

THE FAMILY SEMANTICS GRID III. INTERACTIVE SEMANTIC POLARITIES IN COUPLES AND FAMILIES

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Inspired by Ugazio's (1998, 2013) family semantic polarities model, the FSG III allows a semantic analysis of therapeutic sessions and other video-recorded conversations, such as films. It focuses on the lived story enacted by couples or other family members interacting with each other and with the therapist. This coding system identifies the interactive semantic polarities (ISPs) — that is, the semantic oppositions inferred by how the family members position themselves in the here and now — and classifies them according to the grids of the semantics of freedom, goodness, power, and belonging. The grids show the ISPs which mainly characterize the four semantics, and provide an operational definition, along with cues and nonverbal indicators, for each of these ISPs. The FSG III is a reliable research instrument which can be used by both clinical researchers and psychotherapists.

Key words: Coding system; Family semantic polarities; Meaning; Nonverbal communication; Qualitative method.

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The Family Semantics Grid (FSG; Ugazio & Castelli, 2005; Ugazio & Guarnieri, 2017; Ugazio, Negri, Fellin, & Di Pasquale, 2009) was devised to operationalize the concept of family semantic polarities at the core of Ugazio's (1998, 2013) model of personality and its psychopathological developments. Its goal is to make such a concept, initially defined at a clinical level, empirically identifiable in research contexts.

Ugazio's family semantic polarities model (FSPM) attributes a fundamental role to the processes of meaning-making in couples and families. According to this theory, meanings, the emotions feeding them, and the positions created by meaning-making during conversations, offer important keys in understanding the dynamics of couples and families, the processes that lead to problems and mental disorders and also therapeutic change. Developed in the dialogue with those psychotherapists who place meaning-making at the centre of their work (e.g., Guidano, 1987; Kelly, 1955; Neimeyer, 2000, 2009; Procter, 1996; White & Epston, 1990; Winter & Reed, 2015), the FSPM privileges positioning theory as one of its main points of reference (Harré, 1986, 2012; Harré & Moghaddam, 2003, 2015; Harré, Moghaddam, Cairnie, Rothbart, & Sabat, 2009; Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991, 1999).

Beyond providing a systemic model for the construction of meaning in family conversations and other important emotional contexts, the FSPM offers an intersubjective perspective on eating, phobic, obsessive-compulsive, and mood disorders. Each of these mental disorders, according to the FSPM, is an expression of a family conversational context dominated by a specific semantic, and of the particular positions taken by the patient and other family members within this semantic. One of the main hypotheses pro-

posed by the FSPM is that the semantic of power indeed dominates conversation in families with eating disorders, while the semantics of freedom, goodness, and belonging predominate in families with phobic, obsessive-compulsive, and depressive disorders, respectively.

The operationalization of the family semantic polarities concept highlighted the co-presence of two different types of semantic polarities: *narrated* and *interactive*, that correspond to two different levels of meaning. The *narrated semantic polarities* (NSPs) concern what is said rather than what is done in conversation by conversational partners. They refer to the *narrated story* explicitly told by the clients, in which the therapist takes a position, although playing a secondary role. This story may be quite far from the *lived story* enacted by the clients recounting and interacting with the other members of the family and the therapist. The *interactive semantic polarities* (ISPs) express the lived story, they are discursive phenomena of a performative order which can diverge dramatically from the NSPs. The ISPs are semantic oppositions inferred by how conversational partners position themselves in the here and now of their mutual interaction. These polarities can completely leave out the verbal content of the interaction. The meaning they express is mainly based on nonverbal communication and only secondarily on verbal expressions. Unlike the NSPs, the ISPs much more closely represent the concept of polarity provided by Ugazio (1998, 2013): “Polarities are not considered as something in the mind of each individual, but as a discursive phenomenon” (Ugazio, 2013, p. 21). They construct ranges of meanings fuelled by emotions and created through the ongoing relationships with conversational partners. These two types of polarities express the meanings inferable from positionings similar to those that Lucius-Hoene and Deppermann (2000) consider relevant in biographical interviews.

The first version of the Family Semantics Grid (FSG; Ugazio et al., 2009) operationalizes the NSPs and provides a coding system to identify and classify them as they emerge in transcripts of dyadic conversations. A subsequent version, the FSG II (Ugazio & Guarnieri, 2017), provides a coding system for the NSPs emerging in couple therapies and other, at least, triadic dialogues. The Semantics Grid for the Dyadic Therapeutic Relationship (SG-DTR; Ugazio & Castelli, 2015) operationalizes, identifies and classifies the ISPs during dyadic patient-therapist conversations. Taking the specificity of the therapeutic relationship into account, the SG-DTR focuses on the ISPs inferable from the interactive positionings, in which patient and therapist move away from allocated roles, overtly or covertly, breaking the rules of the setting or simply expressing themselves in more personal ways. The FSG III we are presenting here offers an operational definition of the ISPs in couple and family interactions and presents a coding system to detect and classify them through observing couple and family video-recorded sessions.

As other observational coding systems, for example the Specific Affect Coding System (SPAFF; Coan & Gottman, 2007; Gottman, McCoy, Coan, & Collier, 1995; Yoshimoto, Shapiro, O’Brien, & Gottman, 2005) or the Dialogical Investigations of Happenings of Change (DICH; Olson, Laitila, Rober, & Seikkula, 2012; Vall, Seikkula, Laitila, & Holma, 2018), the FSG III focuses on multiple indicators which characterize each interactive semantic polarity instead of on discrete bits of behavior, as Marital Interaction Coding System (MICS; Hops, Wills, Weis, & Patterson, 1972) or Facial Affect Scoring Technique (FAST; Ekman, Friesen, & Tomkins, 1971). Similarly to the SPAFF and the DICH, it also takes the verbal content into account, even if it is focused mainly on the nonverbal behaviors that characterize each ISP. Moreover, it lets coders directly code a theoretically and behaviorally specified construct, such as the ISPs. As Coan and Gottman (2007) highlight, this approach assumes that coders can be taught how to accurately and rapidly integrate a variety of cues into broader constructs. Moreover, such an approach should increase the speed with which coding can be done, as well as its reliability and external validity. In agreement with Coan and Gottman (2007), we think that microanalytic coding systems such as MICS or FAST often risk

not seeing the wood for the trees. Moreover, these kinds of coding systems require artificial research settings with complex equipment, whereas FSG III can be applied to real video-recorded psychotherapeutic sessions or other video-recorded spontaneous interactions.

THE INTERACTIVE SEMANTIC POLARITIES (ISPs): THE CONCEPT AND ITS OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

The FSG III identifies the ISPs with the semantic oppositions fed by specific emotions, along which three or more people are positioned in the here and now of the conversation. Even if what is said usually contributes to their construction, the ISPs are a performative discursive phenomenon, and can completely disregard the verbal content of the interaction. Each pole of each ISP expresses a positioning, put in place by one or more actors, that acquires full meaning through an opposite position, also expressed by one or more actors who participate in person in that conversation or in a subsequent one.

The ISPs can be constructed by a strict sequence of positionings: a conversational partner, for example, takes on a domineering positioning and the other assumes a submissive one. This happens above all in complementary interactions. Often, however, a strict sequence of positionings does not express semantic oppositions. For example, someone can reply to a person who is in a domineering position by ignoring her¹ or taking the distance; these positionings cannot be considered the opposite pole to domineering. The opposite positioning must be sought in another configuration, often located in a sequence far from the one analyzed or even in other sessions of the same psychotherapy. *The ISPs are therefore semantic oppositions among interactive positionings — fairly stable (macro-positionings) or a few seconds long (micro-positionings) — that can be located in very different parts of the conversation.*

As a rule, the opposite poles of the ISPs are traceable within the same semantic, one fuelled by emotions which characterize the positively evaluated pole and the other by the emotions of the devalued one. For example, the opposite pole of domineering, which underlies the boasting emotion of the semantic of power, could be surrendering, but also being humiliated or even opposing, all meanings fuelled by shame, embarrassment.

In agreement with positioning theory (Harré, 1986, 2012; Harré & Moghaddam, 2003, 2015; Harré et al., 2009; Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991, 1999; Holloway, 1984), positionings, and ISPs which derive from them, are understood as ways in which conversational partners place themselves in relation to each other. They contribute to the construction of episodes which form couple relationship and also play an indirect role in the construction of partners' selves and cultural patterns and values. For example, a ISP, where one partner is in the domineering position whereas the other is in the submissive one, could create an asymmetrical relationship which affects the self of each member of the couple, if it is repeated many times. The partner in the one-up position could consider herself as a winner while the other in the one-down position could feel as a loser. If the winner is a man, their relationship contributes to maintain a patriarchal cultural pattern, if is a woman, the couple contributes to change a cultural pattern where women are disadvantaged. In both cases the couple supports a cultural pattern, widespread in Western societies, dominated by the idea of power. Selves and cultural patterns, as well as episodes and relationships, are here considered in a narrative way. Selves are personal life scripts fed by the stories whose subject is the *position* of the individual in the various narratives she is a part, whereas the stories, in which the individual is involved as a participant in the community, create cultural patterns (Cronen, Johnson, & Lannamann, 1982; Gergen, 2001; Harré, 2012).

The FSG III is focused on relationships and the emotions that feed them. Researchers interested in the contribution provided by the ISPs to the construction of partners' selves, cultural patterns, and values can include them in the analysis which will become more complex and more inferential.

The FSG III has been conceived for therapeutic sessions with couples and families, but it can be applied to other interactions that have people with a common history as protagonists. In the absence of a shared background, misunderstandings in the construction of meanings are more frequent. Therapeutic sessions actually create a conversational system in which a member, the therapist, does not have a common history with other partners. Her position is however particular. Although abstinence and therapeutic neutrality are no longer prescriptive even for psychoanalysts (McWilliams, 2004; Mitchell, 1993), almost all psychotherapists, regardless of their specific orientation, do not take any marked positioning, especially in the initial sessions. The asymmetry of the therapeutic relationship, which characterizes almost all therapeutic models, makes the couple, the family or another subsystem in therapy, not only the narrating voice, but also the main actor of the session and consequently of the semantic polarities of which the session is intertwined. The therapist guides the meeting, formulating questions, giving the floor, changing the subject but, particularly in the first sessions, couples and families are the ones who introduce the most significant ISPs.

THE GRID OF THE INTERACTIVE SEMANTIC POLARITIES

The grid we present (see Table 1) identifies the most characteristic ISPs of the semantics of freedom, goodness, power, and belonging (Ugazio, 1998, 2013) and give them an operational definition, accompanied by specific nonverbal indicators and cues, identifiable in videotapes of therapeutic sessions or other interactions. In defining the ISPs, we took into account facial and vocal expressions, postures, gestures and body movements, proxemic and haptic interactions, and overt physiological reactions which are the universally recognized categories of nonverbal communication (cf. Ekman & Friesen, 2003; Ekman & Rosenberg, 2005; Hall & Knapp, 2013; Manusov & Patterson, 2006; Matsumoto, Hwang, & Frank, 2016). We deliberately excluded some nonverbal behaviors that, although frequently occurring in therapeutic sessions (e.g., ritual greetings), do not convey significant information about the ISPs under investigation.

The positive or negative connotation of the poles of each ISP is determined by the emotions that feed them. For some ISPs the connotation tends to remain constant, while for others it varies frequently. In the latter cases we have inserted, in Table 1, a unidirectional arrow between the two poles, when only one of the poles frequently changes its own connotation of values, a bidirectional arrow when both poles do, as in "getting close/keeping distant," perhaps the most typical polarity of the semantic of freedom. When people belonging to this semantic are afraid, they generally get close to their points of reference, whereas, when they feel safe, they keep distant from their points of reference. However, when the target is an unfamiliar person, getting close implies courage, whilst keeping distant is triggered by fear.

