceptable by the Chairman of the Constitutional Committee M. Výborný (KDU-ČSL) and also by the Chairman of the Security Committee V. Šuman (ODA).

After yesterday's meeting of the General Procurator with deputies and the Chairman of the House of Deputies, J. Šetina denied that the exposé of the law could be characterized as racist. M. Výborný, on the other hand, quoted several sentences from the text, which are in his words expressions of racial hatred.

'We consider the situation in North West Bohemia to be explosive, to be threatening and I personally consider it to be extraordinary' said J. Šetina, and he added that the law proposal was meant as an initiative providing a working model of the law. As he also said, the unlawful notices in some towns and parishes which are threatened by the migration of Roma inhabitants, are 'a well meant provocation.'"

The proposed law has now been rejected by two leading politicians — the Chairmen of the Constitutional and Security Committees. The reader is not told of the circumstances of the rejections — such details are irrelevant; the point is that the rejection is not just local but duplicated and distributed, but the journalist collects the rejections in one place.

The title and the rest of the piece reveal that the adjacency pair structure 'proposal-rejection' is now joined by a third part. We could characterize this, together with the journalist, as 'the defence of the proposal'. The defence is now done by the General Procurator himself, not by his Deputy. Why did he join the network now? His office has become the *target* of critique, and the law proposal was attacked by the relevant politicians.

The next day, that is on 8.1.1993, the Czech national daily *Rudé Právo* printed a long interview with the General Procurator, which dominated the homepage. The title of the piece was, translated literally, "With Jiří Šetina about the extraordinary measures against crime — He rejects the accusations of racism". The text of the interview was placed next to the article "The Deputy Body demands the resignation of Šetina". The important point is that Body is a Roma Deputy in the Czech Parliament (and the only one at the time). He is the first Roma to appear in the dialogical network.

(6)   **With Jiří Šetina about the extraordinary measures against crime. He rejects the accusations of racism (*Rudé Právo* 8/1/1993)**
The proposal of the law on exceptional measures to safeguard public order has so far not met with the approval of the deputies in the Czech Parliament. The Procurator's Office of ČR reacted by this proposal to the public notices of the local councillors in Jirkov and in some other parishes, where they decided to deal in their own way with dishonest elements which are congregating in their neighbourhoods. But, for example, Miloslav Výborný (KDU-ČSL), the Deputy of the Constitutional Committee of the Parliament of ČR, characterized the exposé of the law proposal as 'blatantly racist'. 'If it was compared or directly labelled as racist, this is at best disloyal from a colleague' the General Procurator Šetina told us. 'The notice is general and nobody should accuse the Office of the Procurator, that it is directed against the Roma ethnic group. If somebody commits three or four times criminal deeds of robbery, then he is for me neither Czech nor Slovak, but not even, for example, Swiss, but a dangerous recidivist. If the large part of crimes are being committed by Roma, a social problem is involved amongst other things, but the law does not recognize such differences or cause them.'" [two-third of the interview omitted]

The first half of this extract contains a summary of the dialogical network: the reaction of parliamentary deputies to the action of the Office of the Procurator, which in turn is presented as a reaction to actions of local councillors in Jirkov and elsewhere. The reaction of the Chairman of Constitutional Committee, which we know from the article (4), is mentioned specifically. In *Rudé Právo*, the journalist characterizes it as an accusation, that is the first part of an adjacency sequence. Šetina's response is characterized as a rejection, that is the second part of the sequence. The whole sequence is in fact provided for the reader in the headline. The Procurator does not simply reject the accusation, but he also backs the rejection and his reasoning is of some interest. He argues that the law is not racist because it does not concern Roma but criminals. The last clause in the argument is revealing — it is not the problem for the Procurator that the majority of crimes is committed by Roma, nor are the social causes of this 'fact'. The irony is, however, that the proposed law would selectively criminalize actions of a particular ethnic group and so it would itself potentially increase the 'criminality' of that group. Note also that the criminality of Roma is presupposed in the procurator's argument; it is not a claim in need of a warrant. We have argued elsewhere that this is how 'stereotypic' predicates are typically used (see Leudar and Nekvapil 2000). The Procurator comes very near to re-categorizing Roma as criminals.

