A DIALOGICAL NOTEBOOK

Afterthoughts after Rethinking

Latest updating 2014-02-21.

Per Linell

Department of Education, Communication and Learning, Göteborg University

© Per Linell
Introduction

This notebook contains fragments of thoughts that have crossed my mind in the years after publishing *Rethinking Language, Mind and World Dialogically* (Linell, 2009) (hereafter abbreviated RETH). Mostly these fragments are attempts to explicate aspects of problems that were partly neglected in RETH. Some of the topics do occur in RETH, but most often without having been sufficiently theorised. They are here organised in a list of alphabeticised entries. Asterisks (*) in the texts point to cross-references between entries.

This notebook is a “living document” that might be updated at irregular intervals.

Some abbreviations: CA = Conversation Analysis; CAT = communicative activity type; CG = communicative genre; CP = communicative project; DT = dialogical theory/theories

List of contents (entry titles):

- Abduction
- action, perception and cognition together
- activities
- affordance
- agency
- alterity
- analysts’ vs members’ categories
- appropriation
- as-if concepts
- autism
- brain and dialogue
- causality
- cognition – thinking
- common sense and common ground
- communicative disabilities as disturbed dialogicality
- communicative project
- completion and unfinalisability
- consciousness
- content-vs-context analysis
- contexts
- contributions to discourse and interaction
- dialogical aspects of conversations
- dialogical diamond
- dialogical pedagogy
- dialogical "principles": sequentiality, joint construction, act-activity interdependence
- dialogisms, different alternatives
- dialogue, polysemy of the term
- distributed cognition and holism
- double dialogicality
- dynamics
- enaction
- ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis
- extended cognition
- face-to-face interaction
- feedback (Mead)
- form in language, and formalism and formalisation in linguistics
- gestalt properties
- I – me
- Intentions and intentionality
- interaction
- internal dialogue
- intersubjectivity
- interworld and inner world
- Kant and Hegel
- knowledge; knowing; learning
- language: a self-organising system?
- language: is it a set of codes?
- language: origins and evolution
- language: its whereabouts
- language: the issue of its uniqueness
- language within a theory of language
- languaging
- life and living organisms
meaning
meaning-making in relation to understanding
meaning-making vs. sense-making
mediation
memetics
Merleau-Ponty
meso-level
meta-linguistics
method
mimesis
mind
monologism
morality and ethics
mutual gaze
(the) other
ontologisation of method
perception
phenomenology
political ideologies
posthumanism
practice
pragmatics and pragmaticism
process-based vocabulary
recontextualisation
representations and genetic explanation; self-organisation
scaffolding
self: perspectives and positions
self-organisation
semantics vs. pragmatics
semiotics; texts
sharedness
singular (national) languages and superdiversities
speech and writing
themata
theoretical physics
Theory of Mind
thinking: process and content, and as simulated action
thinking (rhetoric, arguing, persuasion in science); utterances
time scales: situations and traditions
trust and distrust
units of analysis
utterances

Many of these supplements to RETH have resulted from reading books or articles I had not read before. In the reference list I have mostly only listed items that were not given already in RETH.
Specific concepts not sufficiently defined or theorised in RETH:

Abduction

The systematic methods of acquiring robust knowledge about the world, including human beings, are conventionally presented as either inductive, i.e. always driven by empirical (or even observable) data, or deductive, i.e. always theory-driven: testable hypotheses are logically derived from theoretical theses (axioms) and then tested, confirmed or falsified. Sometimes, everyday knowledge is said to be inductive, and “real science”, i.e. mainly natural-science-inspired studies, is hypothetico-deductive. This is the rhetoric. But in actual practice, the logic of discovery is one in which inductive and deductive ingredients are present. Peirce called this ‘abduction’; observable generalisations (“inductively acquired”) are confronted with basic, overall assumptions about the world (general laws), and from this “middle-range” generalizing conclusions are derived (“abducted”). For example, the various situated meanings (uses) of some given words are collected, and then related to some specific overall assumptions about, say, the relations between word-inherent semantic properties and interactions with contexts. There are several general semantic theories on the market, from those of entirely stable lexical meanings to those which assign almost all importance to contextual factors (Cappelen & Lepore, 2005; Recanati, 2004).

The emphasis on empirical (observable, attested) data in Conversation Analysis and various other forms of interaction analysis has generated a wide-spread rhetoric that their methodology is inductive. However, as Svennevig (2001) has argued, CA in practice is abductive rather than radically inductive. In fact, it is difficult to imagine that an empirical science could be entirely inductive, which would mean that there are no underlying general hypotheses. In the case of CA, this paradigm is derived from ethnomethodology, which emphasised the impact of the “documentary method”, that is, the interdependence with participants’ unquestioned and unspoken assumptions about their social realities (*ethnomethodology).

Action, perception and cognition go together

“The knower is not simply a mirror...passively reflecting an order that he comes upon and finds simply existing. The knower is an actor... He registers the truth which he helps to create. Mental interests...help make the truth which they declare.” (William James, quoted by Gerald Myers, 1986. William James: His Life and Thought. New Haven: Yale University Press, p.8, quoted by McCloskey, 346).

Perception cannot be separated from action. Even visual perception is interdependent with the perceiver’s actions, e.g. movements of head and eyes (Noë, 2004). Visual exploration is often coordinated with manipulation of objects. “[P]erceptual experience is the skillful exercise of sensorimotor knowledge” (Thompson, 2007: 81). (See also causality* and perception*).

Perception and cognition, as well as utterance planning, production and perception, involve the anticipation of action effects (Cowley, 2011).

Activities (and sense-making)

Central to DT are activities (action, interactivity, projects etc.), rather than underlying systems or structures. Meanings must be determined in the making. (However, structures (e.g. of language) may become important, when they have emerged from (inter)activities and thus are available as patterns to be oriented to in new activities (e.g. of languaging*) (Račzaszek-Leonardi, 2010).) Some activities are communicative in nature (e.g. talk-in-interaction, many kinds of thinking, literate-textual activities), others are practical, or intermediate in nature. Communicative activities/projects are often embedded in or subordinated to practical projects. However, activities involve sense-making and are subjective to
accountability; i.e. agents can usually explain them at least afterwards. Some activities are consciously planned (intended) and sometimes observably or tacitly rehearsed before performance.

For a start, we can distinguish between practical, linguistic (involving languaging) and cognitive (tacit) activities.

**Practical activities** are, for example, preparing food, dancing, building a house, assembling a piece of furniture (e.g. according to instructions from IKEA), and Trobianders’ doing collective fishing (Malinowski). They can be solitary or collaborative (collective), e.g. playing a solitary game of patience vs. participating in a social card game.

**Linguistic activities** are those involving or sometimes consisting mainly of talk. They are usually collective, although some (loud) talk may be mainly oriented to supporting self’s activity (practical or cognitive). That is, two or more persons are often directly involved and active. Examples are dinner-table conversations in the family, telephone conversations between friends, task-oriented (transactional) meetings in many institutions (seeing a doctor, being interviewed by the police, buying food or other goods in the market-place, participate in a job interview, and (virtually) countless other situation types). (On textual activities, see below.)

**Cognitive activities** are first and foremost such solitary, tacit activities involving a person conducting an “inner dialogue”. A sociodialogue is a form of thinking together aloud, although the problem-solving aspect may sometimes be marginal.

These three kinds of activity are quite often combined, so that practical, linguistic and cognitive aspects are intertwined and integrated within a complex activity. However, before addressing this point, there are two other kinds of activity that need to be recognised, textual and bodily-emotional activities.

**Text-based (and artifact-based) activities** are those involving the use of written, printed or computer-borne texts, as well as activities centred around the use of other cognitive artefacts (such as pictures, films, instruments, etc.). Many of these, including all written texts, are based on traces of prior linguistic and/or cognitive activities. For example, a writer may compose a text out of experiences from spoken interactions or solo thinking. In a sociohistorical perspective, writing and literacies are of course developments in cultures which already contained advanced talk cultures (see Donald, 1991).

All human activities involve the use of the human body (brain, speech apparatus, hands, whole-body postures and movements, etc.). However, it is doubtful if all bodily processes are geared towards sense-making; many processes are unconscious and occur purely at physical (physiological, biochemical, neural) levels. Yet, there is one important category of activities that give rise to self-awareness, and are sometimes the basis of [outer] practical, linguistic and/or cognitive activities. Hence, these are also on social display. These are emotional experiences, which include feelings; from diffuse sensations of uneasiness or stress, to panic attacks, pain sensations etc. These may result in cries of fear, flight behaviours, sometimes paralysis of thought or action, etc.

Activities are intertwinements of different aspects or dimensions. Some examples: All linguistic activities are, by their very nature, also practices, and often interactivities. Practical activities often include linguistic subprojects. Conversations or object-oriented practical activities (e.g. the assembling of furniture) are also cognitive activities in an extended sense (many speak of "extended cognition"). Text writing is a practical, linguistic and cognitive activity, involving practical symbol manipulations. Solving a mathematical problem, with pen-and-paper or only using one’s head, is symbol manipulation. Reading also involves language and symbol use.