Semantic of Freedom

"Courage/fear" and "disorientation/constraint" feed this semantic, consequently all the ISPs listed here are connected with at least one of these emotional oppositions. During therapy, fear emerges in sequences which are unexpected, beyond personal control or perceived as threatening for interpersonal relationships. These antecedents are the obstacles that individuals can overcome by courage, yearned inside this

TABLE 1
The Semantics Grid in Couples and Families

SEMANTIC OF FREEDOM				SEMANTIC OF POWER					
CODE	ISPs		CODE	CODE	ISPs		CODE		
110	Getting close	↔	Keeping distance	111	310	Fighting/Domineering	→	Surrendering	311
	Opening up	↔	Closing up			Competing	↔	Allying	
112	Encouraging		Limiting	113	312	Valuing	↔	Criticizing	313
114	Exploring		Staying put	115	314	Adapting	↔	Opposing	315
116	Reassuring/Protecting	↔	Alarming	117	316	Making an impression		Making a poor impression	317
118	Taking risks		Getting scared	119	318	Bragging/Humiliating		Being humiliated/ Embarrassing	319
EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS				EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS					
120	Courage		Fear	121	320	Boast		Shame/Embarrassment	321
122	Disorientation		Constraint	123	322	Self-efficacy		Inadequacy	323
SEMANTIC OF GOODNESS				SEMANTIC OF BELONGING					
CODE	ISPs		CODE	CODE	ISPs		CODE		
210	Restraining		Unleashing	211	410	Sharing	↔	Ignoring	411
	Resisting		Tempting			Including		(Self-)Excluding	
212	Self-sacrificing		Taking advantage	213	412	Worshipping/ Celebrating		Destroying	413
214	Being responsible/guilty	→	Shrugging off	215	414	Mending	→	Provoking	415
216	Judging	↔	Relieving	217	416	Respecting/Honoring		Dishonoring	417
218	Repulsing	↔	Attracting	219	418	Rejoicing/Energizing		Getting angry	419
EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS				EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS					
220	Disgust		Pleasure	221	420	Joy		Anger	421
222	Mortification/Innocence		Guilt	223	422	Cheerfulness		Sadness/Despair	423

Note. ISPs = interactive semantic polarities; Code: first digit, 1 = freedom, 2 = goodness, 3 = power, 4 = belonging; second digit, 1 = interactive positioning, 2 = emotions and feelings; third digit = even numbers indicate a positive connotation, while odd numbers indicate a negative one.

semantic but terribly difficult to achieve. All the conversational partners have an exaggerated perception of risk, so few are courageous. Constraint emerges when they feel trapped, whereas disorientation emerges when they feel without points of reference. Therapeutic instructive interactions or pressing requests to disclose are the most typical antecedents for constraint, whereas unstructured interactions, which leave the conversational partners floating without direction, are typical antecedents for disorientation.

The *emotional climate* typical of the semantic of freedom is characterized in therapy by a series of moments of tension and others in which positive affective exchanges prevail. When this semantic dominates, some family members express behaviors similar to those found by studies with patients suffering from anxiety (cf. Pope, Blass, Siegman, & Rahe, 1970; Shreve, Harrigan, Kues, & Kagas, 1988; Waxer, 1977). They do not maintain direct eye contact, they fidget, repeatedly shifting position in their chair (as if they were sitting on a "hot seat"), pulling at clothes or wrenching their hands, rubbing their faces or biting their lips. Increase in the rate of verbal productivity, difficulties in expressing what they want to say, speech errors, unfinished statements, hesitations, or interjections as "huh" and "ahh," characterize this emotional climate. Often someone has a lump in her throat and bursts into tears. Muscle tension, sweat, face/neck/upper chest flushing, irregular heavy breathing, dryness of the mouth, frequent shifts in voice tone, from low to high, are often present along with other indicators of nervous tension such as unshared laughter, nervous giggling, blinking, folded arms across the chest, face and neck touching, and wriggling or interlocking the hands. When tension dispels, the emotional exchange becomes warm and the affection between the interlocutors is palpable. Smiles, gazes, physical contact, as touching the partner's hand, shoulder or the back of the chair to give her support, are frequent. Speed of speech slows down and the pauses in which the interlocutor reflects before speaking become longer and more frequent. Hardly anyone interrupts the interlocutor, whose times are respected.

Getting Close/Keeping Distance Opening Up/Closing Up

These two ISPs are very similar. *The first one opposes getting close to keeping distance more physically than metaphorically. Getting close toward one or more interlocutors does not imply the exclusion of the other conversational partners and keeping distance does not exclude the maintenance of the dialogue also with those from whom one keeps distance.* The focus of the ISP is on the target.

The second ISP opposes opening up to one or more conversational partners to closing up to one or more interlocutors. The focus of the ISP is mainly on the actor and the verbal content can play an important role.

Getting close and opening up are expressed in therapeutic sessions through possible movements of the chair and its orientation, changes in the inclination and orientation of the trunk, resuming and maintaining of eye contacts, smiles, movements of the arms and hands indicating interpersonal openness. Short direct physical contacts, such as touching the hands or the shoulder or knees of a partner, or indirect physical contact, for example touching the partner's chair, characterize these positionings. Often, verbal exchanges with which the speaker opens up to the other, making her enter private spaces, accompany these nonverbal behaviors. Keeping distance and closing up are characterized by movements of the chair and its orientation, changes in orientation and leaning back the trunk, averted gaze, hand movements, arms, legs and feet indicating interpersonal closure, for example arms folded on the chest, hands to protect the genitals, stretched feet, hands covering the mouth. Speech is minimal, often limited to evasive answers.

Encouraging/Limiting

The opposition is between encouraging the interlocutor to explore her relationships, feelings and emotions or, on the contrary, limit her exploration, often only with nonverbal indicators. The focus is on the target.

Those who encourage hold a protective gaze on the interlocutor who seems to be preparing to explore or is exploring. They nod and sometimes touch interlocutor's shoulder or the back of her chair. In contrast, sudden averted gazes, changes of facial expression, pallor or redness, nervous swallowing and eyes wide open signal to the interlocutor to limit her exploration. The implicit message is: "you are going too far! Please stop." This is what happens for example when the therapist or a member of the couple deals with topics that the interlocutor does not want to discuss.

Exploring/Staying Put

The opposition is between exploring relationships, feelings, emotions, disconnecting from others, as if you lose your moorings to venture out into the open sea, and remaining firmly anchored within the confines of what you know.

Those who explore tend to look away from the family members, maintaining eye contact with the therapist or directing their gaze toward a distant point, external to the conversation. Those who prefer to stay put avoid emotional involvement. The facial expression is mostly neutral, with few gestures and body movements. They do not show stiffness, nor interpersonal closeness, they seem rather satisfied to remain within the confines of what has been said and what is well known.

Reassuring/Alarming

Directly connected to the emotional polarity "courage/fear," this ISP opposes *reassuring, protecting, calming, mostly on an analogical level, one or more conversational partners experiencing fear or other disruptive emotions, to alarm, frighten them if, for example, they face conflicting or confidential arguments*. The focus is on the target.

The interlocutors are reassured and calmed with a glance that acts as scaffolding, with slow and calm gestures and body movements toward the interlocutor that make her feel the presence of the other without synchronizing with her anxiety or invading her. Alarming is generally expressed by sudden changes in facial expression and gaze such as eyes wide open. Muscle tensions, flushing or blanching are sometimes associated with this positioning.

Taking Risks/Getting Scared

The contraposition is between those taking risks and those who are experiencing fear. The focus is on the actor and this positioning emerges when emotionally charged and/or conflicting topics are framed during a session.

Both poles foresee a state of alert, which is expressed by muscle tension. In those interlocutors who take risks, intrepidity and firmness prevail, expressed through the gaze, the tone of voice, and deter-

mined and controlled movements. The underlying nervousness is eventually expressed by the movements of the legs and feet, such as foot tapping (Ekman, 2009). Those who are scared show raised and drawn eyebrows, open eyes, and a grin (Ekman & Friesen, 2003). Body movements are sometimes disordered and bursts of tears and sobs frequently appear.

Semantic of Goodness

“Disgust/ pleasure” and “innocence, mortification/guilt” fuel this semantic. Within the semantic of goodness, feelings of innocence are expressed mainly by conversational partners who place themselves within the positive pole, whereas guilt is experienced by all the conversational partners. Innocence derives from the awareness of behaving in a morally correct way, avoiding sexual involvement or taking personal advantage of one’s own position. Guilt typically emerges when conversational partners transgress moral norms and behave inappropriately. The situational antecedents of “disgust/pleasure” polarity are significant physical and relational experiences (e.g., sex, physical contact with ill people, pets, dirty objects or anything considered dirty). When an interlocutor tells about some transgressive behavior or uses inappropriate behavior, such as vulgar expressions or gestures, some conversational partners feel disgust while others feel pleasure.

The *emotional climate*, typical of the semantic of goodness, is characterized by emotional retention interspersed with episodic aggressive attacks. Unlike in the semantic of freedom, anxiety and tension are mostly held back. Some conversational partners tend to be rather static with a rigid posture and their faces may appear severe or so blank that they seem made of stone. Sometimes they instil fear with a menacing look. Other partners instead unleash their moods and their emotions, regardless of the effects on the interlocutors. There are also those who express emotions with sudden blushes and pallor or sweating. The tone of voice is often monotonous, but they can give rise to aggressive attacks in which tone and intensity of the voice increase and big gestures are made. The glance is often cold, sometimes accusing, in some cases complicit, and always demanding. The request naturally varies, it may be a request for attention, of confirmation of the expressed point of view, of complicity. It can also take the form of a disguised sexual advances. The smile is innocent in some, mischievous in others. Speech is often abundant, fluent, though often poor in informative content. Some interlocutors express themselves with refined words, others use vulgar expressions.

Restraining/Unleashing

Retaining, restraining, inhibiting what one feels is opposed to unleashing one’s moods and emotions, regardless of the effects that this behavior can have on others.

The inhibition of emotions is expressed in a session through controlled speech, rigid posture, with the exception of possible leg movements and self-adaptors, like touching one’s face, arms and hands. Anxiety and tension transpire from sweating, sometimes abundant, and flushing or blanching. Unleashing, during sessions, takes the form of an aggressive attack on one or more interlocutors, who are accused, according to the actors, of being tarnished of having done something dishonest; other times, this positioning takes the form of a threat or blackmail. Often those who unleash their emotions interrupt the conversation, regardless of conversational turns. The tone of voice mostly rises significantly, gestures and verbalizations

are often aggressive and accusatory. Sometimes the actor addresses rhetorical questions or insulting statements to the receiver of the outburst. Eyes may be wide open to show pain or make one or more interlocutors feel guilty.

Resisting/Tempting

Resisting the interlocutor passively or aggressively is opposed to tempting or seducing her, making her, for example, accomplice.

The face of those who resist is predominantly expressionless, the visual contact is reduced, emotions are held back, even if sometimes expressions of complicity, like short “dampened smiles” (Ekman, 2009), escape. The posture is rigid, sometimes blocked, verbal expressions are short and barely informative, hostile silences are frequently present, hands are often folded across the chest in a closed position, and feet are often tapping or twitching.

Those who tempt or seduce try to involve the interlocutor in some complicity that involves the breaking of shared rules, mostly moral, sometimes connected to the therapeutic setting. Generally, they focus on the target using nods and the so-called “flirtatious smiles” (Ekman, 2009) in an attempt to tune in with her.

Self-Sacrificing/Taking Advantage

Sacrificing one’s own individual interests for others and for a common good is opposed to taking advantage, using, for example, the therapeutic context to achieve individual goals.