(7)   "**Deputy Body demands the resignation of Šetina (*Rudé Právo 8/1/1993*)**
PRAGUE (zr) — The Roma Deputy Ladislav Body is calling on the General Procurator of Czech Republic, JUDR Jiří Šetina, to resign. The reason is the proposal of the so-called Migration Law, which was put forward by the General Procurator at the end of last year. Body considers it 'as a gross violation of constitutional order'. The proposal of the law contradicts the constitutional order in ČR, it is in contradiction with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms and its acceptance would lead to curtailing the rights of an entire ethnic minority living in ČR, Deputy Body writes in his Thursday's declaration, which he made available to the editor's office of Rudé Právo."

The way Body entered the network is of course conditional on his particular dialogical and political position. The way the participants are categorized in the article is revealing: the 'Parliamentary Deputy' calls for a resignation of the 'General Procurator'. Should it have been an ordinary citizen who called upon the procurator to resign, his 'press release' would at best have ended on the letters page.

On the whole, the following dialogical events were relevant in the dialogical network which we are analyzing (for details see Nekvapil and Leudar 2002a).

– the publication of the town notices in Jirkov and in Ústí nad Labem,
– the lodging of the proposed migration law, prepared by the office of the General Procurator of the Czech Republic on 28.12.1992,
– the meeting of the General Procurator with the Members and the Chairman of the House of Deputies on 6.1.1993,
– the press conference of the Roma Civic Initiative (ROI) in Prague on 9.1.1993
– the television debate broadcast on 10.1.1993,
– the press conference given by the ROI in Ostrava on 15.1.1993
– individual press releases by leading Czech politicians or by senior civil servants, sometimes made public through the Czech Press Agency (ČTK) and appearing in various newspapers
– various newspaper interviews, news reports, and editorials
– various news from the ČTK

The heterogeneity of these 'events' is a crucial characteristic of dialogical networks. They are communications distributed in mass media, accessible through it and mediated by it. The participation of media can of course take a varied form, for instance

– a report about a non-media dialogical event, or
– a report of some event organized for the media (e.g. a press conference),
– a newspaper piece collecting several dialogical events in one article, or even simply
– publishing a political declaration.

Austin (1962) argued that descriptions are performatives like other speech acts. In this sense, newspapers do not simply describe what happens in emerging networks, they play a performative role; in other words, they 'do things'. The participation of mass media is a necessary condition for the emergence of a dialogical network, even though not a sufficient one, as will become obvious from the analysis. In the next section we provide an outline of structures, which provide networks with cohesion.

Sequential structures in dialogical networks

By highlighting the dialogical character of networks, we may seem to imply that their cohesion is of just the same sort as that found in ordinary face to face

conversations, and indeed there are some similarities. One is that the dialogical sequences are of the same sort in both cases, but, as we shall see, with important differences, due to the media of interaction. We shall now demonstrate this by examining several adjacency pair structures.

Demand — Rejection

(8)   "**Klaus rejects Sudetan demands** (*Rudé Právo* 12/1/1993)
      <u>Prague — On Monday Premier Klaus described as unacceptable for the Czech Government the demand to cancel the so-called Beneš decrees, on the basis of which after the war Sudetan Germans lost their property and had to leave Czech territory, as well as the demand to compensate them.</u>
      'The starting point of the government is that the conditions which were created after the war in agreement with the victorious powers and strengthened over almost fifty subsequent years cannot be changed without disturbing the basic rights of the current citizens of Czech Republic, without shaking legal certainties, and as a result of this seriously destabilizing the political situation in Czech Republic,' <u>said Prime Minister Klaus in a reply provided for ČTK to the question regarding the demand of the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee of the Democratic Party of Sudetenland J. Blühmel.</u> 'The government is obliged by valid legal norms, including in the first place the restitution laws and by its own decree of June of last year, in which it undertook to prevent any change in the legally set limits on restitutions. The creation of the region 'Sudetenland' would in present conditions be completely not organic.
      <u>The opinions of the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee of the Democratic Party of Sudetenland Mr Jaroslav Blühmel are for the Government of Czech Republic unacceptable,' states the Prime Minister.</u>"
      (emphasis in the original, our italics)