All socioculturally routinised activities (part of cultures or civilisations) are social in some respects. A solitary practical activity, such as cooking a meal by and for oneself (Sinha & Rodriguez, 2008: 364), is a social practice using resources (practical routines, language-borne ideas) appropriated from others. This
holds true even though the activity does not involve social interaction (but it has been learnt under such circumstances). In dialogist terms, one may talk about third parties (and voices), e.g. others’ advice as internalised, influencing one’s conduct. A routine, i.e. a habit, is etymologically (in French) a path that has emerged through people’s repeated use of it. (This applies largely to language and languaging as well; Keller, 1994, on “the invisible hand”)

Talk and text-based activities can be about other human activities, including about other conversations, acts of thinking and textual events. Thus, language allows for “meta-activities: meta-actional, meta-communicative, meta-linguistic. For Vygotsky, language was the “tool of tools”. Therefore, these are also quitesentially semiotic (meaning-making). An interesting issue, already hinted at, is if all practical activities involve sense-making, beyond the fact that agents can often tell in retrospect what they have “done”. For example, if somebody is suddenly attacked by a ferocious bear, it might be true that “he did not have the time to act or think anything at all, before it was all over”. In situations, in which somebody is forced to “do” something, such as in the moment of shooting an enemy in a war situation, he may not be capable of giving any sense to the action, beyond the action itself (e.g. Luckmann, 2012).

The term “activity” has, as most other terms, its advantages and disadvantages. In relation to “action” and “act”, it suggests some comprehensiveness and integrity over time. This also applies to “interactivities” (a much less frequent term, though). “Activities” in general can be both individual and social (the latter either collaborative or competitive, or both (as a tennis match)). (In Swedish, “verksamhet” is more associated with sociality than “aktivitet”.) From this point-of-view, a disadvantage in “activity” is that it can be used also about physical processes, as neural, physiological, metabolic “activities”, etc., which have nothing to do with agency or sense-making.

The five (or so) types of activities have their counterparts, if we focus instead on capabilities, intelligence, and forms of knowledge/knowing (cf. *intersubjectivity).

Affordance

‘Affordances’ as a concept/term was coined by James Gibson, as referring to perceivable properties of things and processes (RETH: 25). Gibson (1979) claims that “affordances are perceived directly”, i.e. affordances (in nature) are picked up by direct rather than mediated perception, i.e. without semiotic mediation* or interpretation via concepts or signs (van Lier, 2004: 63, 92). So how can Gibson be used in a dialogical account? In dialogism, the notion of affordance is usually applied to linguistic actions, utterances in context; the implication is that utterances can be interpreted in different ways, i.e. their affordances (= interpretation offers) allow for different interpretations. However, certain interpretations may be nearer at hand than others (van Lier, op.cit.: 95). We can distinguish between first-order and second-order affordances, i.e. in nature vs. culturally conditioned, respectively (van Lier, 91ff.).

For affordances to be realised, they must be picked up by perceivers, for example, hearers. The hearer encounters an other’s utterance, and is thus faced with its affordance(s), which must then be made sense of. But speakers too hear their own utterances, and may discover affordances in them that were not pre-mediated.

In discussing language and languaging in RETH, I chose to make a distinction between ‘meaning potentials’ in linguistic resources (mainly lexical items and grammatical constructions, at the situation-transcending level (“language system“)) and ‘affordances’ in specific utterances. This corresponds roughly, I believe, to Rommetveit’s (1974) ‘meaning potentials’ and ‘message potentials’.

Agency
Agency can be defined, with a definition originating in Dewey and Mead, as the ability of an individual (or group) to act “independently of the immediate situation”. “The immediate situation is the here-and-now perceptual and experiential situation which arises as a function of the agent’s immediate impulses combined with situational affordances, demands and constraints.” (Gillespie, 2012: 32). This, Gillespie (pp. 34-35) explains, presupposes the complementary relations of distantiating (self’s ability to “step out” of ongoing action and reflect upon one’s self and one’s situation, adopting an observer’s (3. person) perspective) and identification (self’s ability to identify with, or participate in, the actions and experiences of others, adopting a 1. person (or 2. person? /PL) perspective on the other) (cf. *self: perspectives and positions). These abilities emerge as part of ordinary persons’ experiences of interaction and intersubjectivity. But people seldom liberate themselves completely from “immediate situations”.

Another definition of agency is the following. Agents have agency, that is, abilities to assign meanings to their behavioural conduct and hence be held accountable for it. Agency implies

- ability to make meaning (in a situation-appropriate and partly original manner);
- ability to take initiatives, in addition to acquired or pre-programmed responses;
- ability to take on responsibility: accountability and answerability (Bakhtin).

Only human beings can be genuine agents, and they can do so only if they are conscious and normally developed. Other cultures may ascribe agency to animals, trees, holy objects, supernatural creatures, etc. But such ascriptions do not amount to truth, according to Western science.

A book does not have agency, even though it contributes to a person’s meaning-making. But here we must make recourse to internal dialogue; the person internalises voices inscribed in, or ascribable to, the text as authored by another person. Thus, the agency is with the human user, the sense-maker. We sometimes assign dialogicality to artefacts like books, but this is dialogicality in an extended and metaphorical sense (RETH: 421).

Computers and computer systems are boundary cases, which may perhaps be ascribed some agency. At least they can take over parts of the computations in meaning-making (like calculators).

Some theoreticians regard agency as a pure epiphenomenon, much like the argument that *consciousness is an epiphenomenon. Instead of referring to agency – the ability to choose one’s actions and take on responsibility – such theories assume that “things just happen to us”. This type of theorising, sometimes labeled ‘posthumanism’ occur in organism-environment theories, with a background in biology (von Uexküll, Maturana etc.). They have been applied to language within, for example, ‘distributed language theory’ (cf. Cowley, as referred to in Linell, 2012c, 2013c).

DTs, especially classical dialogue philosophy, sustain the assumptions of agency and accountability. However, it may be important to recognise that modern theories of the *mind do not assume that all sense-making is caused by active agency and conscious practices. This applies to utterance production too. Some aspects of utterances must be explained by reference to physical constraints on the speech apparatus or on cognitive systems of the (embodied) brain, and speakers are typically not aware of such effects. Another domain of aspects is that of automatisation, that is, culturally dependent (language-specific) aspects of utterances that have become more or less completely automatised; they are legion in phonology, grammar (morphology, syntax) and lexical features (such as the valence of verbs), and are not chosen by speakers. We do not choose to obey, for example, word-order constraints or morphological categories of words. Furthermore, our utterances may be strongly influenced by others’ prior utterances and other events in the communication situation. Yet, studies of utterance-building processes in situated languaging reveal that speakers do actively select certain linguistic actions, content words and even grammatical constructions (Linell, 2013b). At some points in the temporally distributed process there are
decision points, where the speaker is forced, or at least likely, to actively search for and decide on which linguistic resources to use. There is some room for choice, decision, agency and responsibility.

Problems of agency are also related to issues of intersubjectivity, interactivity, subjectivity and objectivity (Linell, 2014).

**Alterity**

The term ‘alterity’ is Wertsch’s translation of Bakhtin’s idea of Russian *drugost’, which in turn often implies *ostranenie* ‘estrangement’ (RETH, 82ff). It means that the other very often comes with a different perspective on things talked about or on the world in general than the perspectives entertained or known by oneself. This is due to the varying personalities and personal and cultural biographies and experiences.

Hodges (2011) (in Cowley, 2011) develops alterity in a partly different way (no reference to Wertsch in Hodges). Hodges seems to take alterity as an axiom (the other is different), and argues that self may react in different ways to the experience of alterity. One alternative is (complete?) ‘attunement’ (Hodges, 152) as in situations of “fabulous conversations” with a sensation of ‘flow’, the feeling of immediate contact and mutual inspiration when one experiences complete engrossment, being “lost in the moment”. This seems to take this kind of alterity to a feeling of (illusory?) intersubjectivity, or immediate dialogicality. However, one can, following Hodges, also experience alterity as disruptive, problematic, painful, as involving “suffering” and “loss” (p. 152). This is the alternative of sensing “separation and alienation” (152).

Although alterity could be ascribed to primarily direct partners/addressees in concrete situations (it is when we meet somebody in person that we can develop outsideness either into fruitful alterity or to painful alienation), but alterity is arguably also applicable to peripheral others (see *the other).

In languaging, there are always tensions between attunement and alienation (or intersubjectivity and alterity?). Alienation is linked to consciousness; the discovery of alterity leads to one’s becoming conscious of differences, sometimes a painful experience. One form of alienation is the disinterested, “objective” (PL) attitude entertained by many scientists; “representational consciousness (i.e. the disengaged self)” (154) is for Hodges not a sufficient guide to understanding human relationships.

Bakhtin uses another term, which seems related but different from *ostranenie*, namely *vnenachodimost*’ (RETH: 105, n.9), usually translated as ‘outsideness’ (e.g. Morson & Emerson, 1990). See also *intersubjectivity.