Those who sacrifice themselves give up their personal goals for the benefit of the demands and needs of other family members, often subtly blaming others. Their facial expression can express mortification, guilt, but also satisfaction for their moral superiority. The gaze toward those who take advantage of the renouncement is sometimes accompanied by a smile that can be bitter or self-satisfied. Those who place themselves in the opposite pole try to make conversational partners assume the behaviors and choices to their own advantage. The smile and voice are either inviting or imposing and threatening. The gaze is sometimes elusive.

Being Responsible, Guilty/Shrugging Off

Being responsible, as a patient, spouse or parent, or simply toward one’s own actions and affirmations, is opposed to shrugging off the interlocutors and the commitments deriving from their own roles.

Those who are responsible tend to take a serious and sometimes dramatic attitude. They hardly make statements or observations that do not respect the ascribed roles. The posture is rigid and the speech is controlled and formal. Those who shrug off are generally little in tune with the other members of the group and with the therapist. In addition to being distracted during the session or making self-referential interventions, they can express boredom, make gestures indicating disinterest, like shrugging their shoulders, looking out of the window, peeking at their cellphone, and making fun of the interlocutors. Their posture is often relaxed, sometimes slumped and their linguistic register is informal, sometimes vulgar.

Moral Judging/Relieving

Judging, condemning, accusing mostly in the light of ethical principles is opposed to lightening the climate by absolving, de-dramatizing or trying to change the subject or change its meaning.

Those who judge or condemn have an upright posture, often rigid, the jaw is generally contracted, the trunk and the gaze are oriented toward the target, the tone is cold, the expression of the face is, at times, indignant or contemptuous, in some cases the judgment is accompanied by a sardonic sneer, in others the interlocutor is pointed at. This positioning can be expressed only on a nonverbal level. In this case the expression of the face indicates a marked dissent, dismay and indignation accompanied by gestures that distance the interlocutor under scrutiny.

Those who relieve the interlocutors are generally attentive to what is happening in the session, but make divergent verbal interventions, trying to lower the conflict. They frequently smile, make jokes and funny observations. Their tone of voice is often calm, sociable, their eyes and mouth convey an ironic expression, their posture is relaxed.

Repulsing/Attracting

Repulsing the other, or being repulsed, is opposed to attracting one or more interlocutors, or being attracted by them.

Those who repulse use cruel or vulgar rhetoric or inappropriate gestures and behaviors (e.g., eating dandruff, smelling). Those who feel disgust raise the upper lip, wrinkle the nose, and push up the lower eyelids, and lower the eyebrows (Ekman & Friesen, 2003). The attraction toward one's own person can be solicited in the session through cognitive abilities, especially introspective and narrative, wit and insight. The goal of the actor, even when she collaborates in the therapeutic work, providing information and getting involved, is primarily to attract, and move the attention toward those aspects of herself that become the object of attraction. When someone is attracted to an interlocutor, her attention and posture are oriented toward the target and the movements are in tune with her. Often nods of assent and smiles are directed to her and the whole face shows remarkable animation in response to the object of attraction.

Semantic of Power

"Boast/shame, embarrassment" and "self-efficacy/inadequacy" fuel this semantic. Their antecedents are social in nature and the kind of shame characterizing the experience of conversational partners within this semantic is akin to the Scheff's (2000) *social shame*. Boasting characterizes relational exchanges in which conversational partners want to be recognized as socially superior by the interlocutors. Conversely, shame or embarrassment arise when they end up in a lower position in comparison with others or make a poor impression. Feedback of conversational partners fuels the "self-efficacy/inadequacy" emotional polarity. Self-efficacy is felt when their actions, behaviors and narratives receive approval and they are recognized by others as superior, while they feel inadequate when they are disapproved, or worse, criticized by others.

The *emotional climate*, typical of the semantic of power, is characterized by high arousal. Everyone is very attentive to what happens in the session and what is being said. Speech is generally abundant

and fluent and turn taking is often not respected because everyone wants to give voice to her point of view. Emotions are held back by competitive dynamics and occasionally emerge through tears or aggressive attacks. Everyone seems committed to convey the impression of being at ease, not embarrassed by the therapeutic setting, even if they show signs of tension such as foot tapping, kicking, or twirling one's hair. The winners try to show they are in control of other family members and of the session. They hold an upright posture and they often have a smug facial expression, and show self-mastery through an assertive voice tone and sometimes a superior attitude. The smile is generally unfelt, not involving the muscles surrounding the eyes, akin to the so called non-Duchenne or social smile (Ekman & Friesen, 2003; Hecht & LaFrance, 1998). The losers often have a slumped posture, uncrossed legs, arms dangling on the chair or folded across the chest. Sometimes they answer questions evasively. Often, some aggressive or sarcastic remarks emerge, that seem in response to an attack that the observers are not able to grasp. Both winners and losers often appeal to some external authority in order to strengthen their point of view and sometimes they speak in clichés.

Fighting, Domineering/Surrendering

A combative, sometimes belligerent attitude is opposed to a passive, temporary surrender to the interlocutor.

Those who are combative are focused, their eyes follow the interaction, passing quickly from one interlocutor to another, often interrupting the speaker. Instead, those who surrender assume a withdrawn, passive attitude. Sometimes the surrender, clearly suffered, is expressed by a lump in the throat and bursting into tears. At other times the smile is bitter or ironic as in the "Chaplin smile" (Ekman, 2009), the observations are sarcastic, and the tone of the voice is contrived.

Competing/Allying

Competing to achieve a winning definition of self in comparison with someone else is opposed to allying with one or more conversational partners.

Both poles employ at least three actors. Competition requires an observer who can verify who wins. An alliance between someone is usually against someone else. Both poles can be fed by the emotions which characterize one or the other pole. You compete to be perceived as nicer, or smarter, but sometimes to be sicker, more unlucky, or unhappier. Everyone is looking for allies within this semantic: the winners to maintain their position, the losers to subvert the existing positions of power.

Those who compete actively seek to focus the attention on themselves, taking it away from others. If the target is the patient, they can propose themselves as suffering too, aggravating their discomfort and problems, or presenting themselves as much more intriguing and collaborative patients. They frequently overlap talking over each other or, as soon as one finishes her turn, the other promptly intervenes. They also look at each other sideways, frequently monitoring those who are supposed to sanction their superiority. Those who ally use nonverbal behaviors characteristic of the valued pole. What distinguishes this pole is that the valued behaviors toward a target are a means to an end, that is, they are aimed at creating an alliance against a third conversational partner.

Valuing/Criticizing

Valuing others, which is sometimes manipulative, is opposed criticizing others, in a more or less malevolent way.

The positioning can be expressed in session, even only nonverbally, through the maintenance of eye contact with the interlocutor, admiring looks, nods, posture, respect of her turn taking and requests to express her opinion, all behaviors that express esteem and raise this interlocutor in comparison to others. On the contrary, lack of eye contact with the speaker, expressions of disappointment made with the head and hands (e.g., head-shaking), or signs of annoyance like snorting, turning the head in the opposite direction of the speaker, raising one or both eyebrows, rolling and lifting eyes toward the sky, backing away with the posture express a criticism which can be harsh even if not accompanied by verbalization.

Adapting/Opposing

Adapting to others and their expectations is opposed to, actively or passively, opposing to the interlocutors.

Those who adapt take on a docile, helpful, compliant attitude. They shape their behavior to the expectations of others and do not oppose their will even if in conflict with their needs. Attentive listening is accompanied by nods and “compliance smiles” (Ekman, 2009) to the interlocutor. Those who oppose participate less actively in the interaction, put the interlocutor in difficulty as soon as possible, can defy the conversational partners, therapist included, and express a constant disagreement that seems to disregard the addressed issues and problems. Content seems irrelevant, what matters is to emphasize that they “do not agree.” When the opposition is active, the actor directly faces the interlocutors. Those who oppose passively destroy arguments, trivializing them or not taking them into consideration, not engaging and rejecting everything that the interlocutor offers, often using ironic smiles and raising an eyebrow.

Making an Impression/Making a Poor Impression

The opposition is between appearing self-assured, possibly in a higher social position than the interlocutors, or, on the contrary, in a lower social position or socially inadequate.

Those who commit themselves to making an impression have a self-confident attitude, an upright posture and the typical non-Duchenne smile. The speech and tone of voice are assertive and polite. Even if they do not feel well, their appearance is appropriate to the context, often impeccable. Those who, intentionally or unknowingly, want to make a poor impression (or want to make other members of the family make one) present themselves with inappropriate clothes, often messy, they are in obvious discomfort or have a challenging attitude. Sometimes they tend to look away from other interlocutors and have a slumped posture to mask embarrassment.

Bragging, Humiliating/Being Humiliated, Embarrassing

The opposition is between bragging about one's own social position and achievements in front of the interlocutors and feeling humiliated by virtue of being socially inferior or lacking the qualities appreciated by the interlocutors, such as wealth, slimness, professional or sporting success.

Those who brag have a self-confident attitude, the posture is upright, the gaze, expressing smugness, is directed alternately at all the conversational partners whose feedback is immediately understood. They place themselves in a central position in the session and, thanks to broad and calm gestures and any accessories (helmet, handbag, etc.) that they scatter here and there in the therapy room, they occupy the space around them. The speech and the tone of voice are assertive and the facial expression is smug. Verbalizations do not openly boost their qualities, but are such as to induce the interlocutor to recognize their superiority. Those who feel humiliated are in obvious discomfort, they tend to look away from their interlocutors, often blushing and making self-adaptors, like touching one's face or arms. Sometimes they use non-Duchenne smiles to avoid being engaged in the conversation. Sweating can be intense and neck and upper chest flushing are often visible.

Semantic of Belonging

"Joy/anger" and "cheerfulness/sadness, despair" fuel this semantic. Joy typically emerges when the conversational partners feel to be really involved in an intimate, all-embracing relationship or included in a group, and cheerfulness arises when they feel understood. On the contrary, anger and sadness arise when conversational partners feel rejected, excluded, and betrayed, and despair emerges when they feel abandoned, left alone often because they have destroyed an important relationship.

The *emotional climate* of the sessions is often characterized by highly expressed emotion. Loving and not being loved dominate the conversation, putting emotions directly into play. Joy, cheerfulness, enthusiasm, anger and sadness prevail, but do not exclude the presence of other emotional states. Hierarchical position, ethics, and autonomy do not seem to exert a decisive role on loving and being loved. Those who do not feel loved or welcomed often appear isolated. Their speech rate is low and their pauses are long and frequent. They also use a lot of self-touching gestures and few illustrators. Joy and enthusiasm emerge in the session when family members share feelings, emotions, points of view with the therapist or with each other. Being included, understood, feeling loved, give a joy that radiates in the therapy room. Not feeling understood generates sadness. Aggression and rancour generally appear when they feel betrayed, neglected or ignored. Often someone is excluded during the sessions, while the love and affection binding other members of the family are palpable. Those who exclude themselves, or are excluded, detach themselves from everyone else. Their eye contact and postures are not in tune with interlocutors and their facial activity, especially in the upper part of the face (Schneider, Heimann, Himer, & Huss, 1990), is reduced. When those in this position try to coordinate themselves with others, they do so in a forced way, for example with "miserable smiles" (Ekman, 2009), and sometimes with out-of-tune laughs. There is a strong contrast with those who occupy the opposite position. The latter express warmth and affection spontaneously, they are expansive and attract others' affective manifestations. Empathy flows from them with great naturalness.

Sharing/Ignoring *Including/(Self-)Excluding*

These ISPs are very similar as are their indicators. The opposition is, in the first ISP, between sharing ways of feeling and thinking with the conversational partners and ignoring, isolating them, while in the second one, between including, involving someone isolated, out of the conversation, and excluding or self-excluding.