The article (8) presents a sequential structure even in its title: "Klaus rejects Sudetan demands". The problem which concerns us is how this seemingly simple exchange 'demand-rejection' was accomplished. The first point is that there was not just one demand, made at one time and in one place. Blühmel voiced the demand on several occasions. In Nekvapil and Leudar (1998) and Leudar and Nekvapil (1998), we dealt with two, which were the most visible — a press conference of the Democratic Party of Sudetenland (DPS) and the TV debate which took place five days later. The 'demands' made on these occasions were duplicated many times in media, even though the duplicates were never

quite verbatim copies of each other. In our terms, the 'demand' directed to Klaus was distributed. The title of the article presented in (8) provides us with Klaus's reaction — a rejection. This rejection was, however, again not singular but duplicated — it was done in a statement issued by the Czech News Agency (ČTK) and, mediated through this Agency, it appeared in Czech national newspapers. So it turns out that the network contains a distributed demand — rejection sequence, whose parts are duplicated and separated in time (by several days) and space (i.e. uttered in different places, at a press conference, in a TV studio, and printed in *Rudé Právo*). There is, however, one important problem in this analysis. Who exactly does Klaus react to and who does he speak to? The article in (8) documents that Klaus in fact does not react directly to Blühmel and DPS. According to *Rudé Právo* Klaus provided a statement to the Czech News Agency. But at whose instigation? This is clarified in the news agency text presented in the extract (9).

(9)   **The Czech Press Agency (ČTK) (11/1/1993, 22.06)**
"… 'said Prime Minister Klaus in a written reply to Czech and Moravian-Silesian Agricultural News in response to a question regarding the demands of the Democratic Party of Sudetenland. The Premier also made the reply available to ČTK.'"

So Klaus reacts in fact to the question put to him by another newspaper, the daily *Czech and Moravian-Silesian Agricultural News*. But, it is not necessarily the case that he reacts *just* to this newspaper (it is not an important national paper). As we see in both (8) and (9), he also made his response available to the Czech News Agency. In this way, the representative of the Czech Government rejected the 'opinions' of the DPS but without being drawn into a direct dialogical engagement. Klaus did not talk to the DPS, he commented on their 'opinions'. Blühmel and the DPS had to read the comments reported in national papers like most other people. If Klaus had received the DPS for face-to-face talks he would have thereby ratified their political status. The result was that the DPS was not treated as an acceptable dialogical partner. The interaction between the DPS and the Czech Government was then intricately mediated, but what was relevant in the network was exactly what was formulated as a 'demand-rejection' sequence.

Summons (for support)–response

The extracts (10) and (11) document a sequence, which can be denoted as

'summons (for support)–response'. In extract (10), the Deputy Procurator of the Czech Republic defends the migration law proposed by the General Procurator's Office. The first part of this sequence was voiced in the TV debate (see Extract 10, line 4) and has not been reported in newspapers as far as we can determine. Nevertheless, the sequence as a whole was distributed, and the mediated connection of both parts is worth noting, even though in the media it remains occluded.