**Analysts’ and members’ categories**

In recent years the idea of ‘members’ (‘participants’) categories as the basis of language description has been gaining ground in the language sciences, but particularly within CA and EM. The basic argument is that participants in communicative and cognitive projects make meaning, and that researchers must explicate these meanings in order to accurately account for and understand languaging* and communication. Human science is not like natural science, which typically sets up abstract theories that are often at odds with common sense. Human sciences explore humans who make meaning while natural sciences investigate objects and organisms that do not make meaning (in the same sense) in and through themselves. Thus, the subject matter of the human sciences is closely intertwined with meaning-making (or sense-making*), while the activities of *analysis* in those selfsame sciences are also a matter of meaning-making, although at a secondary level. Therefore, human sciences involve meaning-making at two levels (RETH, 29). Natural science analyses also make meaning, but their subject matter is not in itself sense-making.
The accepted stance in linguistics is not to start out from members’ categories. Yet, it has often been said that the ‘members’ perspective’ of Conversation Analysis and ethnomethodology (EM) is the ‘emic’ perspective recommended by American structuralists, especially Pike (1954) who coined the term. In one sense there is a point in this argument, since a ‘phonemic’ analysis, as opposed to a ‘phonetic’ natural-science-based perspective, works from “within the system” as it is understood by those who know the language in question. However, structuralist linguists are concerned with the abstract linguistic system, not with how people make sense in situ, as in CA and EM. Furthermore, the preferences of generativism and other formal approaches in linguistics is in general scientific. The argument, e.g. in Chomsky’s work, is that members’ categories and assumptions are often mistaken (often being erroneous common-sense ideas), whilst a truly scientific theory should be grounded in a putatively scientific (i.e. natural-science-like) method. (Common-sense traditions are often mistaken, yet they can live on; e.g. creationism vs. evolutionary theory.)

The dialogist stance is based on the assumption that languaging involves participants’ sense-makings. Participants make sense on the basis of their culturally penetrated experiences. It is a kind of lived embodied knowing, using knowledge about practical routines (methods) of solving communicative (and cognitive) problems. However, that does not imply that analysts’ descriptions should be simple copies of these members’ understandings. The participant’s and the analyst’s predicaments and interests are typically different. The participant regularly entertains personal reasons for saying specific things and creates idiosyncratic meanings, the full background of which the analyst can usually only speculate about. The analyst is, in most cases, interested in generalisations about methods and routines of sociocultural communities which reflect participants’ familiarity with kinds of social situations; the analyst is not supposed to “psychologise” about putative personal intentions and motivations. Some introductions to CA/EM simply state that analysts deal with members’ sense-making, without problematising this stance. However, while it is true that analysts of real languaging necessarily must start out with participants’ utterances, doings and meanings, they analyse these phenomena within a framing of analytic interests that participants, by contrast, are seldom concerned with (cf. Linell & Luckmann, 1991). Thus, a researcher’s analysis of, say, a conversation is an analysis of participants’ communication within a frame of analytic interests.

Having done away with the crudest simplifications, we remain faced with a number of thorny problems regarding the relations between members’ and analysts’ understandings. Let us start to unpick some of these.

First of all, analysts develop an analytic terminology that is usually not known to participants. Analysts have access to a terminology, and its explicit form is inconsequential for practices; one can indulge in appropriate language without knowing terms and concepts like NP, PP, Subject, Predicative, Main vs Subordinate clause etc. Yet, one may argue that participants organise their linguistic conduct in accordance with the linguists’ descriptions in these terms. Thus, the terms – so the argument goes – may have a kind of embodied reality for the participants. (See Linell (2013) for a brief argument with some interactional linguists who test the position of abandoning these kinds of descriptive devices.)

There is hardly any really sharp boundary between members’ and analysts’ categories. On the one hand, we have relatively uncontroversial categories, such as those exemplified in the previous paragraph, which seem to be relevant for participants. On the other hand, we have sometimes seen excessively abstract (far from surface-based) categories set up in e.g. generative linguistics but still regarded as “psychologically valid”. In between, there are many cases whose statuses are unclear. For example, take the various discrepancies between Swedish main and subordinate clause topologies. Main and subordinate clauses are mutually related, and could, e.g. according SAG (REF), possibly be derived from the same “underlying” abstract structure by certain transformational rules. Thus, a generative grammar would “explain” these regularities by recourse to such rules. Are these rules part of members’ knowledge? One might argue that members are familiar with the regularities and can perform surface transformations (“cut or copy, then move and paste”), i.e. their knowledge is present in or at least derivable from everyday linguistic practices.
Is there a difference between the ability to transform some real utterances onto other real utterances ("surface transformations"), and a theory of derivation of surface structures from (very) abstract underlying structures?

Other examples of the fuzzy boundary between members’ and analysts’ categories can be derived from ‘usage-based’ theories of language (e.g. Bybee, 2010). Usage-based linguistics can be taken to mean many things, but a common denominator is often the insistence to include frequency measures in the linguistic models. These frequencies are usually grounded in corpus studies. Are they also part of members’ knowledge of their language? Well, members may have some counterparts; speakers often have a fairly good idea of (at least crudely) how frequent various lexical items or grammatical constructions are. But members can sometimes be mistaken. And clearly, analysts’ ‘usage-based’, i.e. corpus-based, descriptions are another kind of frequency measures.

There is reason to exercise caution in positing abstract linguistic structure. Everyday common sense is not the only domain in which mistaken ideas may arise; theories too can create and endorse implausible or erroneous assumptions and categories. In the case of Chomskyanism, such categories and structures have included a number of untenable assumptions (Linell, 2012a). Present-day Chomskyanism has tended to say that the user cannot understand (the true nature of) his/her own language.

On the other hand, however, we may assume that having a meta-language is not inconsequential for actual behavior. Most people have some rudimentary linguistic education, especially from schools, which influences their understanding and appreciation of linguistic structures. (Yet, this quasi-theoretical understanding may seem quite superficial from a technical linguistic point-of-view.) For example, Cowley (2011) has talked about the “language stance”, derived from learning about language within a literate culture, which most people entertain in modern Western countries and increasingly throughout other parts of the world. Does this language stance influence how people speak, and not only for how they write, or make meta-linguistic assessments? In CA/EM orthodoxy, there has sometimes been a kind of purist attitude to this, as if actual socioculture didn’t matter (see above). Such an attitude might be OK for Chomskyan or other formalist theories that don’t care about real languaging anyway, but it is not adequate for a theory of languaging, let alone a dialogist understanding.

**Appropriation**

We often talk about the “appropriation” (or even “internalisation”) of knowledge, skills etc. This sounds like persons acquire, come to possess, abilities and knowledges, which is a static way of looking upon the phenomena. When somebody learns to do something (better), “appropriates” a skill more fully, (s)he has increased or refined her/his ability to cope successfully with situations in which the skill is relevant. In such situations, other factors than the person’s skill will also have an impact on achievements.

**As-if interpretations**

In making sense of the world, including other people’s conduct, we often treat others (and self) as-if they are doing and meaning something else (and more) than they evidently do, or can do. For example, we treat infants and small children as if they understand what we are saying, as if they themselves mean something more than they can say (e.g. babbling interpreted as proto-words). This is in one sense “over-interpretation”, at the same time working with the infants in a ZPD (zone of proximal development); often, the infant may later, when they are ready for it, adopt the adult’s interpretation and begin to really say and mean what they earlier did “as-if”. As-if is therefore sometimes a real phenomenon producing effects. One could invoke Thomas’s theorem (RETH, 287).
As-if was a central concept in the German philosopher Hans Vaihinger’s *Die Philosophie des Als-Ob* (1911) (Vaihinger’s “fictionalism”). As-if occurs in all life stages, but can be more detrimental when adults take them seriously (e.g. life-long deceptions (“livslögner”)). In the philosophy of science, one may treat certain concepts as “fictions”, and yet they are useful, mainly for bringing order into data. This was the attitude to many linguistic categories in classical American structuralism (Twaddell and others), categories being regarded as “hocus-pocus” rather than “God’s truth”.

**Autism**

The dialogicality of the human mind leads in the normal case to the development of relatively sophisticated self-other relations; one’s understanding of self is deeply intertwined with relations to others (the “dialogical self”, RETH, ch. 6). Evidence for dialogicality is usually drawn from basically two domains: early infant-carer interaction and evolution, and the structures and processes of (adult) interaction (verbal and non-verbal) (see Münster). Compare also self’s “dialogical emotions”: shame, guilt, pride, complacency, complaisance, conscience, consciousness, compassion, empathy/sympathy, morality (feeling for right/wrong).

However, the caring for others may be severely disturbed. Two (seemingly opposite) other-ignoring conditions would be egoism (and machiavellianism) and autism. Egoism, and its extreme form machiavellianism, involves the calculation of others’ future reactions/initiatives on the bases of self/other experiences, calculations made in self-interests. This presupposes a highly developed ability to reflect on self-other relations.

Another ego-centred, but partly opposite, condition is autism: the inability to take others’ perspectives (which can take many forms, severe and high-functioning). Autists have two strategies with regard to self-other relations (Barresi & Moore, 2008: 60-61): 1. They develop rather complex *T(T)oM-like accounts of mind from a third-person-perspective of their own and other people’s behavior; 2. They overgeneralise their own egocentric first-person perspective as valid also for others’ perspectives (lack of empathy).

See also *communicative disabilities, *morality.