Sharing ways of feeling and thinking is a joint activity eliciting joy, while including is an active, positive movement toward someone not involved. Ignoring is an active movement toward someone else fuelled by repressed anger but sometimes it is the result of a totally positive involvement with one conversational partner, whereas the other partners are ignored. Self-excluding, isolating elicit sadness and are expressed when conversational partners believe they are not understood. The active movement of excluding is generally enacted toward conversational members who show a behavior that is considered despicable. People who share lean toward their conversational partner, affect each other with a warm tone of voice, and maintain eye contact. They have an animated facial mimicry and express interest and enthusiasm toward the interlocutor and the object of the conversation. Turn taking is generally fast and fluid. The movements of the body and face are in tune with the interlocutors. Smiles and nods are frequently present, as well as the genuine and shared laughter that transmit joy and cheerfulness. Nonverbal indicators of including are similar, but the joy and enthusiasm deriving from full reciprocity are lacking. Those who ignore seem blind and deaf to the targets from whom they withdraw their glance and attention. Also those who exclude themselves avoid eye contact and they disconnect emotionally from the interlocutors whom sometimes they seem to observe from the outside.

Worshipping, Celebrating/Destroying

The opposition is between adoring, venerating, paying homage to the interlocutor putting her on a pedestal and destroying her by trampling on her identity and honor.

Those who worship focus their attention on their targets by involving them emotionally. They often do not take their eyes off the beloved target as if she was the only person present in the session. The affection of those who adore is often so overflowing as to influence the entire climate of the session. The same attention and focus characterizes the opposite positioning that is fuelled by anger that profoundly alters facial mimicry. The tone of voice is high, speech is quick, verbalizations that accompany it are threatening, gestures are aggressive and offensive, the jaw is clenched, and the neck is contracted.

Mending/Provoking

Recognizing one's own mistakes, accepting the rebukes of the interlocutors, attributing any wrongdoing to their "wrong" nature, or to adverse conditions that have constructed their identity in an attempt to repair the relationship is opposed to provoking the interlocutors, proposing taboo subjects, putting salt on open wounds, affecting the most conflictual areas of the relationship. The effect of provoking is a conflicting involvement of the targets.

Those who recognize their mistakes are often in the position of the "beaten dog." Partially detached from the conversation, they keep their eyes low and create long silences with possible nods. Verbal interventions are usually brief, the content is represented by excuses, attacks on themselves, their own history, confirming the reasons of those who tell of their wrongdoings with a look. Facial mimicry expresses sadness and regret and it is characterized by raised inner corners of the eyebrows and drawn down corners of the lip (Ekman & Friesen, 2003). The posture is sometimes curled up, self-adaptors, such as stroking the hair, are frequently present, the intermittent glances are directed to the target of the relational positioning. Those who provoke, on the contrary, have an upright posture: attentive to the interlocutors, involved with those who are the object of provocation. Gesticulation and facial mimicry are often animated and the tone of the voice can have significant variations. The provocations are often expressed by irony and sarcastic jokes.

Respecting, Honoring/Dishonoring

Respecting the person and her role is opposed to dishonoring the interlocutor, showing her unworthiness as a man, woman, husband, wife, etc. Specific behaviors are not attacked but the integrity of the interlocutor, or of central areas of her identity are questioned.

Respecting is expressed in the session through a genuine attention with which the conversational partner is listened to, the request made to her to express her opinion on the issues that are discussed, the seriousness with which her observations are received, even if they are divergent from those expressed by the actor. The interlocutor is taken into account, even when she does not speak, through intermittent eye contact. Those who dishonor usually have a more detached attitude than those who destroy. Bitterness prevails over anger. The posture is usually composed, the tone of voice can be high, but it is less altered than when they destroy. Dishonorable verbalizations are often expressed indirectly, that is, they are aimed at absent targets, although the context of the conversation clearly indicates a target present in the therapy room.

Rejoicing, Energizing/Getting Angry

To rejoice, to express enthusiasm for what is discussed is opposed to getting angry at what is emerging in the conversation.

Those who position themselves in the rejoicing, energizing pole convey contagious joy and enthusiasm. Their smiles are broad and warm and their facial mimicry is animated. Sometimes they use a grotesque or comic rhetoric to entertain the interlocutors even when the content of what they are saying is sad or tragic. The speech is rapid, vivid, and imaginative. On the contrary, those who are angry lean toward the target, raising the tone of voice. Gestures and verbalizations are aggressive, breathing can accelerate, skin colour changes, angry expressions take on the typical features described by Ekman and Friesen (2003). Anger is sometimes so overwhelming that it does not allow those who experience it to differentiate their behavior toward the targets, from the behavior of interlocutors seen as innocent. When despair prevails, the volume of the voice is low, movements slow down, and pauses and tears frequently appear.

THE CODING METHOD

The identification and classification of ISPs according to the FSG III is carried out on the video-recordings of couple or family therapy sessions following seven steps.

Step 1. Mastering and contextualizing the session

Coders should watch the entire session several times and read all the available documentation about the clinical case, including the family chart and the summary of the phone call (Di Blasio, Fischer, & Prata, 1986) and possible email exchanges preceding the session.

Step 2. Identifying triadic or polyadic configurations

The aim of this step is to identify the main interactive triadic or polyadic configurations of the analyzed session, or other videorecorded interactions, in order to organize the flow of the interaction. Coders should identify the significant changes in the interactions which give rise to a new configuration, taking into account the following five variables:

1. *agency*: the individuals who initiate the interactive configuration;

2. *addressee*: the individuals to whom the main interactions are addressed;
3. *responsiveness*: the involvement with which the targets respond to the agents;
4. *intensity*: the extent with which the main interactions characterize a configuration;
5. *emotional climate*: the atmosphere created by the emotions prevailing during the configuration.

Many indicators contribute to create the emotional climate — such as vocal pitch, intonation, verbal content, gestures, and other body movements — and many others that are difficult to describe but easily identified by coders. Sometimes the emotional climate is created by a partner's emotions that influence the atmosphere of one configuration, otherwise, all the partners equally contribute to the creation of the emotional climate of a configuration.

Often all the above mentioned variables contribute to create significant changes in the interaction, sometimes they follow different patterns, so it is recommended that researchers decide in advance which variables take priority, and, according to their choice, they should instruct coders. We decided to prioritize the emotional climate, which is essential in therapeutic settings. Therefore a change of emotional climate is enough to determine a transition from one configuration to another.

Each configuration should take into account all the actors participating in the session and it should last between 2 and 10 minutes.

Step 3. Assessing the configurations and pointing out their time limits

Coders should evaluate, one by one, each of the five above mentioned variables, changing, if necessary, the segmentation of the session and indicating the precise duration of each configuration. The duration of each configuration should be noted on the coding sheet, expressed in hours, minutes, and seconds.

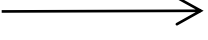
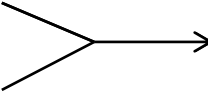

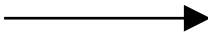
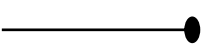
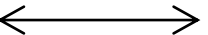
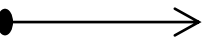
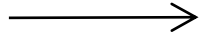

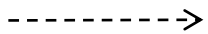
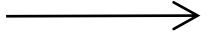
Step 4. Depicting the configurations

Once the configurations are identified, coders should chart them through graphs, partially following those introduced by Hinde and Hermann (1977), focusing on agency, addressing, responsiveness, and intensity (mentioned in Step 2). These graphs consist of differently designed arrows (see Table 2) synthesizing the main interactions of the various actors, who are indicated with their initials. The emotional climate does not receive any graphic representation but is described by coders in the appropriate column of the coding sheet.

Step 5. Finding macro- and micro-positionings and specifying targets

In this step, the *macro-positionings* (M) and *micro-positionings* (m), characterizing each configuration, are detected. As mentioned before, macro-positionings are rather stable interactive positionings including at least two conversational partners, whereas micro-positionings are shorter interactive positionings, which can be located within or outside the macro-positionings. They can signal the transition to a new macro-positioning; whereas, if they are located inside a macro-positioning, they do not significantly alter the emotional climate, which remains unchanged. In the case of psychotherapy sessions and other natural interactions, the duration of micro-positionings is between 3 seconds to 2 minutes, whereas macro-positionings last between 2 and 5 minutes. These time spans have to be reduced when analyzing movies because they are particularly semantically significant. As Hitchcock stated: "What is drama, after all, but life with the dull bits cut out" (Truffaut & Scott, 1985, p.103). We shorten movie macro- and micro-positionings to 5 seconds and less than 5 seconds, respectively. Coders should specify their time limits, for each micro and macro-positioning, as well as their agent and target, indicated by numbers, which remain constant.

TABLE 2
The graphic representation of the agency, the addressee, the responsiveness, and the intensity

AGENCY		Agency: it is represented by the position of the arrow at the base of the person who starts the interactive configuration
		The base of the arrow will be divided in two or three parts when two or more actors begin the configuration in a nearly synchronous way
ADDRESSEE		Addressee: when interlocutors are two, three or more, the direction of the arrow is forked or three headed
		When the main interactions are aimed at all interlocutors, the tip is filled up
		When the main interactions are not specifically addressed to anyone the tip is round
RESPONSIVENESS		Responsiveness: when the interlocutor actively responds, a tip toward those who started the interactive involvement is inserted
		When the interlocutor does not respond or leaves the conversation, a round tip toward the agent is inserted
		When the interlocutor responds in a disengaged way, nothing is added to the arrow
INTENSITY		Intensity: when a main interaction is capable of characterizing the whole configuration, the line of the arrow is highlighted in bold
		When a main interaction is implicit or weak, the line of the arrow is dashed
		When the intensity is standard, a default line is inserted

As targets, coders have to indicate not only the conversational partners to whom the positioning is explicitly addressed, but also the partners for whom and to whom the positioning is relevant (i.e., implicit targets). The reader can find an example in one configuration of Tom Andersen's session (Ugazio & Guarnieri, 2018) in which one partner does not take his eyes off his companion. Even when the therapist intervenes he does not look at him, and keeps on staring at his partner. Instead, the other partner's positioning has both his companion and the therapist as targets and it creates two different poles. Another example can be found in a short sequence (from 10 min, 22 s to 10 min, 27 s) in *Finding Nemo*, analyzed in the Appendix.

Step 6. Constructing the ISPs

Coders construct interactive semantic polarities by identifying the meaning expressed by each macro- and micro-positioning, and then by looking for the macro- or micro-positioning expressing the opposite meaning. The latter can be found in other configurations in the same session or in other sessions within the same psychotherapy. Each polarity can be formed by a macro- and a micro-positioning, as well as two macro- or two micro-positionings.

Furthermore, when a macro- or micro-positioning has two or more different targets, we have to consider the possibility that it forms two different polarities, and consequently we have to look for two opposite meanings. This is particularly true when one target is the explicit referent of the positioning, while the other is the implicit one. In the previous example, in which one partner does not take his eyes off the companion, apparently deaf to therapist's interventions, the same positioning constructs two different poles of different po-

larities: worshipping (“worshipping/destroying”), having his companion as the explicit target, and ignoring (“ignoring/sharing”), having the therapist as the implicit target.

As we underlined before, ISPs can be formed in a strictly sequential way, when for example a conversational partner assumes a domineering position and the other one yields. This can happen mainly in complementary interactions. The majority of semantic polarities are therefore not built up through a back-and-forth-exchange. Someone can reply, for example, taking distance or ignoring, which cannot be considered opposite to domineering. We should look for the opposite macro- or micro-positioning in another configuration also in different parts of the analyzed therapy.

As we mentioned before, we suggest circumscribing the search for the opposite positioning in the same semantic, within the range of positionings fuelled by opposite emotion. For example, sharing can construct a polarity with the opposite positioning of ignoring but also with destroying or provoking. Each pole of a polarity can also be expressed by different actors involved in the same session.

We suggest constructing a polarity formed by positionings in two different semantics only if a couple of conditions are respected: a) coders *unanimously* consider these two positionings as opposite; b) this semantic pattern recurs at least three times. We used this threshold for consultations consisting of two to four sessions, whereas longer consultations may require different thresholds.