(10)   **Debate. From the political scene (*The Czech TV1* 10/1/1993)**
   1.   "Pat: I think and I start from the fact that the top experts took part in it [elaborating the proposed
   2.   law] … it [the proposed law] needn't be appropriated by a particular group of deputies,
   3.   it is enough if simply they take it as a new proposal, we simply want it to be looked at.
   4.   *the towns will certainly agree with us about this.*" (our italics)

(11)   "**The proposed Migration Law is harsher then the town notices. The Mayors of 'Jirkov-like' towns react to the proposal of the procurator's office (*Mladá fronta Dnes* 12/1/1993)**
   1.   Following Jirkov and Ústí nad Labem the representatives of Most implemented 'Jirkov' notice.
   2.   At the same time, in front of the Czech Parliament lies a proposal of a 'Migration Law' of the
   3.   General Procurator Jiří Šetina. He rejected the town notices as illegal. *What do the Mayors of*
   4.   *these towns think of the proposed law?*
   5.   The Mayor of Ústí nad Labem Lukáš Mašín: '[…]'
   6.   The Mayor of Jirkov Filip Škapa: '[…]'
   7.   The Mayor of Most Bořek Valvoda: '[…]'
   8.   Despite some reservations, all three Mayors would welcome it if the proposed law was
   9.   accepted. …Some deputies of the Czech Parliament branded the law proposal and the exposé as
   10. racist. 'I invite the deputies to come and visit us next Monday, to get to know the situation here,
   11. about which they are going to be deciding' said the Mayor of Jirkov Filip Škapa." (our italics)

Line 4 in (10) transcribes an indirect call for support, which is provided, see lines 5–9 in (11). Of course, we cannot be sure, simply on the basis of reading

the article (11) (of which we reproduce just about a third), how the journalist mediated the sequence. However, the role of the journalists in keeping the dialogical networks going is again important. The author of this article presumably contacted and spoke to the three town representatives — he quotes from their answers. This again illustrates that journalists can initiate and co-produce the sequential development of dialogical networks. 'The towns' may have always agreed with the General Procurator, but this agreement became effective by being made public by the journalist.

There is another point to note in the extract (11). An invitation to visit (see lines 10, 11) is a first part in a sequence, which is to be followed by an acceptance or a rejection. The media did not report whether the deputies accepted the invitation. This means that whatever happened, the invitation issued by Škapa did not contribute to the development of the mass media dialogical network. This shows that such networks do not develop in all possible directions: they also have local endings. We now turn to this particular issue.

Appeal–response (or no response)

In our materials, we have found many instances of the appeal–response sequence. One of them is presented in the extracts (12) and (13).

(12) **Debate. From the political scene (*The Czech TV1* 10/1/1993)**
"Mod: so Mr Šuman, where do you see the fault. …
Šu: … there <u>aren't</u>- there are no simple and quick solutions of this problem. but on the other hand I say that this situation as they describe it and as we know it from Northern Bohemia must be resolved very <u>fast</u>, and in <u>my</u> view, *it is necessary to appeal to the Government in the direction I suggested already.*" … (our italics)

(13) "**The criminality of Roma will be dealt with by the government (*Mladá fronta Dnes* 12/1/1993)**
Praha (jem) — The possibility that the Government will give attention to the increased criminality in the north of the Czech Republic, was yesterday admitted by the Director of the Legislative Office of the Government Milena Poláková. …According to her, the solution will probably require cooperation of the Ministries of Justice, Interior and Economy. … Meanwhile, the Minister of the Interior J. Ruml said yesterday that if the Government will not be able to deal with the situation he will take the initiative himself."

So far we have been dealing mainly with the sequential structures as a means of keeping dialogical networks going. However, some expansions of dialogical networks are limited, and of course no network goes for ever. One of the ways in which networks come to terminate locally is that no response follows the first part of a sequential structure. This implies that there were participants who could have joined the dialogical network, but did not. What data could support a claim such as this? How can we possibly know who could have joined the network and who could not? The point is that some absences seem noticeable to participants, or at least to some of them. Let us turn to the extract (14).

(14) "**Roma are demanding the resignation of the General Procurator** (*Rudé Právo* **11/1/1993**)
… [K. Samková] also spoke about negotiations with Václav Klaus in late September and early October. According to her, the Czech Premier did not fulfil even one of the promises [he made] in it … 'We consider today's meeting with the journalists, and our declaration to be also the last appeal to Mr Klaus' stated K. Samková."