**Brain and dialogue**

MacNeilage (2008) presents an account of recent findings about the brain, especially with regard to the production (and perception) of speech. Donald (2001) does so with the evolution of artefact use in mind. In my view, many of these findings or hypotheses could be seen as compatible with dialogical theories.

Many controversies about the brain, between the “classical” (MacNeilage) view and current ideas, can be seen in the light of the (partial) shift from a conception of language as logical formulas and formal representations, to a conception of language (and languaging) as motor actions with specific (culturally conventionalised) acoustic (and visual) effects, organised in complex larger packages (corresponding to words and multi-word phrases). This contrast is a variant of the difference between language as abstract symbols (logic) vs temporally distributed, embodied actions. The latter alternative fits spoken interaction much better (Linell, 2005; *languaging*).

There is little support in modern brain sciences for ideas of linguistic representations in highly circumscribed brain areas. Rather, many different brain systems and areas are involved in language production and perception. Some of these areas seem to contain so-called mirror neurons (MacNeilage: 194). Being neurons that fire both when the individual performs own actions and when (s)he observes
others perform such actions, mirror neurons would be part of the brain’s “resonance systems” for dealing with interpersonal relations. The discovery of mirror neurons has been celebrated as a confirmation of dialogical theory (e.g. Bråten, 2002), but actually, there are several other reasons to assume that the brain is designed to function "dialogically" (see below).

MacNeilage argues (p. 198) that in Caplan’s (1994) “classical” account of the neurology of language there is only place for an “intrinsic system” (see below), and there is no connection between speech/language and anything else (such as other motor actions, vocalisations, ingestive activities). In general, the view (Caplan) criticised by MacNeilage is Cartesian; mental capacities are described as more or less independent of bodily actions.

As suggested above, the classical Wernicke-Geschwind conception of brain-language relationships (MacNeilage, 189, 171ff) builds upon an “extrinsic system” for dealing with the coupling of vocal symbols and meanings (ultimately related to the “external” world: “responding to external stimulation” (p. 169); MacNeilage talks, in some places, primarily about nouns, that is, clearly referring expressions). These brain areas and pathways are primarily perisylvian, that is, frontal-parietal, in location. MacNeilage (p. 189) adds the “intrinsic system” (concerned with self-generated activity” (p. 168), primarily located in the medial cortex (supplementary motor area, cingulate motor area), related to (1) pre-linguistic motor abilities and (2) general-purpose rhythmic (repetitive) prototypes (“programming frames”, 189). In talking about an “intrinsic” system, MacNeilage seems to point to the need for the mind to have an “internal” memory, including a working memory (190ff).

To summarise, there are several points in modern brain sciences that broadly fits a dialogical conception. First, the management of language and speech engages many different systems and areas in different parts of the brain. It is not confined to a few areas, in which linguistic representations are being processed, an idea typical of the “classical” theory (cf. assumptions of modularity). Instead, the external complexity of sense-making seems to be matched by an internal complexity and interactivity.

Secondly, matching observations of the evolution of external activities, and data about human brains and brains in other higher mammals, language seems to have evolved out of functions that existed earlier, in non-communicative or pre-linguistic behaviours. Thus, language does not seem to have appeared out of nothing, by a single-gene “saltation” (MacNeilage, 212). In addition to speech, the so-called “speech organs” were earlier functional in respiration, non-linguistic phonation and ingestion, MacNeilage mentions left-hemispheric language as part of a global specialty system which controls whole-body actions under normal circumstances (a complex system under bipedal conditions (“postural origins theory”)) (in contrast to emotionally driven emergency reactions controlled by the right hemisphere).

Thirdly, brain data support the idea that “internal” thinking involves the activation of structures and pathways that are used in overt action and interaction. Part of this evidence is constituted by the putative existence of mirror neurons in structures engaged in speech and other actions. (On brain and dialogue, see also Barresi & Moore, 2008, and RETH: ch. 16).

Issues of brain and dialogue are obviously closely related to ideas of the whereabouts of language*. Neuroscientists usually insist that language is lodged in the brain; “language is a system of brain circuits” (Pulvermüller, 2002: 270). Others, mostly humanists and social scientists, argue that language is a cultural phenomenon, and that culture is outside of individual brains, in the (dialogical, interactional) relations between individuals, and between people and their institutions (for some discussion, see Linell, 2013e). But brain and culture are usually treated as incommensurable perspectives on humans, by nature (inherently) mutually incompatible and opposed world-views. Brain and culture imply indeed different perspectives, but these must still be somehow combined within a comprehensive meta-theory. Dialogical theories must face this task of creating a meta-theoretical framework. Among the few who have really made a serious and comprehensive attempt to show that brain and culture are compatible is Donald (2001). The brain engages in cognition (and other activities) with external objects and resources. In a long
evolutionary history the brain has accommodated to the regular use of externalized symbols. An obvious but hardly isolated example is reading and writing. In the evolutionary perspective this is an extremely recent acquisition of the human mind, and yet it engages quite specific and specialized brain structures.

**Causality**

Most scientists probably use the term ‘causality’ in a (more or less diluted) Humean conception: causes precede effects, and causes are independent of their effects (linear causality). But linear causality has many exceptions in the domain of mind and languaging. Thompson (2007) argues that non-linear causality is wide-spread in living organisms. For self-determining systems (living organisms), “the linear input/output distinction must be replaced by the non-linear perturbation/response distinction. From an enactive perspective, brain processes are understood in relation to the circular causality of action-perception cycles and sensorimotor processes.” (p. 365).

Accordingly, there are not only linear cause-effect chains in languaging, but also structural loops (cf. Chomsky’s critique of finite state grammars), feedback and anticipation (response-and-initiative processes), i.e. “circular” causality (Thompson, 2007: 68, 86; phenomena “circulate back and reshape processes”, e.g. in perception), (partially) holistic (global-to-local) properties (Thompson, op.cit.: 69), (“downward causation”, Thompson, op.cit.: 417f, Thibault, etc.), retroconstructive reinterpretations, etc. It follows that strict linear, Humean causality is too constrained a model to be valid for life*, mind and culture. Often, we cannot say that one thing causes another; rather, there is simply an intrinsic connection between aspects of the same processes.

**Cognition, cognitive activities & thinking**

Cognition can be defined as finding one’s way, or trying to do so, in solving (or trying to solve) a problem (trivial or complex) in dealing with a situation in a non-random way. Or, in Stephen Cowley’s (pers. comm.) words, cognition is “that which makes possible flexible adaptive behaviour”.

Cognitive activities occur in more situations than solo thinking. The extreme case of solo thinking is the individual (sitting like Rodin’s *Le Penseur*) thinking without noticing or using the external situation, the surroundings with other people, artefacts etc. (Yet, he is of course utilising his prior experience/memory of the world.). Solo thinking is an extreme and exceptional case (focusing on “pure thinking”), and it would be strange to use this as a kind of paradigm case of cognition or thinking.¹

Cognitive activities are part of more comprehensive activities involving also perception, action, interaction with others, interventions in the world, like:

- #1: Performing individual practical activities, such as driving a car (cf. #4);
- #2: Co-performing practical activities with others, monitoring and instructing (& self-instructing) in moving heavy furniture, conducting or playing in a symphony orchestra, chamber music ensemble or jazz ensemble;

¹ There are some problems with the terms ‘cognition’ and ‘thinking’: ‘Cognition’ is too associated with intra-individual cognitive processing, ignoring thinking with the help of others, artefacts and the surrounding world in general. ‘Thinking’ is too much linked to solo thinking; e.g. opposition between moments of thinking (cognitive activities while retracted from active participation) and moments of speaking in interaction (cognitive activities accompanying speaking, e.g. those involved in immediate responding and understanding).
• #3: Problem-solving with the help of external artefacts, e.g. performing mathematical operations with pencil-and-paper or a calculator, reading a book (especially when working with it, such as when trying to learn something from it or criticising it), using the Internet in searching for answers to questions one has in mind. If I do a calculation by using pencil-and-paper, where does my “thinking” take place, and where are its starting point and end?: at the exit from the brain, in my hand, somewhere in between, at the end of the pencil, in the traces on the paper? Or take a spider’s net: is that part of the spider’s body or its perceptual organ, or is it completely outside of the spider’s body? Such questions are misconceived, since they cannot be given straight and unequivocal answers. Thinking is both embodied (in the thinker’s boy), rooted in the world, e.g. based on artefacts and drawing upon other people’s thinking and actions.

• #4: Automatisation and deautomatisation of actions and behaviours; automatisation includes learning to do knitting or to drive a car; de-automatisation can be exemplified by domesticating or controlling one’s affects or impulses, avoiding to make all one’s whims public (in talk), or simulating (faking, feigning) expressions of affects in smiling, laughing, or crying etc.

• # 5: Private thinking accompanying speaking and listening in a conversation, or internal dialogue in solo thinking (auto-dialogue) (RETH, 121ff.);

• #6: Participating in more (technologically) advanced teamwork, e.g. steering a ship, guiding planes on flight paths (Hutchins, Cockpit REF), working in the control room of the London underground (Heath & Luff, 1992).