Step 7. Classifying and connoting the ISPs according to the semantics of freedom, goodness, power, and belonging

The last step is dedicated to the classification of the emerged ISPs according to the four grids in Table 1, integrated with the FSG II (Ugazio & Guarnieri, 2017) and the SG-DTR (Ugazio & Castelli, 2015) grids. Coders check if each pinpointed polarity can be assimilated to one included in the family semantics grids of freedom, power, goodness, and belonging, indicating the corresponding code. Polarities that cannot be included in these grids should be coded in the *other semantics* category.

When a polarity is constructed by two different actors we highlight it by putting one asterisk, when a polarity crosses the semantics as in “closing up” (semantic of freedom)/“provoking”(semantic of belonging) we highlight this uncommon occurrence (see Step 6) with two asterisks.

In this step, we give a connotation of value to each semantic polarity. The emotions which fuel the poles define the positive or negative connotation of the polarity. A bidirectional arrow between the poles of a polarity (see Table 1) signals that the value connotation of those poles frequently switches, nevertheless, it can also change in all the polarities. Coders need to grasp the underlying emotion of each pole to decide its connotation, which is expressed by codes: even numbers indicate a positive connotation, while odd numbers indicate a negative one.

A CLINICAL CASE EXAMPLE: TAKING ROOTS, A FORBIDDEN STORY

Here, two excerpts are reported, respectively, from the first session of a young couple who requested therapy for the husband diagnosed as having type I bipolar disorder and from the third session with the husband and his siblings. They are an intercultural couple: Mikkel is Danish, whereas Isabel is Argentinian. The therapy was carried out in Italy where the couple resides. The siblings were asked to come to therapy, despite living in Denmark, because Mikkel’s psychotic episode was part of a more general crisis in their family. The last two years of Mikkel’s family of origin were tormented. Two events opened a difficult time in this family, always struggling to find a place to put down roots: the sudden abandonment by the father of his mission as a Protestant pastor and the concurrent parents’ move to another country far from all their children and relatives.

These unexpected events were followed by eldest son's existential crisis, the second-born's bipolar psychotic episode for which she was hospitalized for a month, and now by Mikkel psychotic outburst.

As shown in Tables 3 and 4, the ignoring pole, repeated several times in the first two couple sessions, finds its opposite — sharing — only in the third session with Mikkel's siblings. During the first two sessions, Mikkel appears withdrawn, often ignores the interventions of his wife who tend to help him and actively participating in the session, he does not share much even with the therapist. In the third session, with Mikkel and his siblings, the emotional climate changes sharply, becoming joyous. The three siblings seem to be involved and also very happy to be able, for the first time, to share the experience that each of them has lived in their family of origin, as their repeated laughs unequivocally suggest. This joy and this warmth are totally unexpected both because of the seriousness of the problems that Mikkel is experiencing and that the second-born has just recently overcome, at least in part, as well as because the three siblings have been following their own path for years.

As we highlighted, the second poles of some significant polarities of the first couple session (see Table 3) find their opposites in a session with another family subsystem, the siblings (see Table 4). It happens at times but, naturally, polar opposites can also be traced in subsequent sessions with the same system.

A MOVIE EXAMPLE: MILLION DOLLAR BABY

The semantic of power, according to FSPM peculiar to eating disorders, dominates *Million Dollar Baby* (Eastwood, Ruddy, Rosenberg, Haggis, & Eastwood, 2004). It is not a coincidence that Maggie, a waitress who becomes a successful boxer, as soon as she learns that her coach has a daughter asks him: "How much (does) she weigh?"², justifying herself in front of his astounded look says: "Trouble in my family comes by the pound."



Maggie has left the poverty and debasement of her original Missouri context behind, but she has not forgotten her on welfare "white trash" family. When she saves enough money to buy them a house, she asks her coach to drive her to her family: she would like to spring the surprise on them. The dramatic scenes, analyzed in Table 5, concern the moment (from 1hr 9 min 55 s to 1hr 12 min 41 s) in which Maggie gives a decent house to her mother who lives with a daughter and a nephew in a trailer.

In the Appendix, we analyze other sequences taken from three movies in which, according to us, the semantics of freedom — *Finding Nemo* (Walters, Stanton, & Unkrich, 2003) —, of goodness — *As Good as it Gets* (Brooks, Johnson, Zea, & Brooks, 1997) —, and belonging — *Melancholia* (Foldager, Vesth, & von Trier, 2011) — are dominant.

RELIABILITY

The FSG III was applied to the video-recordings of the first session of 12 psychotherapies; 11 with couples and one with a family. The sessions were conducted by three different therapists according to systemic approach. The language used is Italian in eight cases and English in four. Ten couples/family are formed by Westerns (seven Italians), one by a Western and a Latin American, and one by a Western and a Eastern. The level of education is high, only five persons are without degrees. The couples are heterosexual and the average age of the partners is 40.7 years (men: $M = 42.1$, $SD = 9.19$, range = 21-54; women: $M = 39.3$, $SD = 10.02$, range = 25-59). The reasons why they required therapy are couple's conflicts or a psychopathology in one of the two partners.

TABLE 3
Interactive semantic polarities in Mikkel and Isabel's first session

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
	33 min 28 s - 36 min	Isabel speaks about her family of origin with great animation and involvement, whereas Mikkel does not participate	33 min 52 s - 36 min	M	1	3	Isabel telling her parents' story tries to please the therapist. She often smiles and nods at the therapist	(31 min 41 s - 31 min 46 s)	(m)	(2)	(1)	(Mikkel coldly refuses what Isabel has to say about his faith)	Adapting	314 *	(Opposing)	(315) *
			34 min - 36 min	M	2	1+3	While Isabel is talking, Mikkel rubs his eyes and then looks at his shoes. He seems disconnected from Isabel and the therapist	III s (6 min 50 s - 7 min 47 s)	(m)	(2)	(4+5)	(The therapist turns to the siblings and Mikkel, noticing that Gregers and Cara have not understood the last part of the question, translates it in Danish. Gregers and Cara nod)	Self-excluding	411	(Including)	(410)
	36 min 01 s - 45 min 25 s	Mikkel replies promptly to the therapist, "awakening" as soon as she addresses him. Isabel tries to step in, but gives up because Mikkel shows that he does not appreciate it	38 min - 38 min 43 s	m	1	2	Isabel tries to step in sensing that Mikkel has not understood the therapist's question	(44 min 55 s - 45 min 10 s)	(m)	(1)	(2)	(Isabel leans her back on the backrest and turns her face toward Mikkel)	Supporting	510	(Stepping back)	(510)
			38 min 30 s - 40 min 38 s	M	2	1	Overlapping Isabel, Mikkel directly addresses to the therapist asking her to better clarify the question	III s (20 min 44 s - 23 min 10 s)	(M)	(2+4+5)	(2+4+5)	(The siblings laugh in delight when they notice that their mother treats them in the same way)	Ignoring	411 *	(Sharing)	(410) *

(table 3 continues)

Table 3 (continued)

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
			44 min 12 s - 44 min 41 s	m	1	2	Mikkel hesitates, as if he's trying to find the right word in order to express what he has in mind. So Isabel suggests the word	44 min 55 s - 45 min 10 s	m	1	2	Isabel leans her back on the backrest and turns her face toward Mikkel	Supporting	510	Stepping back	510
			44 min 42 s - 45 min 25 s	m	2	1	Mikkel does not take in consideration neither Isabel nor her suggestion and keeps addressing the therapist using a synonym	III s (20 min 44 s - 23 min 10 s)	(M)	(2+4+5)	(2+4+5)	(The siblings laugh in delight when they notice that their mother treats them in the same way)	Ignoring	411 *	(Sharing)	(410) *

Note. M = Mikkel, I = Isabel, T = Therapist; Tm = time limits; III s = third session; M/m = macro- or micro-positioning; A = agent (1 = Isabel, 2 = Mikkel, 3 = Therapist, 4 = Cara, Mikkel's sister, 5 = Gregers, Mikkel's brother); Tg = target (1 = Isabel, 2 = Mikkel, 3 = Therapist, 4 = Cara, 5 = Gregers); Code: first digit 1 = freedom, 2 = goodness, 3 = power, 4 = belonging, 5 = other semantic; second digit 1 = interactive positioning, 2 = emotions and feelings; third digit = even numbers indicate a positive connotation, while odd numbers indicate a negative one. Polarities in which the two poles are expressed by different actors are highlighted by one asterisk.

TABLE 4
Interactive semantic polarities in Mikkel and his siblings' session

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
	35 min 35 s - 43 min 25 s	Geggers takes the floor and his siblings, after listening attentively and respectfully to him, interact with each other easily and cheerfully	30 min 57 s - 32 min 59 s	M	5	3	Geggers, replying to the therapist, with a peremptory tone of voice, explains why their mother nannies her grandchildren only in emergency situations	35 min 50 s - 36 min 05 s	m	4	3	Cara is not sure how to reply to the therapist and stuttering tries to answer	Asserting	510	Being tentative	510
			36 min 06 s - 36 min 18 s	m	2	4	Mikkel, staring at his sister, encourages her to take a position, similar to his, against their father	1 s (31 min 47 s - 31 min 50 s)	(m)	(1)	(1)	(Isabel is visibly embarrassed when Mikkel coldly refuses what she has said about his faith)	Allying	311 *	(Being embarrassed)	(321) *
			40 min 14 s - 40 min 22 s	m	2+4+5	2+4+5	The three siblings laugh in delight when Cara makes fun of their father	1 s (38 min 30 s - 40 min 38 s)	(M)	(2)	(1)	(Overlapping Isabel, Mikkel directly addresses the therapist asking her to better clarify the question)	Sharing	410 *	(Ignoring)	(411) *
			40 min 28 s - 41 min 23 s	m	2	3	Since the siblings mention three different dates for their father's heart attack, Mikkel, smiling, helps the therapist: Cara is the most precise of them	(44 min 55 s - 45 min 10 s)	(m)	(1)	(2)	(Isabel leans her back on the backrest and turns her face toward Mikkel)	Supporting	510 *	(Stepping back)	(510) *

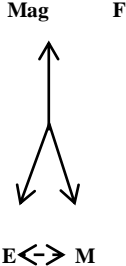
(table 4 continues)

Table 4 (continued)

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
	43 min 26 s - 46 min	The therapist turns to Cara, who lightens the mood, because she often sees the funny side of the things. The three siblings are in perfect harmony	44 min 17 s - 44 min 33 s	m	2+3+ 4+5	2+3+ 4+5	Cara quotes a Danish proverb, Mikkel and Gregers laugh in delight together with their sister. The therapist joins their heartfelt laugh	I s (38min 30 s - 40 min 38 s)	(M)	(2)	(1)	(Overlapping Isabel, Mikkel directly addresses the therapist asking her to better clarify the question)	Sharing	410 *	(Ignoring)	(411) *
			45 min 17 s - 45 min 25 s				The three siblings agree with one voice when the therapist, talking about their father, says: "it was difficult to understand him"	I s (38 min 30 s - 40 min 38 s)				(Overlapping Isabel Mikkel directly addresses the therapist asking her to better clarify the question)				

Note. C = Cara, Mikkel's sister, G = Gregers, Mikkel's brother, M = Mikkel, T = Therapist; Tm = time limits; I s = first session; M/m = macro- or micro-positioning; A = agent (1 = Isabel, 2 = Mikkel, 3 = Therapist, 4 = Cara, 5 = Gregers); Tg = target (1 = Isabel, 2 = Mikkel, 3 = Therapist, 4 = Cara, 5 = Gregers); Code: first digit 1 = freedom, 2 = goodness, 3 = power, 4 = belonging, 5 = other semantic, second digit 1 = interactive positioning, 2 = emotions and feelings, third digit = even numbers indicate a positive connotation, while odd numbers indicate a negative one. Polarities in which the two poles are expressed by different actors are highlighted by one asterisk.