As is obvious from the title, this text is a fragment of an article presenting a demand by the Roma Civic Initiative (ROI) made at a press conference. At the same conference, the representatives of the ROI accused the Czech Premier Václav Klaus of not fulfilling his promises and appealed to him to do so.

This appeal constitutes the first part of an adjacency pair. In ordinary conversation, one would expect the second part, and its absence may be heard as a refusal to respond. Klaus never reacted publicly to the call by the ROI representative. Can Klaus then be said to have refused to join the network? The point is that, even though the sequentiality in conversations and in dialogical networks may apparently involve the same structures, it is not clear that the same normative expectations operate in both of them — we have already seen that some sequences in networks are mediated by journalists even though their work is hidden from the casual reader. Moreover, in the networks we analyzed, it was not unusual for the first parts of adjacency pairs to be "heard" only when they were duplicated — voiced many times and by different participants (as was the case in the duplicated appeal transcribed in (12)). So, although Klaus (or his Government) never reacted directly to the appeal by the ROI representatives, and this might have been noticeable, in the end the Government took some measures reacting to a multiplicated appeal. As we have seen, in the other network, the one concerning *Sudetan* problems, the participants themselves took the 'silence' of Václav Klaus to reflect his decision that the Democratic

Party of Sudetenland was not a proper negotiating partner for the Czech Government.

Network cohesion

Are sequential structures the only means of providing dialogical networks with cohesion? Indeed not, as the reader may have noted already. The cohesion can also be accomplished by strategic use of lexical resources (cf. Antaki and Leudar 2001; Leudar and Thomas 2000, ch. 8). In networks emerging in the Czech media during 1990s, for instance, some participants referred to what happened to Sudetan Germans in 1946–1947 as 'transfer' (Cz. *'odsun'*), others as "expulsion" (Cz. *'vyhnání'*) (cf. Extract 1). In the 'Roma network', partly presented in Leudar and Nekvapil (2000), some participants routinely opted for the word 'Roma' (Cz. *'Rom'*), others used 'Gypsy' (Cz. *'Cikán'*) — see the extract (15), lines 244–245.

> (15)   **Aréna (*The Czech TV* 95/238–246)**
>   "238 H1:   Mister Deputy.
>   239 B: (.) I (.) Mister Chairman, (.) have for you uh: one (.) just
>   one question: , so far, (.) and this I think that we'll drop
>   these exchanges of fire and come to the merits of the thing.
>   (.) citizens they are interested, and I am personally too, (.)
>   how you judge, Czechoslov-Czech citizen. (.) if sa, so to say
>   according to the colour of the skin, (.) according to proper
>   manners, or according to political, (.) orientation. (.) how
>   you judge that citizen and what (type of a citizen) you sim-
>   ply choose.
>   244 S: Mister Deputy you are the only representative of Gypsies in
>   the Parlia[ment,]
>   245 B: [of Ro]ma.
>   246 Audience: ((more people laughing))"

In both cases, the choice allocates the participant to a side of a debate — it works as a 'category bound activity', as does the re-use of claims and arguments. In the 'Roma network' presented in some detail in this paper, these were the respective claims that the proposed law was racist, and that it was an extraordinary measure to deal with an extraordinary situation. In (5), now abridged and re-numbered as (17), the Procurator used very much the same argument as his

Deputy the day before (originally excerpt 3, now 16).

(16) ***České a moravskoslezské zemědělské noviny*** 6/1/1993
"… In the interview with ČMZN the Deputy General Procurator J. Patočka rejected the view that the proposal of the law is in contradiction with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. 'The use of extraordinary measures during an extraordinary event is common, and the Charter allows it' he said and used as an example the law of ČR concerning fire control."