There are cognitive activities at different levels of awareness. Pylyshyn (according to Rommetveit REF) made a distinction between subcognition (of which the thinker is unaware) and cognition (partly conscious, verbalized or can be brought into language). Another, albeit related, distinction is between “type 1 thinking” (spontaneous, intuitive etc) and “type 2 thinking” (reflective, more of special dependence on language) (Jonathan Evans, John Barge, according to Stephen Cowley, pers. comm.), as exemplified by chatting vs reflected argumentation. Yet another distinction is between ordinary thinking and meta-perspectives; understanding vs understanding that one understands (or not), between a solution and seeing that it is a solution. Cowley (pers. comm.) talks about doubleness in human mindedness.

Cognition and interaction

Thinking (inner processes) and external behaviour have often been treated quite separately, as mutually exclusive alternatives or domains in psychology (cognitivism, behaviourism). Even today, cognitive psychology (& linguistics) and social interactionism (CA, EM) have very little in common. Both have to give up some of their theoretical and methodological dogmas; dialogism seems to be a third alternative in this regard. The cognitivism vs behaviourism opposition shows how theories and ontologies are heavily influenced by method; in psychology, one may compare controlled experiments and the study of publicly manifest behavior (CA) and their respective ontological presuppositions.

There are, however, new theories of cognition that try to integrate insights. Yet, many of these seem to give undue weight to one of the poles individualism vs collectivism. For example, Núñez & Freeman (1999) stress that action, emotion and intention are primary and that cognition has to be related to these activities/aspects of mental functioning. But these authors still focus on individuals, rather than interaction. At the other end, we find the theory that cognition is in interaction, in the world, in practices; it is social or shared. But some of these theories seem to have a deficit in lack of accounts for cognitive content. So these lines need to be united. The unifying theory is one in which interactivity is primary (cf. Linell, 2013c), and comes before intersubjectivity*. 


Common sense and common ground

“Common sense” is a time-honoured notion which is central in DT and social representations theory (Marková, 2003). A short definition might define it as shared and wide-spread everyday knowledge and assumptions of the world. It is different from scientific knowledge in that it is often resistant to change and usually not problematized. It may often be mistaken, seen from a scientific point-of-view.

However, common sense is not always shared within a given cultural community. Rather, it is partially shared, but perhaps often sufficiently shared for people to conduct everyday conversations about the things involved. The same applies to the notion of ‘common ground’, a notion develop by Clark and his associates (Clark, 1996). Common ground is what parties to a specific, situated and constantly updated communicative activity share as assumptions for the upcoming communicative interaction. When things have been said and accepted, they get added to the common ground for more talk (this successive build-up of common ground is called ‘grounding’ by Clark). In addition, common ground seems to include common sense, i.e. that which is already taken-for-granted-and-shared by interlocutors. However, it is not always easy to sort out what is common ground in some situations; using examples of referential communication during a surgical operation, Koschmann et al. (2003) raises some doubts about it. Details of what may initially be seen as shared on account of earlier discourse may in fact be obscure, ambiguous and endlessly defeasible. Common ground is therefore at most sufficient common ground for current purposes; as Rommetveit (1974) pointed out, what parties to a communicative exchange share is only partially and temporarily shared. What is “sufficiently shared” is perhaps sufficient for signaling mutual understanding in discourse, but not necessarily sufficient for practical action, e.g. safe surgery (Koschmann et al.; op.cit.).

Common ground may perhaps be analysed with the help of the notion of *trust, which involves (by definition) relying on knowledge and assumptions that are necessarily uncertain.

Communicative disabilities as forms of disturbed dialogicality

Psychiatry identifies, among many other conditions, two broadly opposed disturbances in ADHD and autism. These are similar in their lack of dialogicality; the person is more or less incapable of anticipating others’ responses.

ADHD includes the inability to inhibit socially non-desired responses (and initiatives), including "asocial talkativeness" (Asplund, 1987). This appears to include a seemingly high degree of dialogicality, or at least sociability, but this is dialogicality suited for the period of primary intersubjectivity.

Severe autism* may, on the other hand, be characterised as asocial responselessness (Asplund, op.cit.)

Thus, some psychiatric diagnoses may involved problems derive from disturbances in the development of dialogicality (Trevarthen’s or Bråten’s stages; RETH: 258).

Such phenomena occur in other exceptional circumstances than psychiatric disturbances too:

a) ‘immediate communication’, ‘felt immediacy’, also occurring in some situations involving older children and adults;

---

2 ‘Common’ does not seem to mean the same in the two expressions. In “common sense”, it means basically ‘everyday’ and ‘(partially) shared in the whole community’, whereas in “common ground” it means ‘sufficiently shared by parties to a situated activity’.
b) cultures, especially literate cultures, can support behaviours that are normally regarded as asocial: compare phenomena like hermits, monasteries, etc.

Dialogicality is not one ability of one well-defined kind; it concerns relational capacities with many developmental stages and contextual variants. We are faced with dynamic and composite dialogicalities, not with one monolithic capacity, or one module.

**Communicative project**

This notion was developed in several different texts of mine. The idea or term was sparked off from some suggestions by Luckmann (1995; see Linell, 1998). Like communicative activity types, CPs can range from explicitly communicative exchanges (involving language or the use of other semiotic systems) to other kinds of cognitive or practical projects (Linell, 2011: 75-76). In CA, the term ‘project’ is sometimes used in a non-technical sense (e.g. Schegloff, 2007), whereas I intend it as a more technical term, although with a wide range of coverage. In part my CP corresponds to ‘activity’ in CA.

In human communication projects and activities are organised in a more or less hierarchical manner: projects are nested within other projects which in turn can belong to even larger projects, etc. This quasi-hierarchical organisation reflects means-end relations; projects are enacted in the service of overarching, more comprehensive projects (goals, tasks). This is a fundamental property of a considerable part of human communication and cognition. It means that small sequences may have functions in larger wholes. These gestalt-like aspects of sequences are often conscious but diffusely planned, except for the immediately upcoming part. More remote future developments of interactions tend to lack clear contours for the participants. Some projects and activities are primarily communicative in nature, others are practical (but usually including minor communicative aspects and local actions).

That CPs appear in different kinds and sizes, and at different levels, implies that the notion becomes less descriptively exact. Accordingly, I have used the term CP in several ways, often without providing the whole picture. Some attempts were made, however, in Linell (1998, 2011, 2012), and here I shall delineate the three most important applications. If `CP´ is to be used for classificatory purposes applied to a corpus of discourse, it will be important to define exactly what type of CP is focused on.

The first context in which I applied a notion of CPs was in critiques of Searlian speech acts (Linell, 1998: 208ff; see also RETH: 178). The idea is that a single speaker’s speech act (utterance, turn etc) cannot be treated in isolation from its sequential environment (which is the basic approach of Searle (1969).) A Searlian speech act can therefore not be a fully satisfactory unit of analysis of communicative discourse, which is dialogic in nature. A communicative unit like an utterance cannot be understood only in terms of its linguistic composition and its felicity conditions, since it is issued in the service of a more comprehensive “project” that the speaker shares (or wants to share, or partly shares) with the other(s). (This is not to deny that the communicative labour, the active participation in terms of overt semiotic actions (e.g. verbal utterances) is usually asymmetrically distributed among participants.).

The recipient/addressee’s response will have an impact on the significance in situ of a first speaker’s contribution. The answerer often makes a crucial contribution to the project. (This can of course be developed further, beyond the second-positioned turn.) For example, suppose that a speaker A asks a question like “What time is it?”. A Searlian analysis would not do justice to the communicative value of such a communicative contribution outside of its sequential and activity-type contexts. One case would be:

\[(1)\]
1. A: What time is it?
2. B: Eleven.
3. A: So we should leave now.
Here, the relevant CP, as it actually unfolds, seems to be about finding out the time in the service of a project of determining whether A and B should now take leave from the dinner party. Another case might be:

(2)
1. A: What time is it?
2. B: Eleven.
3. A: OK/Thanks.

We could imagine that A approaches a stranger B in the street, a situation in which the two have no more specific background in common, at least not with regard to the communicative project initiated in line 1. In such a context the small sequence in (2) could make up a very local CP in itself, which seems actually only be about finding out the time. Another case is:

(3)
1. A: What time is it?
2. B: Eleven.
3. A: Good.

Here, A’s uptake is observably an evaluation, and we can imagine that the social context is that of an early education, say a pre-school or first grade of primary school, with A as the teacher and B as a pupil. For the participants in a real school context, it may be evident that A in line 1 asks an exam question and that an evaluation of the student’s answer in line 2 is expectable and implicated as the third-positioned action (line 3) (cf. Mehan, 1979). However, even for the addresssee in the classroom (B), the purpose of the initial question (line 1) could have been heard as grounded in a genuine wish to get to know the time (as in (2)).

A fourth type of project is suggested in (4):

(4)
1. B: ((telling a story))
2. A: What time is it?
3. B: Don’t interrupt me. ((goes on telling))

Here, we don’t know what A’s incipient project in line 2 might have been designed for. It could have been developing a sequence like (1) or (2). If so, it fails, since in line 3 it is treated just as an interruption, which it remains to be (provided that B gets away with his response in line 3).

Etc. Any utterance in communication in real life is situated, which is to say that it is somehow part of a CP. It can also relate to several local projects: in (1), line 3 arguably belongs to a CP with lines 1-2 and it accounts for why A uttered line 1 in the first place, but line 3 could also be a transition to another (next) CP, for example, one of preparing for leave-taking. This depends on how it is followed up.