TABLE 5
Interactive semantic polarities in a sequence of the movie Million Dollar Baby

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
	1 hr 09 min 55 s - 1 hr 11 min 51 s	Maggie's excitement about offering a house to her family turns off in front of her mother's and sister's harsh criticisms	1 hr 09 min 55 s - 1 hr 10 min 06 s	M	1	1	Frankie drives Maggie home, where her family lives. The house is a rusting trailer. Maggie is bursting with pride about giving them a new house	1 hr 10 min 07 s - 1 hr 10 min 13 s	M	3	3	Mardell's facial expression shows annoyance and shame for her sister's visit. She welcomes Maggie with a stretched half smile	Being proud of herself	320 *	Being embarrassed	321 *
			1 hr 10 min 45 s - 1 hr 10 min 48 s	m	3	1	Mardell, instead of thanking her, immediately comments the gift saying that the furniture is missing	1 hr 10 min 49 s - 1 hr 10 min 50 s	m	1	3	Maggie replies with a smile on her face: she will take care of everything	Criticizing	313 *	Facing	310 *
			1 hr 10 min 51 s - 1 hr 11 min	M	2	1	The irritated mother says to Maggie that she should have asked her first	1 hr 10 min 55 s - 1 hr 10 min 56 s	m	1	2	Maggie dismayed replies: "you need a decent place"	Opposing	315 *	Facing	310 *
			1 hr 11 min - 1 hr 11 min 02 s	m	4	1+2+3	When Frankie, who was about to come in, sees Earline's reaction, hangs silently back on the railing.	(1 hr 44 min 52 s - 1 hr 45 min 42 s	(M)	(4)	(1)	(Frankie, when noticing that Maggie's family try to make her sign some documents, enters the hospital room where Maggie is admitted)	Taking a step back	510	(Stepping in)	510

(table 5 continues)

Table 5 (continued)

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
			1 hr 11 min 03 s - 1 hr 11 min 18 s	M	2	1	The mother noticeably displeased accuses Maggie of making her lose the welfare	1 hr 10 min 10 s - 1 hr 10 min 11 s	m	1	2	Maggie replies that she will send her more money and stops counterattacking her mother	Opposing	315 *	Adapting	314 *
			1 hr 11 min 19 s - 1 hr 11 min 23 s	m	3	1+2	Mardell boosts the mother's criticisms	(1 hr 09 min 02 s - 1 hr 09 min 10 s)	(M)	(1)	(5)	(Maggie fights a boxer in the ring)	Allying	311 *	(Competing)	(310) *
			1 hr 11 min 24 s - 1 hr 11 min 30 s	M	2	1	Earline, with a scornful laugh, reproaches Maggie for the gift. The daughter should have given her money instead of a house	1 hr 11 min 31 s - 1 hr 11 min 40 s	M	1	2+3	Maggie, visibly disappointed, gives her mother the keys of the house and tells her to do as she pleases	Criticizing	313 *	Adapting	314 *
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <p>Mag</p> <p>↑</p> <p>↓</p> <p>E <-> M</p> </div> <div> <p>F</p> </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <p>1 hr 11 min 52 s - 1 hr 12 min 41 s</p> </div> <div> <p>Back at the rusting trailer, Maggie's mother hurts Maggie in many ways. Maggie is disheartened and bitterly disappointed</p> </div> </div>		1 hr 11 min 52 s - 1 hr 12 min 05 s	M	2	1	Earline, as if she is doing a favour to Maggie, accepts the gift. The mother laughs, mocking her daughter, when Maggie repeats that she will send more money	1 hr 11 min 56 s - 1 hr 12 min 04 s	M	1	2	Maggie tries to please her mother, she follows her and agrees with her	Opposing	315 *	Adapting	314 *
			1 hr 12 min 06 s - 1 hr 12 min 13 s	M	2	1	Earline touches Maggie's face in order to check her bruises and she asks if it is Frankie's fault	1 hr 12 min 14 s - 1 hr 12 min 19 s	M	1	1	Maggie, nearly shivering at her mother's touch, reminds her that she is a fighter	Humiliating	318 *	Opposing	315 *

(table 5 continues)

Table 5 (continued)

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
			1 hr 12 min 20 s - 1 hr 12 min 37 s	M	2	1	Earline, with a scornful grin, tells Maggie that she is ashamed of her: “find a man Maggie, live proper. People hear about what you’re doing and they laugh [laughing]. Hurts me to tell you but they laugh at you”	1 hr 12 min 38 s - 1 hr 12 min 41 s	m	1	2+3	Maggie disheartened remains silent	Humiliating	318 [*]	Adapting	315 [*]
			1 hr 12 min 21 s - 1 hr 12 min 36 s	M	3	1+2	First Mardell with the sneer observes the scene, and then sniggers with her mother	(1 hr 09 min 02 s - 1 hr 09 min 10 s)	(M)	(1)	(5)	(Maggie fights a boxer in the ring)	Allying	311 [*]	(Competing)	(310) [*]

Note. Mag = Maggie, F = Frankie, Maggie’s coach, E = Earline, Maggie’s mother, M = Mardell, Maggie’s sister; Tm = time limits; M/m = macro- or micro-positioning; A = agent (1 = Maggie, 2 = Earline, 3 = Mardell, 4 = Frankie, 5 = other boxer); Tg = target (1 = Maggie, 2 = Earline, 3 = Mardell, 4 = Frankie, 5 = other boxer); Code: first digit 1 = freedom, 2 = goodness, 3 = power, 4 = belonging, 5 = other semantic, second digit 1 = interactive positioning, 2 = emotions and feelings, third digit = even numbers indicate a positive connotation, while odd numbers indicate a negative one. Polarities in which the two poles are expressed by different actors are highlighted by one asterisk

Coding was carried out on the first 30 minutes. The analyzed sessions last between 1 hour and 30 minutes and 2 hours and 50 minutes ($M = 2$ hours and 4 minutes). The coded polarities are on average 10 per session ($SD = 3.9$, range = 5-20).

The reliability about the configurations, the positionings, and the ISPs is assessed. First of all, coders unitize the configurations autonomously and later jointly. The inter-rater agreement is 77.6 % (Step 3). In the same way, they identify the macro- and micro-positionings and ISPs first autonomously and then jointly. The inter-rater agreement is 83.3% for positionings (Step 5) and 90.2% for ISPs (Step 6). The inter-rater agreement for coding the semantics of the selected ISPs is satisfactory (Cohen's $k = .815$).

CONCLUSION

The FSG III provides an operational definition and a method to identify the ISPs in couple and family therapeutic conversations and in other triadic or polyadic conversations. It allows a reconstruction of meanings exchanged primarily at a nonverbal level during the therapeutic conversation. The FSG III also enables the researchers to distinguish the contribution of each conversational partner, therapist included, to the meaning making and to verify the semantic changes during therapy, also session by session if necessary.

Thanks to this coding method, the polarities that best express the distinctive features of the concept of semantic polarities (Ugazio, 1998, 2013) are now empirically detectable. Indeed, polarities are a discursive phenomenon expressed mainly by emotions, therefore through nonverbal behavior. The previous versions of FSG do not fully capture the specificity of the concept of semantic polarities because they concern the narrated story, rather than what is done. The first version (Ugazio et al., 2009) identifies the NSPs in dyadic conversations that are very similar to personal constructs (Kelly, 1955), while the FSG II (Ugazio & Guarnieri, 2017) captures the NSPs in couples and families, similar to family constructs identified by Procter's (1996, 2014) Repertory Qualitative Grids. A first attempt to give an operational definition of ISPs was carried out by the SG-DTR (Ugazio & Castelli, 2015). Being addressed to the therapeutic relationship in individual psychotherapies, the SG-DTR restricts the analysis to six kinds of dyadic positionings in which patient and therapist construct their relationship moving away from their allocated roles.

Like the first three versions of FSG, the FSG III permits to gather quantitative data, but it is essentially a qualitative method with inferential aspects that allow to overcome the limitations of computer-aided coding systems, making it possible to catch conversational partners' idiosyncratic meanings by inferring them from the specific context in which they emerge.

The meaning reconstruction, developed thanks to the FSG III, is the fruit of coders too. They are trained to decentralize their point of view and their semantics to catch conversational partners' idiosyncratic semantic polarities and to classify the ISPs according to predefined categories of a known model (FSPM). Nevertheless, the FSG III is an inferential coding system with flexible, although predefined, categories, so coders play an important role.

The FSG III was constructed to analyze therapeutic conversations. It is certainly richer when therapists let couples and families interact or even encourage conversational partners to enact the usual patterns. The analysis of ISPs during therapeutic conversation is, however, always possible regardless of the therapeutic approach and it is also applicable, with few changes, to movies, as the examples here included show.

The greatest limitation of this method is that it is time consuming. Moreover, beyond a full in-depth knowledge of Ugazio's (1998, 2013) FSPM, its application requires an extensive training, competence, and experience in couple and family therapy.

The FSG III is a research instrument, but the kinds of questions answerable by the ISPs analysis can also be of great interest to clinicians. Thanks to this last version of FSG, it is now possible to perform a semantic analysis able to shed light on the interplay between narrated and lived stories, one of the most intriguing topic not only for researchers but also for clinicians. A pair of couple single cases we carried out (Ugazio & Fellin, 2016; Ugazio & Guarnieri, 2018) reveal interesting discrepancies between NSPs and ISPs and a lot of *unsaid*, which are so important in couple therapy, where partners are generally reluctant to express their feelings clearly in order to protect a vital relationship at stake when they ask for therapy. The analysis of ISPs allows clinicians and researchers to better understand also the therapists' position and the related changes during the therapeutic process. As Ugazio (2013) proposes, therapists find themselves taking position, often unknowingly, in the dominant semantics of couples and families when interacting with them. But it is difficult to identify the positions that therapists assume during sessions without an analysis of ISPs between the family and the therapists. One of the specificities of FSG III is to enable researchers and clinicians to detect these mainly implicit ISPs.

NOTES

1. She and her are used throughout the paper as a gender neutral singular third-person pronoun.
2. Does is in brackets because Maggie, who use Southern United States slang, omitted it (Million Dollar Baby; Eastwood, Ruddy, Rosenberg, Haggis, & Eastwood, 2004; from 40 min 36 s to 40 min 39 sec).

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APPENDIX

The Family Semantics Grid (FSG) III Applied to Three Movie Excerpts

Three sequences from three well known, award-winning films — *Finding Nemo* (Walters, Stanton, & Unkrich, 2003), *As Good as it Gets* (Brooks, Johnson, Zea, & Brooks, 1997), and *Melancholia* (Foldager, Vesth, & von Trier, 2011) — are analyzed here. In each film a specific semantic dominates: freedom in *Finding Nemo*, goodness in *As Good as it Gets*, and belonging in *Melancholia*.

Finding Nemo

Finding Nemo (Walters, Stanton, & Unkrich, 2003) is an animated adventure film by Pixar studios. The clownfish Marlin survives a tragedy. A barracuda killed his wife and exterminated all their eggs except for Nemo's. Marlin promises himself that he will never let anything happen to Nemo, who grows up healthy apart from a withered fin. When it's time for Nemo to begin school, Marlin, who is overprotective toward him, would rather wait because he thinks that his son is not yet ready, but Nemo is looking forward to his first day at school. The analyzed scene (from 9 min, 35 s to 15 min, 39 s) in Table 6 is about Nemo's first day of school: Marlin is afraid, whereas Nemo, eager to explore the ocean with his classmates, in spite of his damaged fin, ends up captured by a scuba diver.