(17) ***Lidové Noviny*** 7/1/1993
"… After yesterday's meeting of the General Procurator with Deputies and the Chairman of the House of Deputies, J. Šetina denied that the exposé of the law could be characterized as racist. M. Výborný, on the other hand, quoted several sentences from the text, which are in his words expressions of racial hatred.
    'We consider the situation in North West Bohemia to be explosive, to be threatening and I personally consider it to be extraordinary' said J. Šetina, and he added that law proposal was meant as an initiative providing a working model of the law…"

Dialogical networks are then held together not only through sequential structures, but also by the use of lexical and argumentative resources. This is, however, still not enough. These networks are not 'phatic communions' done for the sake of communicating; rather they are motivated by historical, social and political problems. The cohesive resources can only be used if participants are brought together in the first place by a problem that needs to be resolved. This problem provides a theme for the network and locates the participants in a common 'argumentative space'.

Concluding remarks

This paper dealt with communications in the media to which we refer as dialogical networks. Central properties of these networks are that contributions of individual actors to communication are distributed in time and space, and that contributions to a network can be multiplicated. These networks are always thematically and argumentatively coherent, but their cohesion is in the first place afforded by sequential structures. In terms of their types, though these structures are the same as those one finds in face-to-face conversations, there

are some distinctive properties. These include:

i.   several actors often react to the first part of a sequence,
ii. the second part in a sequence is often a reaction to several tokens of the first part,
iii. the connection between the parts of sequences is often mediated by journalists.

We first developed the concept of 'dialogical network' analyzing British media, and only subsequently used it in our Czech studies. The presence of such networks there was by no means a foregone conclusion: the emergence of such networks requires certain technologies of communication, and remain a matter of political culture, and it is remarkable that these networks appeared in Czech political life in the early nineties. One is tempted to speculate that dialogical networks are characteristic of societies in which public participation and debate are important parts of political culture. In the Czech Republic, this became possible only after 1989, following radical political restructuring of the society.

A related problem is the extent to which dialogical networks may extend over the borders of nation states. Our research showed that dialogical networks with Roma themes in Central Europe did indeed extend over the borders of individual states (see Homoláč, Karhanová and Nekvapil 2003). Our latest work shows that dialogical networks may indeed span the whole world, and cultures as distinct as those in USA, UK and in the Arab world (see Leudar, Marsland and Nekvapil 2004). The concept of 'dialogical network' is an obvious methodological tool which can be used to investigate what is often vaguely referred to as 'globalization of discourse' (see Fairclough 2001: 204ff.).

Note

1. We present all the Czech texts only in English wording. They have been translated into English by the present authors. The analysis though was based on the originals. On the general situation of the Czech newspapers see Nekvapil (1996).

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Authors' addresses

Ivan Leudar
Psychology Department
Manchester University
Manchester M13 9PL
U. K.

E-mail: I.leudar@manchester.ac.uk

Jiří Nekvapil
Department of Linguistics
Charles University
Prague
Czech Republic

E-mail: jiri.nekvapil@ff.cuni.cz

About the authors

Ivan Leudar was born in Czechoslovakia and educated at London University. Currently he is a Reader in Psychology at the University of Manchester. One of his interests is in how membership categories are produced, maintained and contested in talk and in media. The pertinent problems he is working on are: (i) changes in conceptualisations of 'psycho-pathologies' and their effects on living, (ii) presentation of ethnic minorities in media (iii) development of identities in dialogical networks

Jiří Nekvapil was a Research Fellow at the Institute of Czech Language of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Prague, where he also received his PhD. In 1990 he moved to the Department of General Linguistics at Charles University, Prague, where he teaches socio-linguistics, conversation analysis, and pragmatics. He has published extensively in these fields. Among his edited volumes are *Reader in Czech Sociolinguistics* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins 1987; together with J. Chloupek), and *Studies in Functional Stylistics* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins 1993; together with J. Chloupek). Recently he has published a number of papers dealing with the Czech mass media, interethnic relationships and language planning in the Czech Republic.