These examples deal with (very) local CPs, an alternative to CA’s adjacency pairs. In his ‘sequence analysis’ Schegloff (2007) at times uses the word “project” as a non-technical term for such extended adjacency pairs. (Here I have merely hinted at (beginnings of) post-sequences after the second-positioned pair part, but as Schegloff demonstrates, there can be pre-, inter- or post-sequences added to the main pair.)

The quasi-hierarchical build-up of communicative and cognitive activities is an important feature of CPs. As noted already, it means that we can talk about CPs of different sizes at different levels of organisation. Perhaps, the main category would comprise not the very local types exemplified in (1-4) above (“expanded adjacency pairs”) but the more or less coherent and externally bounded sequences that treat local topics (or perform some activity such as mutual greetings or leave-takings, in which case the project
or sequence is activity-rather than topic-sustained). A local topical CP forms a ‘topical (or activity) episode’ (Linell & Korolija, 1997). (On this type of CP, cf. Linell, 2012a.)

But this is still not the end. Local topical CPs (episodes) can be part of larger chunks, which could be seen as bigger CPs, such as phases of communicative activities or whole communicative encounters (e.g. whole conversations). In fact, many communicative encounters, including many telephone conversations, are basically monotopical, i.e. they have one major CP. But then conversations can be part of series of conversations, that together make up even larger CPs. The bigger the time-scales are, the more diffuse are the CPs (as a rule). At some point, it may make little sense to talk about higher-level CPs as parts of members’ immediate understandings. In such a perspective, the local topical CPs stand out as the most important units.

Some DLG scholars (Cowley et al., 2010; 213, n. 2) use the term ‘cognitive event’ in a sense similar to CP (provided that CP is taken basically in the sense of topical episode). They seem to presuppose that ‘cognitive’ (*cognition) is a more comprehensive term than ‘communicative’, and take ‘event’ as better than ‘action’ or ‘project’. Others use a threefold distinction, in terms of degrees of meaningfulness or mindfulness: action – actuation – behavior (Andrén, 2010) (cf. also definition of ‘gesture’ vs ‘movement’). The intertwinenment of language and action-perception* cycles is usually stressed. Cowley (pers. comm.) states that “events are as important as routines”, a position mirroring that of CA (in e.g. Scheglof, 2007).

**Completion and unfinalisability**

Acts of saying (utterances) have to be terminated, and are terminated, usually very quickly, and their situated meanings are completed “for current purposes” with the help of resources like meaning potentials, contextual factors and other sense-makers, especially the addressee, so that something said has thereby been accomplished. But the interpretations of that which has been said may be carried further, in principle ad infinitum, through more and more utterances; discourse is hence ‘unfinalisable’. These ideas were elaborated by Bakhtin (1986).

**Consciousness**

The term ‘consciousness’ has often been used as more or less co-referential with ∗‘the mind’. At the same time, many representatives of present-day neuroscience and philosophy have tried to explain away references to consciousness, arguing that references should only be made to the brain, and its structures and functions (e.g. Donald, 2001). Yet, several theoreticians assume the presence of some “Central processor”, “a conscious generalist” (op.cit.: 37), cf. Minsky’s agents and Dennett’s demons (op. cit.: p. 30).

Consciousness is in such “modern” theories an epi-phenomenon with no explanatory value, a passive by-product of activities in neural nets (op.cit.: 32) (cf. above on ∗agency). “Hardliners” in neuroscience have tended to deny that consciousness can have any significant role at all in human mental life (ibid.: 28ff.). Consciousness is regarded by them as an illusion (ibid.: 45, et pass). Many circumstances have been adduced as evidence, such as the fact that awareness of particulars is limited to very short moments and “spatial” extension. Some theoreticians limit consciousness just to sensation (sensory perception), others only to the use of language. Therefore, the vast part of cognition functions unconsciously (see Donald for an extended account).

Donald (op.cit.) himself, however, insists on the necessity of building a theory of human mental life on the notion of consciousness. He criticises the narrowness of the laboratory-experimental paradigm in neuropsychology (e.g. p. 47), and asks for a broader theoretical framework (p. 46). He recommends an evolutionary perspective, in which forms of consciousness have developed as a consequence of both
biological and socio-cultural evolution. Thus, his theory is a “culture-first approach” (p. 279). He launches a model of three major stages of “cognitive emergence” in the human mind (after the “episodic” stage, shared with primates) (op.cit.: 259ff): ‘mimetic’ (basically evolution of “playacting, body language, precise imitation, and gesture”, p. 261), ‘mythic’ (oral language; he also characterizes this stage as having a ‘linguistic matrix’ (p. 321)), and ‘theoretic’ (external symbols, especially writing). In this perspective, humans have developed a ‘hybrid mind’ crucially dependent on both biology and learning/cultures. The stages are still with us, creating multi-layered cultures and a ‘consciousness hierarchy’. Consciousness has a ‘distributed’ nature (op.cit.: xiii, et passim); symbolic tools have been imported into consciousness from outside, that is, from culture, rather than being generated by the mere brain itself. “Intellectual work is shared across many nervous systems”. These are ideas fully compatible with a dialogist meta-theory.

The advent of oral language (“mythic” stage in Donald’s jargon) and written language (“theoretic” stage) meant a qualitative shift in cognitive evolution (p. 279). But language came about in a world which already had an “episodic” experience base and a “mimetic” inventory of skills. These in part explain how language could come about (p. 283 et pass).

In RETH (12), I proposed that ‘the mind’ be understood as the sense-making ability (or ‘sense-making system’) of (primarily human) individuals and collectives (more precisely, individuals in social interactions and cultural contexts). Sense-making processes and activities take many forms, and we are not consciously aware of all their properties. They include categorisation and pattern recognition in perception and cognition, interpreting tokens as belonging to types, putting fragments into a coherent understanding, monitoring muscular actions that need controlled processes (p. 49) (automatised complex behaviours, e.g. in musical performance, dancing, talking and conversing, sports have developed from carefully controlled processes, p. 57), anticipating consequences of actions and evaluating them (e.g. morally), communicating by language and other semiotic means, furthermore the meta-ability to scrutinise thoughts, perceptions, actions and utterances, for example in terms of their linguistic appropriacy, “reading” others’ minds (though this can be done subconsciously too), as well as one’s own. In some way or another, all these involve going beyond the material and situated nature of appearances (their first-order reality), seeing them as standing for something more, as meaningful in a wider context (see “sense-making,” “meaning-making). At the same time, these examples show that consciousness can not be limited to just sensory perception nor to just language-borne cognition.

Sense-makings involve aspects of awareness, but also aspects of which sense-makers themselves are unaware. However, sense-making can also include doubts in one’s own sense-makings (sometimes called meta-cognition, cf. below). Things of which we are usually unaware can be brought into awareness or consciousness; e.g. cultural values normally never questioned can be topicalised in critical discussion (cf. Marková et al., 2007). Note that consciousness always concerns the awareness of (aspects of) the senses or meanings made of what we perceive or do, and the results in terms of content related to the world. We are not aware of the brain processes. Consciousness thus pertains to the effects of bringing something into language, rather than characterising an intention or plan before the utterances (cf. Donald, p. 39). To the extent that we have conscious plans, these are due to silent rehearsals of incipient utterances.

Sense-makings can involve only limited awareness, and complex meaning-making also usually involves automatised aspects or layers of meaning of which the sense-maker is not self-conscious (as shown for example in psychodynamics). Nonetheless, awareness is an important feature of most sense-makings, not in the least those involving explicit language and comparable semiotic resources. We are aware of central aspects of knowledge, perceptions, actions, utterances etc, that which something x means to us, or what the other may mean by x. Awareness (at some level) is a prerequisite of the agent’s accountability. For a developmental account of human awareness, see Marková (1987).

Donald (op.cit.) calls for an “intermediate time frame of awareness, multilayered in structure, and with multiple foci” (p. 57). Many human activities, e.g. participating in a conversation, must involve “intermediate-term awareness”, memory processes working over minutes and hours, in between
conventional working memory for sensory details (up to fifteen seconds), but more vivid and active, playing an immediate governing role in ongoing behavior” (p. 53), contrasting with “the patchy, rather loose, slow-to-surface long-term memory” (p. 53). This argument is explicitly bolstered with references to the contingencies of normal conversation (cf. RETH, the role of communicative projects of varying extension).

Donald emphasises the role of consciousness (awareness) in self-interpretation. He (pp. 139ff.) enumerates a considerable number of subtypes: self-monitoring, divided attention, self-reminding, autocuing, self-recognition, rehearsal and review, whole-body imitation, mindreading, pedagogy, gesture, symbolic invention, and complex skill hierarchies. These all seem to involve some kind of meta-ability, the awareness of how you conduct your behavior or action. Language involves the ability to criticise one’s own collective language, and one’s own (individual) inadequate expressions, which are meta-linguistic abilities (pp. 277-278).