As Good as it Gets

As Good as it Gets (Brooks, Johnson, Zea, & Brooks, 1997) is an American romantic comedy starring Jack Nicholson and Helen Hunt. They play the roles of Melvin, a misanthropic best-selling novelist with a full-blown obsessive-compulsive disorder and Carol, a single mother with a chronically ill son, who works in the restaurant where Melvin is a regular customer. The analyzed scene (from 10 min, 40 s to 14 min, 31 s) in Table 7 shows Carol and Melvin, clashing with each other after a moment of collusion.

Melancholia

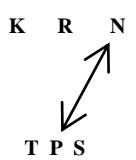
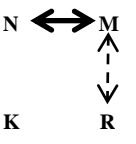
Melancholia (Foldager, Vesth, & von Trier, 2011) is the second film of von Trier's depression trilogy, inspired by a depressive episode he suffered, and focuses on two sisters, the wedding of one and the slow, inescapable approach toward Earth of a rogue planet — *Melancholia* — which will crash into it bringing the world to an end. The first part of *Melancholia*, focusing on Justine, played by Kirsten Dust, shows her elegant wedding reception which ends with the break-up of the newly marriage and of her successful career. The analyzed scene (from 13 min, 58 s to 20 min, 42 s) in Table 8 concerns the wedding reception.

TABLE 6
Interactive semantic polarities in a sequence of Finding Nemo

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
	9 min 35 s - 11 min 18 s	The kids rush over to Mr. Ray, Nemo is champing at the bit to join them, whereas Marlin, worried about his son's first experience at school, wants to entrust his son to the teacher before letting him start the lesson	9 min 43 s - 9 min 45 s	m	1	2	Nemo, invited by Sheldon to welcome the teacher, is held back by his father: "Whoa. You better stay with me"	10 min 03 s - 10 min 07 s	m	2	1	Nemo is the last to join the class and says: "Dad you can go now"	Limiting	113 *	Emancipating	112 *
			10 min 22 s - 10 min 27 s	M	1	2+3	Marlin, beside Mr. Ray, explains to the teacher that Nemo has a little fin and needs to have some breaks	10 min 28 s - 10 min 30 s	m	2	1	Nemo gets rid of Marlin: "Dad. It's time for you to go now!"	Limiting	113 *	Emancipating	112 *
			10 min 43 s - 11 min	M	1	1	Marlin works up the courage and lets Nemo go away	10 min 44 s - 11 min	M	1	1	Mr. Ray, in response to Marlin's worries, reassures him	Alarming	117 *	Reassuring	116 *
			10 min 43 s - 11 min	M	1	1	Marlin works up the courage and lets Nemo go away	10 min 44 s - 11 min	M	1	1	The fathers tell Marlin that today their children are going to the Drop off. Marlin, scared to death frantically swims off after the class	Self-encouraging	112	Getting scared	119
			11 min - 11 min 10 s	M	1	4	A shocked Marlin blames the fathers of his son's classmates for being thoughtless ("What are you insane?!")						Heatedly disagreeing	510		
			11 min 11 s - 11 min 18 s	M	4	4	The fathers stunned, express their bewilderment						Being puzzled	520		

(table 6 continues)

Table 6 (continued)

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
	11 min 18 s - 13 min 05 s	Nemo is in awe of everything he sees. He is so curious to get away from the teacher but not so far as to follow after his reckless classmates	11 min 18 s - 12 min 08 s	M	1+5	1+5	Holding on to Mr Ray's back, Nemo explores the ocean along with his classmates	13 min 03 s - 13 min 05 s	m	1	6	Nemo is called to take part in the competition but he remains still: "My dad says it's not safe"	Exploring	114 *	Staying put	115 *
			12 min 09 s - 12 min 27 s	M	6+1	6+1	Nemo, driven by curiosity, follows after Tad, Sheldon and Pearl, who are sneaking away from the teacher and class	(14 min 54 s - 14 min 58 s)	(m)	(2)	(2)	(Nemo screams: "Daddy! Help me!")	Taking risk	118 *	(Getting scared)	(119) *
			12 min 48 s - 13 min 03 s	M	6	6	Sheldon, Pearl and Tad have a contest to see who can go further in the empty ominous blue void	(50 min 44 s - 51 min 09 s)	(M)	(7)	(7)	(The tank gang collaborates one with each other to rescue Nemo)	Competing	510 *	(Collaborating)	(510) *
	13 min 06 s - 14 min 49 s	The tension is palpable. Marlin is agitated, thinking that Nemo is about to swim into the open ocean, stops him. Nemo, in the grip of anger, shows his courage	13 min 06 s - 13 min 38 s	M	1	2	Marlin agitated reaches Nemo and pulls him away from the reef edge, scolding and threatening him to put off his school entrance	13 min 42 s - 14 min 04 s	M	3	1	Mr. Ray tries uselessly to reassure Marlin	Alarming	117 *	Calming	116 *
			13 min 38 s - 13 min 41 s	m	2	1	Nemo is angry, he says: "I hate you" to his dad	(1 hr 26 min 40 s - 1 hr 26 min 51 s)	(M)	(1+2)	(1+2)	(At the end, after several adventures, dad and son meet again)	Getting angry	419 *	(Rejoicing)	(418) *
			14 min 05 s - 14 min 49 s	M	2	1	Nemo swims out to the sea and bravely touches the boat	14 min 10 s - 14 min 49 s	M	1	2	Marlin rushes to the reef edge, but is too afraid to go further	Taking risk	118 *	Getting scared	119 *

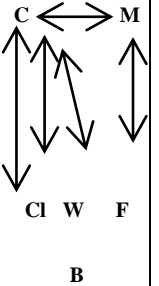
(table 6 continues)

Table 6 (continued)

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
$N \longleftrightarrow M$ $R \leftarrow - \rightarrow K$	14 min 50 s - 15 min 39 s	Moments of pure terror, two giant divers show up and one captures Nemo	14 min 50 s - 14 min 53 s	m	1+3+5	1+3+5	A giant diver rises up from behind Nemo, Marlin opens his mouth, but nothing comes out. The words are stuck in his throat. Meanwhile the kids all scream in terror	15 min 03 s - 15 min 04 s	m	3	5	Mr. Ray scoops up the class of kids and heads back into the reef	Getting scared	119 *	Protecting	116 *
			14 min 54 s - 14 min 58 s	m	2	2	Nemo screams: "Daddy! Help me!"	14 min 59 s - 15 min 00 s	m	1	2	Marlin replies: "I'm coming, Nemo" and breaks from the safety of the reef	Getting scared	119 *	Taking risk	118 *
			15 min 01 s - 15 min 03 s	m	1	1	A second diver blocks Marlin from Nemo and he is frightened	15 min 24 s - 15 min 31 s	M	1	1	Marlin struggles to catch up with the divers and throws himself in the open sea	Getting scared	119	Taking risk	118

Note. N = Nemo, M = Marlin, Nemo's father, R = Mr. Ray, the teacher, K = kids, F = fathers, T, P, S = Tad, Pearl, and Sheldon; Tm = time limits; M/m = macro- or micro-positioning; A = agent (1 = Marlin, 2 = Nemo, 3 = Mr. Ray, 4 = fathers, 5 = kids, 6 = Tad, Pearl, and Sheldon, 7 = tank gang); Tg = target (1 = Marlin, 2 = Nemo, 3 = Mr. Ray, 4 = fathers, 5 = kids, 6 = Tad, Pearl and Sheldon, 7 = tank gang); Code: first digit 1 = freedom, 2 = goodness, 3 = power, 4 = belonging, 5 = other semantic, second digit 1 = interactive positioning, 2 = emotions and feelings, third digit = even numbers indicate a positive connotation, while odd numbers indicate a negative one. Polarities in which the two poles are expressed by different actors are highlighted by one asterisk.

TABLE 7
Interactive semantic polarities in a sequence of the movie As Good as it Gets

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
	10 min 40 s - 12 min 38 s	Melvin's annoyance having found "his" table occupied, gives him the chance to unleash his bad temper and to catch everybody's attention. The clients and the staff are indignant while Carol is indulgent	10 min 40 s - 10 min 57 s	M	2	3	Carol, excited, tells a regular customer that she has a date	(34 min 15 s - 34 min 35 s)	(M)	(2)	(1)	(Carol stops talking to Melvin about her son's recent health issue)	Opening up	110	(Closing up)	(111)
			10 min 58 s - 11 min 12 s	M	1	3	Melvin using vulgar language, offends a couple of costumers who are sitting at "his" table	(1 hr 40 min 22 s - 1 hr 41 min 20 s)	(M)	(1)	(3)	(Melvin makes a flattering comment to Carol, who is profoundly moved by it)	Repulsing	218	(Attracting)	(219)
			11 min 18 s - 11 min 22 s	m	1	1	Carol puts two hands on Melvin's waist to move him out of the way. Melvin gulps at the contact (no one else is ever allowed to touch him) but enjoys it since he intentionally moves a step in Carol's path so that she must touch him again to get him out of the way	(9 min 13 s - 9 min 16 s)	m	(1)	(1)	(Frank grabs Melvin by his shirt and jerks him forward, who reacts with a sneer of disgust: "No touch. No touch. No touch")	Feeling pleasure	221	(Feeling disgust)	(220)
			11 min 38 s - 11 min 58 s	M	1	2	Unsettled Melvin, interrupting the conversation between Carol and her colleagues, complains: "I've got Jews in my table"	(14 min 13 s - 14 min 30 s)	(M)	(1)	(2)	(Melvin, hardly breathing, senses that he is gone way too far. He has hurt Carol and he feels bad about it)	Shrugging off	215	(Being guilty)	(214)

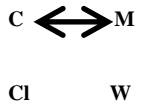
(table 7 continues)

Table 7 (continued)

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
			11 min 59 s - 12 min 02 s	m	2	1	Unperturbed Carol replies with firmness: "It's not your table. It's the place's table. Behave. This once, you can sit at someone else's station"	(12 min 51 s - 13 min 12 s)	(M)	(2)	(1)	(Carol, amused, accepts the complicity)	Restraining	210	(Becoming an accomplice)	(211)
			12 min 03 s - 12 min 04 s	m	4	2	Carol's colleagues are frightened at the idea of serving Melvin. Scared to death they turn to Carol	12 min 05 s - 12 min 07 s	m	2	4	Carol calms the colleagues showing that she is able to handle him and open to keep him at her station ("...or you can wait your turn")	Getting scared	119 *	Calming	116 *
			12 min 08 s - 12 min 10 s	m	1	4	Melvin watches the waitresses with disdain	(1 hr 23 min 24 s - 1 hr 23 min 29 s)	(M)	(1)	(2)	(Melvin appreciates Carol arriving on time for their appointment)	Despising	510	(Appreciating)	(510)
			12 min 12 s - 12 min 38 s	M	1	3	Melvin interrupts the confidences between the two friends, saying: "How much more you got to eat? Appetites aren't as big as your noses, huh?"	(22 min 24 s - 23 min 17 s)	(M)	(1)	(3)	(When Melvin meets Carol again, who ignores him, tries to mend their relationship asking her about her son's health troubles)	Provoking	415	(Mending)	(414)
			12 min 27 s - 12 min 35 s	M	5	1	Carol's boss, very upset, commands her to tell Melvin is barred for life from the restaurant	(1 hr 26 min 34 s - 1 hr 27 min 07 s)	(M)	(1)	(7)	(Carol pays attention to Simon's story about his childhood)	Getting "pissed"	520 *	(Being sympathetic)	(520) *
			12 min 30 s - 12 min 35 s	M	2	5	Carol intercedes with her boss for Melvin	(9 min 25 s - 9 min 37 s)	(M)	(1)	(6)	(Melvin is scared by Frank's attack)	Protecting	116 *	(Getting scared)	(119) *

(table 7 continues)

Table 7 (continued)