As was noted above, Donald is close to dialogist thinking. Thus he notes that the “episodic layer [...] is inherently other-oriented” (p. 322) (the episodes of course are of course directly part and parcel of the situated social life, which are things that already the ancestors of Homo sapiens took part in). About the mimetic stage and style he says that they have “meaning only in relation to the action of others” (p. 321). Oral language (the mythic or linguistic stage) is “a powerful means of constructing auto-biographical memories, but our sense of self takes on meaning only within a shared oral tradition” (p. 321). And about external symbols (the theoretic representations) he says that “they too acquire meaning only in the context of a collective sense of social structure” (p. 321) (italics added/PL). Note the appearance of the reference to “meaning” in all these cases, and to other-orientation and hence implicitly to dialogism.

Other points shared with dialogism is that consciousness is supported by *action (manipulation) plus perception (exploration of the world, often under the guidance of others), and claims that cognition could not have evolved in “the isolated mind” (p. 249). Donald also expresses reverence for Vygotsky’s thinking (from interpersonal to intrapersonal thinking). "Theoretic representations can win governance over culture only if they successfully operate the levers of the hierarchy (i.e. episodic, mimetic, mythic, theoretic/PL) and assume direct control over narrative, mimetic, and episodic imagination” (p. 323).

Despite this affinity of Donald’s with dialogist thoughts, however, his reasoning sometimes seems mainly about the individual mind in relation to the environment and culture; interactivities with others, and talk-in-interaction are not particularly highlighted in this “culture-first approach”. He talks about genes, environment and culture as three necessary components in consciousness, but these three tend to be treated as free-standing. But for dialogism, culture, in particular, is always directly or indirectly co-emergent with social interaction.

Content-vs-context analysis

One fundamental thesis of dialogism is that sense-making is always dependent on explicit or implicit semiotic resources (talk, text, non-verbal resources) and contextual resources in interplay. This means that content analysis, which is usually taken to be discourse- or message-based, is always context-interdependent; content is influenced by contextual factors, and vice versa. According to this view, any text, including the holy scriptures, must be interpreted in relation to relevant contexts, which may differ between situations. Conversely, contexts (in a “context analysis”) are created or completed by verbal or other “content”, i.e. the topics treated in discourse.

“Content” is difficult to handle in CA based exclusively on sequential analysis. If one wants to deal with content, an analytic complement is needed. For example, Marková et al. (2007) suggest a “dialogical content analysis” in their study of focus-group discourse. However, the term “content analysis” may conjure up unfortunate associations of coding atomic units (Weber, 1990), and one may prefer alternative
terms and models, such as ‘thematic analysis’ (Roberts & Sarangi, 2005) or ‘topic analysis’ (e.g. ‘topical episode analysis’; Linell & Korolija, 1997).

Contexts

Contexts, especially in relation to discourse (particularly talk-in-interaction), have been theorised in Linell (1998 = Approaching Dialogue), in RETH, pp. 16ff., and (more extensively) in Linell (2011). However, my accounts have shifted a bit in meaning over time, and I have gradually become aware of the extension of the unclarities and shifts. I will therefore repeat the most important conceptual distinctions here.

The notion of context was of course first developed with regard to texts, especially text interpretation. The context was then conceptualised as those circumstances outside of the text proper that have, or can have, an impact on the interpretation of the given text. (The text as such has of course its obvious meaning potential too.) There are a lot of conceptual differentiations made by text experts (e.g. Genette, 1991), which I will not delve into here. My own considerations of context(s) have concerned spoken discourse (and more recently, sense-making in real-time interactivity in general).

In the literature of linguistics, the notion of context has usually been treated in a very rash way; it has simply been a gloss for all those extra-discursive circumstances that can influence the interpretation of a given piece of discourse, in whatever way. Whether contextual factors influence lexical (and grammatical) linguistic meaning in itself has been a moot point. Some (monologist) approaches have argued that linguistic meaning is in fact contextually insensitive (Cappelen & Lepore, 2005), but there are many different, radical or less radical, positions (Recanati, 2004). The standard dialogist view is that lexical and grammatical meaning always interplay with contextual factors in determining situated meanings, and that lexical meanings must include references to different relevant contextual dimensions (see RETH: ch. 15 on meaning potentials). In addition to this difference of opinion, there is a major contrast between, on the one hand, those who regard “the context” as a (more or less) stable and pre-given environment for meaning-making in situ (the standard monologist assumption: RETH: 36), and, on the other hand, those who argue that contexts are dynamically used by parties to communication (the standard dialogist view). According to DT, participants exploit linguistic and contextual resources in a *dynamic though not random way so that varying situated interpretations are made relevant.

In order to account for regularities between contexts and interpretations, on the one hand, and the dynamic sense-making on the other, Linell (1998) made a basic distinction between contextual resources and realised contexts, i.e. contexts actually made relevant by participants in situ. According to this view, contextual resources are there as (or in) potential contexts, but they become realised, if and only if they are made relevant “there-and-then” (or, if you prefer, “here-and-now”) in situ. When the resources are actualised in this sense, they actually influence situated interpretations. The corresponding is true of dimensions (aspects, “resources”) in the linguistic (and other semiotic) means deployed in the situated sense-making. Contextual resources may condition but do not determine meaning. Although some contextual (and linguistic) resources may present themselves as usually relevant (appear to be default solutions), speakers must make some choices, which actually render them relevant there-and-then. If the speaker makes certain active choices, e.g. concerning lexical items and how to start the utterance, certain other features, e.g. of grammar, follow more or less automatically (Linell, 2013b; Linell & Mertzlufft, 2014).

“Resources” and “contexts”, two prominent notions in accounts of sense-making (or *meaning-making), are relational notions. The status as a resource is not something inherent in things or processes. A resource is always a resource for somebody for some purpose in some kind of situation. The account in RETH would treat linguistic features of utterances (or other semiotic actions) and contextual factors as resources for the participant’s sense-making. A slightly different view (Linell, 1998) would look at
contextual resources as resources for making sense of a piece of discourse (for example, an utterance). Similarly, "contexts" are not contexts in any absolute sense. They are always contexts of something particular, e.g. utterances (in situ) (Linell, 1998) or a person's (situated) sense-making (RETH).

At both levels (potenti ally vs. actuality), that is contextual resources as potentialities vs. contexts actually made relevant in situ, one might distinguish between different contextual dimensions (although in Linell (1998: 128ff) I used these distinctions mainly about the former). These dimensions are: (i) resources and contexts in the (physical) situation in which the interaction takes place, for example, physical objects and events occurring (cf. Bergmann, 1990: sources of 'local sensitivity' of discourse), (ii) co-text, basically what has been said (in the same situation) before the utterance or episode in focus; of particular importance is the local co-text, consisting of the immediately prior utterances by self and other, because these adjacent contributions are normally responded to and dealt with in the current utterance/episode, and (iii) background knowledge, including participants' (divergent or shared) assumptions about the relevant communicative activity type (definition of the social situation), their knowledge and assumptions about the world in general, about the specific discourse topics raised (including social representations of these topical domains), about each other and their common biography (especially the respective communicative biographies), relations to other situations (e.g. in chains of communicative events) and situation types ('intercontextuality'). (i) and (ii) may be called immediate resources or contexts, and (iii) abstract or mediate resources or contexts. Note, however, that immediate contextual resources are not automatically relevant for the communicative exchange; they too must be made relevant by the participants. For example, many things said before or present in the environment are left behind (e.g. forgotten (but sometimes potentially amenable to reinitiation), ignored or otherwise avoided as topics.

My general assumption is that contexts are dynamically changing in the course of the interaction, fragmented and only partially shared. Rommetveit (1974: 29ff) talks about this as a micro-world of "temporarily shared social reality" (TSSR) (RETH: 79). This sharedness leads to (at least partial) coherence; Garfinkel & Wieder (1974: e.g. 223) have talked about the gestalt contexture of the communicative situation. The notion is ultimately borrowed from gestalt psychology. It seems to be a moot point, in the interpretation of these authors, to decide if the contexture has coherence as one gestalt, or if it should still be seen as dynamic and fragmented.

The issue of how to conceive of contexts and which aspects are relevant will become quite different if we focus on talk-in-interaction, printed texts, internet and hypermedia, etc. It may also be important to ponder the potential differences between what constitutes the relevant context(ure) of an utterance (or "piece of discourse"), and what constitutes resources or contexts of a printed text as read in different situations (different types of "text events"), the solution of a practical or cognitive task (e.g. a mathematical problem in school), or any other type of situated sense-making.

By way of summary, there have been some topic glides and shifts of reference and meaning in my writings over time. Myself I have not always been aware of all of these shifts. Basically, I may have turned from discussing only contexts of situated (linguistic) utterances in Linell (1998) (a natural focus for a linguist!) to contexts of various kinds of situated sense-making, in which linguistic resources may be of varying importance (see *activities and *languaging). Linguistic resources may simply be one out of an array of semiotic resources (Goodwin). This latter stance is more typical of RETH and later texts (Linell, 2013a,b,c, 2014). More specifically, I may be focus on three points: (a) the division into contextual dimensions (i-iii) I now take to be valid for both potential and actualized contexts; (b) the notion of "resources" could also be applicable to both these phenomena, i.e. both potential (latent) resources and those actually made relevant; (c) likewise, "resources" comprise both linguistic resources (e.g. lexical items, grammatical constructions) and other expressive (bodily) resources (e.g. gestures, body positions, gaze) as well as contextual resources (of the three general categories (i-iii) and their subcategories).
Contributions to discourse and interaction

Here I shall deal with what could be called 'elementary contributions to discourse' (Linell, 1998: ch. 9). According to *monologism, and a wide-spread common-sense idea of conversational exchanges, a speaker issues an utterances (or several), and the listener’s job is to understand this utterance and then take over the speaker role in responding, i.e. in issuing an utterance of his/her own, etc. The conversation is therefore a “from-to” process, in which each person acts as an individual system. The dialogical idea is rather that of a “between” process, in which contributions are made “from within” an interactivity.