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
	12 min 42 s - 14 min 31 s	The tension, which, is eased a little, becomes heavy when Melvin hits a nerve with Carol. She is frozen and sorrowful, whereas Melvin is mortified for hurting her	12 min 42 s - 12 min 51 s	m	1	2	Melvin, self-satisfied by his own transgressive behavior, looks for Carol's complicity	(11 min 59 s - 12 min 02 s)	(m)	(2)	(1)	(Unperturbed Carol replies with firmness: "It's not your table. It's the place's table. Behave. This once, you can sit at someone else's station")	Tempting	211 *	(Restraining)	(210) *
			12 min 51 s - 13 min 12 s	M	2	1	Carol, amused, accepts the complicity	(11 min 59 s - 12 min 02 s)	(m)	(2)	(1)	(Unperturbed Carol replies with firmness: "It's not your table. It's the place's table. Behave. This once, you can sit at someone else's station")	Becoming an accomplice	211	(Restraining)	(210)
			13 min 13 s - 13 min 16 s	m	2	1	Carol, using Melvin's ironic style, comments on his order, warning him about his health	(1 min 37 s - 1 min 43 s)	(M)	(1)	(8)	(Melvin stuffs Verdell, the dog, in the garbage chute)	Taking care	116 *	(Uncaring)	(117) *
			13 min 17 s - 13 min 21 s	m	1	2	Melvin, while laying the table with his own plastic cutlery, unsympathetic toward the health issue of Carol's son, replies: "We're all gonna die soon. I will, you will. It sure sounds like your son will"	13 min 31 s - 13 min 38 s	M	1	2	Melvin understands that he has crossed the line and he feels guilty	Shrugging off	215	Being guilty	214


(table 7 continues)

Table 7 (continued)

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
			13 min 22 s - 13 min 30 s	M	2	1	Carol is petrified. She remains in silence and is visibly hurt	(1 hr 12 min 44 s - 1 hr 13 min 10 s)	(M)	(8)	(2)	(Carol is consoled by her mother)	Being hurt	520 *	(Being consoled)	(520) *
			13 min 39 s - 14 min 00 s	M	2	1	Carol threatens Melvin to bar him from the restaurant if he does not show signs of repentance	(2 hr 3 min 24 s - 2 hr 4 min 01 s)	(M)	(7)	(1)	(Simon pushes Melvin to go to Carol in order to express his feelings)	Threatening	510 *	(Spurring)	(510) *
			14 min 01 s - 14 min 12 s	M	2	1	Not receiving a reply, Carol angrily says: “Do you understand me you crazy fuck? Do you?”	(55 min 27 s - 55 min 50 s)	(M)	(2)	(9)	(Carol is grateful and full of joy for the doctor’s availability to take care of her son)	Getting angry	419	(Rejoicing)	(418)
			14 min 13 s - 14 min 30 s	M	1	2	Melvin, hardly breathing, senses that he is gone way too far. He has hurt Carol and he feels bad about it	(13 min 17 s - 13 min 21 s)	(m)	(1)	(2)	(Melvin, while laying the table with his own plastic cutlery, unsympathetic toward the health issues of Carol’s son replies: “We’re all gonna die soon. I will, you will. It sure sounds like your son will”)	Being guilty	214	(Shrugging off)	(215)

Note. C = Carol, M = Melvin, Cl = clients, W = waitresses, F = friends at “Melvin’s table”, B = boss of Carol; Tm = time limits; M/m = macro- or micro-positioning; A = agent (1 = Melvin, 2 = Carol, 3 = clients, 4 = waitresses, 5 = boss of Carol, 6 = Frank, 7 = Simon, 8 = Carol’s mother); Tg = target (1 = Melvin, 2 = Carol, 3 = clients, 4 = waitresses, 5 = Carol’s boss, 6 = Frank, 7 = Simon, 8 = Verdell, the dog, 9 = doctor); Code: first digit 1 = freedom, 2 = goodness, 3 = power, 4 = belonging, 5 = other semantic, second digit 1 = interactive positioning, 2 = emotions and feelings, third digit = even numbers indicate a positive connotation, while odd numbers indicate a negative one. Polarities in which the two poles are expressed by different actors are highlighted by one asterisk.

TABLE 8
Interactive semantic polarities in a sequence of the movie Melancholia

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
	13 min 58 s - 15 min 13 s	Although the spouses arrive very late to their reception, the climate is joyous	13 min 58 s - 14 min 21 s	M	11	1+2	Justine and Michael enter their reception and the guests welcome the couple with a thunderous applause	(15 min 27 s - 15 min 36 s)	(M)	(6)	(1)	(Gaby mimes with great exaggeration and seriousness to Justine that she will not make a speech)	Celebrating	412 *	(Destroying)	(413) *
			14 min 18 s - 14 min 20 s	m	6	11	Gaby's dress is not suitable for the occasion. She wears a tie-and-dye tunic whereas the others guests wear formal clothes	14 min 21 s - 14 min 31 s	M	5	1	Leo stands up, congratulates Justine and offers her a gift	Provoking	415 *	Celebrating	412 *
			14 min 32 s - 14 min 47 s	M	7	1	Dexter embraces his daughter and with a tear-choked voice, but a satisfied look, introduces the two ladies by his side						Welcoming	510		
					7	6		14 min 55 s - 15 min 13 s	M	4+11	1+2	John raises a toast and all the guests drink in honor of the newlyweds	Provoking	415 *	Celebrating	412 *

(table 8 continues)

Table 8 (continued)

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
	15 min 14 s - 16 min 24 s	Justine and Michael are warm with each other. Gaby is the one who ruin the moment, Dexter plays the clown and all the guests laugh	15 min 17 s - 15 min 24 s	M	1+2	1+2	Justine and Michael smile and whisper between them	(20 min 18 s - 20 min 35 s)	(M)	(1)	(11)	(Justine isolates herself: her face becomes sad and stops interacting with others)	Sharing	410 *	(Self - excluding)	(411) *
			15 min 27 s - 15 min 36 s	M	6	1	Gaby mimes with great exaggeration and seriousness to Justine that she will not make a speech	(14 min 55 s - 15 min 13 s)	(M)	(4+11)	(1+2)	(John raises a toast and all the guests drink in honor of the newlyweds)	Destroying	413 *	(Celebrating)	(412) *
			15 min 37 s - 16 min 17 s	M	7	10	Dexter entertains the guests at his table. In defiance of the bon ton rules, he puts the spoons in his breast pocket pretending that they are missing	(14 min 55 s - 15 min 13 s)	(M)	(4+11)	(1+2)	(John raises a toast and all the guests drink in honor of the newlyweds)	Provoking	415 *	(Celebrating)	(412) *
			16 min 17 s - 16 min 23 s	M	6	10	Gaby, gritting her teeth, speaks to her daughter, preventing her ex-husband from repeating his gag: "Justine, would you mind slapping your father for me hard, please?". All the guests at the table laugh						Attacking in an ironic way	510		

(table 8 continues)

Table 8 (continued)

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
	16 min 25 s - 18 min 54 s	Jack's speech, while honors the bride, as Dexter does, minds his own business	16 min 25 s - 16 min 29 s	m	8	9	Jack, who is at the same time Justine's boss and Michael's best man, gets up and commands Tim to hand him a stack of post-its	16 min 28 s - 16 min 29 s	m	9	8	Tim immediately springs into action	Commanding	310 *	Obeying	311 *
			16 min 29 s - 18 min 02 s	M	8	1	Jack promotes Justine. He praises her but at the same time he asks her to prioritize job over her sentimental life. Beyond the irony ("If I were to choose between a woman for my dear friend Michael and an employee, you know I'd always choose the employee"), Jack projects a picture of an unfinished work. He cares about the tagline instead of the wedding. He will soon put Tim after her	(19 min 14 s - 20 min 09 s)	(M)	(6)	(11)	(Gaby promptly stands up and, addressing all the guests, speaks against marriages ruining the celebratory mood)	Celebrating	412 *	(Destroying)	(413) *
													Shrugging off	215		
			18 min 20 s - 18 min 54 s	M	7	1	Dexter, in his speech, praises her daughter	(19 min 14 s - 20 min 09 s)	(M)	(6)	(11)	(Gaby promptly stands up and, addressing all the guests, speaks against marriages ruining the celebratory mood)	Celebrating	412 *	(Destroying)	(413) *

(table 8 continues)

Table 8 (continued)

Configuration			Macro- and micro-positioning										Polarity			
Graph	Tm	Emotional climate	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 1	Tm	M/m	A	Tg	Positioning 2	Pole 1	Code	Pole 2	Code
	18 min 55 s - 20 min 42 s	The reception's celebratory mood collapses thanks to the mutual attacks of Justine's parents. Both of them seem not to realize how their behavior hurt their daughter, who completely changes her mood	18 min 55 s - 19 min 13 s	M	7	6	Dexter during his speech attacks his ex-wife	(18 min 20 s - 18 min 54 s)	(M)	(7)	(1)	(Dexter, in his speech, praises her daughter)	Provoking	415	(Celebrating)	(412)
			19 min 14 s - 20 min 09 s	M	6	11	Gaby promptly stands up and, addressing all the guests, speaks against marriages ruining the celebratory mood	(18 min 20 s - 18 min 54 s)	(M)	(7)	(1)	(Dexter, in his speech, praises her daughter)	Destroying	413 *	(Celebrating)	(412) *
			20 min 02 s - 20 min 04 s	m	4	6	An embarrassed John tries to make Gaby stops	(40 min 26 s - 40 min 52 s)	(M)	(8)	(9)	(Jack puts pressure on Tim, who has to follow Justine during the party in order to get the tagline he needs)	Trying to contain	510 *	(Agitating)	(510) *
			20 min 10 s - 20 min 13 s	M	3	6	Claire, angrily, asks her mother: "Why did you even bother coming?"	20 min 19 s - 20 min 42 s	M	3	1	Claire looks intensely at Justine, who isolates herself from the party, and pulls her out of the room	Getting angry	419 **	Protecting	116 **
			20 min 14 s - 20 min 17 s	m	7	10	After Gaby's violent attack, Dexter keeps playing the clown	(18 min 20 s - 18 min 54 s)	(M)	(7)	(1)	(Dexter, in his speech, praises her daughter)	Provoking	415	(Celebrating)	(412)
			20 min 18 s - 20 min 35 s	M	1	10	Justine isolates herself: she becomes sad and stops interacting with others	(15 min 17 s - 15 min 24 s)	(M)	(1+2)	(1+2)	(Justine and Michael smile and whisper between them)	Self-excluding	411 *	(Sharing)	(410) *

Note. M = Michael, J = Justine, G = guests, Jo = John, Justine's brother in law, L = Leo, Justine's nephew, D = Dexter, Justine's father, Ga = Gaby, Justine's mother, Ja = Jack, Justine's boss, T = Tim, Jack's subordinate, C = Claire, Justine's sister; Tm = time limits; M/m = macro- or micro-positioning; A = agent (1 = Justine, 2 = Michael, 3 = Claire, 4 = John, 5 = Leo, 6 = Gaby, 7 = Dexter, 8 = Jack, 9 = Tim, 10 = Justine's family of origin table, 11 = guests); Tg = target (1 = Justine, 2 = Michael, 3 = Claire, 4 = John, 5 = Leo, 6 = Gaby, 7 = Dexter, 8 = Jack, 9 = Tim, 10 = Justine's family of origin table, 11 = guests); Code: first digit 1 = freedom, 2 = goodness, 3 = power, 4 = belonging, 5 = other semantic, second digit 1 = interactive positioning, 2 = emotions and feelings, third digit even numbers indicate a positive connotation, while odd numbers indicate a negative one. Polarities in which the two poles are expressed by different actors are highlighted by one asterisk. Polarities in which the two poles are coded with two different semantics are highlighted by two asterisks.