Monologism and dialogism thus entertain different ideas of how an elementary contribution to a sequence of discourse or interaction is constituted. A monologist analysis posits the ‘utterance’ or ‘speech act’ as the minimal unit. However, ‘utterance’ is a polysemic term and is often not presented as a technical term. Anyway, the speaker produces an utterance (or several), and the listener may produce feedback items (listener support items, continuers) in close connection with this utterance. (After that, it is this person’s (i.e. the one who has just been the listener and recipient of the prior speaker’s utterance) to produce his/her response, usually another utterance.) Thus, we get a series of utterances; speaker A’s utterance u₁, B’s utterance u₂; A’s utterance u₃, etc., each utterance being produced in one turn and “owned” by one person. However, sometimes a speaker may produce a multi-unit turn consisting of several units, each of which could have been separate turns if the listener had exercised her right to a turn after the first speaker’s first unit (utterance, more technically: turn-constructional unit). The turn allocation is subject to rules originally specified in the seminal turn-taking paper by Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974).

Here I have suggested that the turn-taking paper by Sacks et al. (op.cit.) might be “monologist” in nature, which is certainly unfair. It is partly in line with DTs (see *ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis) (although the demarcation line between monologism and dialogism is not sharp; RETH: ch. 18). But let me proceed to another theory, Clark’s (1996; Clark & Schaefer, 1987, 1989; cf. Linell, 1998: 214ff) “contribution theory” (cf. Koschmann & LeBaron, 2003), which his related to Clark’s theory of “joint projects” and similar to my own theory of *communicative projects. Clark’s term for an elementary unit of interaction is precisely (what he calls) “a contribution”. He develops a mini-theory of such contributions. A contribution includes for Clark several phases with utterances of both parties in a dyad. The first speaker starts by making a presentation of a problem or a claim for the other to evaluate or respond to. The other participant will then accept the speaker’s (suggested) problem formulation, problem solution or claim, or respond to it by providing an (expanded) answer, for example, by giving an extended answer or problematising the first speaker’s position. The second speaker’s acceptance or response belongs to the acceptance phase of the contribution. In other words, the first speaker takes an initiative by initiating his/her presentation, and only when the addressee has somehow responded, the contribution is potentially completed. If the latter person, the second speaker, provides an extended response, this will in itself be a new initiative (“presentation” in Clark’s terminology). This will be a source of further meaning negotiation. This is relatively close to the initiative-response theory and the related theory of *communicative projects in Linell (1998).

Clark’s theory of contributions depicts discourse as interactionally or dialogically evolving, with mutual other-orientations between participants and their actions. Utterances have responsive and initiatory aspects (“inter-acts” in the terminology of RETH: 177ff; cf. Linell, 1998: 161-169). But the model cannot account for all the facts in many complex communication situations, such as the surgery interaction (and talk) described by Koschmann & LeBaron (2003), who criticise Clark’s contribution theory. In my terms, Clark’s “contributions” are close to minimal *communicative projects, but these small projects are embedded within larger activities (such as the operation conducted by responsive surgeons and the demonstrations done for co-present novices). That means that the first speaker’s “presentation” is often responsive to prior events or expectations, and the second speaker’s responses may, as already indicated, be new initiatives engendering further talk. These “contributions” are not as self-standing and complete, as the account by Clark and associates may suggest. In fact, it seems counter-intuitive to call sequences
consisting of, for example, a questioning act and its answer one (elementary) "contribution". Even Clark’s theory is only partly dialogist in nature.

**Dialogical aspects of conversations**

Dialogical principles of sense-making come to the fore-front especially in sociodialogue, notably conversations. This includes aspects such as the following:

- Contributions to a sequence of interaction with two or more participants are interlinked. There is a tendency for participants to reuse the others’ (and their own) words with variation; there is ‘resonance’ or ‘affinity’ (Du Bois, 2009) between utterances, that is, a speaker may repeat some of the other’s words, in lexico-grammatically the same or similar form but often prosodically reaccentuated. Such inter-turn links may emphasise agreement and consensus, or difference and competition (cf. intersubjectivity and alterity in dialogical theory; e.g. Linell 2009). In terms of Goodwin’s (1990: 177ff.) related notion of ‘format tying’, partial repetition of others’ utterances is used mainly for competitive purposes (Goodwin is particularly concerned ritual insults among young Black girls).
- Accordingly, utterances have external relations to prior actions (responsive relations) and to possible next actions (projective relations). Such properties may also be built into grammatical constructions of the language system; we may talk about ‘responsive’ or ‘projective’ constructions, and some constructions have both these external relations at the same time. In this paper, we will focus on a few particular types of responsive constructions (‘reactives’) in Swedish and German.
- The preceding point has a turn- or utterance-internal counterpart. Utterance building is analysable in terms of *projectivity and fulfillment or alteration of projections* (the latter points are equal to internal responsivity) (Linell, 2013; Günthner, 2011). This is a corner-stone of on-line syntax (see section 2 below), and can be seen as an indication of a speaker’s ‘internal dialogue’; the speaker orients to different positions (or ‘voices’), his own, those of the other participants and those of others not even present.
- The fact that continuations of utterances can be anticipated, due to projection, implies that speaker and listener can process on-line utterance building and utterance understanding partly in parallel. This *synchronisation* enables listeners to complete a speaker’s utterance which is still in progress (collaborative, or competitive, completion), or they can take over the turn immediately, without any lapse at all, after the previous speaker’s turn completion (e.g. Lerner, 2002). Such synchronisation implies that speaker and listener coordinate their activities on-line in a truly dialogical way; these activities are not purely individual or mutually independent (Auer, 2013).
- Appendor questions; other aspects of listener support items (“feedback”) (Gillespie & Cornish, 2012: 30)...
- If parties to a dialogue (at least sometimes) strive to determine the degree to which they mutually understand each other (establish intersubjectivity), the phenomenon of ‘third-position repair’ (Schegloff, 1992) seems particularly interesting: here a speaker A – in a ‘third-positioned’ response – tries to remedy what seems to be a misunderstanding on the part of speaker B in his second-positioned response to A’s first-positioned turn (the ‘trouble source’). This is a “dialogical” process; it takes two to communicate.
- The deployment of linguistic resources (lexical items, grammatical constructions) is subject to *activity-grammar interdependence*: constructions, as entrenched patterns of language, are characterised not only by their grammatical structures and local pragmatic functions but also by their links to communicative activity types (Linell, 2010) and communicative genres (Günthner & Knoblauch, 1995).
These, and other, points have to be accounted for in a dialogical grammar. However, there is not yet a full-blown theory of ‘dialogical grammar’ (Linell & Mertz, 2014).

**Dialogical diamond**

By the “dialogical diamond” I refer to the figure and argumentation in RETH: 95, in which I argue, with many others (e.g. Zittoun et al., 2007), that the triadic relation (‘I–you–object’) posited in the ‘pragmatic triad’ and proposed to explain sense-making in semiotics and dialogism, is not sufficient. Yet, this triad has been hailed by many, including Bühler and Quine, and most emphatically by Marková (2003 and elsewhere), who also invokes Moscovici, whose concept of ‘social representation’ would be the third co-ordinate (‘object’). Recently, it was made basic in Cornejo’s (2008) ‘co-phenomenology’ (*phenomenology).

Before proceeding to some points of perhaps major importance, let us first ponder for a moment over who ‘I’ (or ‘Ego’ or ‘Self’) refers to in the triad. The usual answer would be the Speaker. However, actually it is the Self as (currently) an active sense-maker, i.e. one who is making sense either in producing an utterance (speaking, writing) or in interpreting another’s (another speaker’s) utterance. In the latter case, Self would be an actively interpreting recipient (especially, perhaps, in the role of a reader who tries to make sense of (an other’s) text).

Returning now to Marková’s triad, she and other authors refer to Bakhtin (1986: 122) who says that “[t]he word is a drama in which three characters participate (it is not a duet, but a trio)”, and this “living tripartite unity” involves the speaker (but cf. above), the other (addressee) and the object (cited in RETH: 89). A lot of confusion has evolved around what the “third party” is. Marková and Bakhtin talk about both “object” and “third party”. I think that one must distinguish between the object (referent/topic) (which is what Bühler presumably meant) and peripheral others (real or imagined sense-makers to which the primary parties (speaker and addressee) may orient in their interaction). It is my impression that Bakhtin mostly had such “participants” in mind (cf. the case of the ‘superaddressee’). Therefore, we need more than three co-ordinates. This can be substantiated by an argument based on evolution and development (see below).

Before going into this developmental argument, it might be important to distinguish between two lines in the discussion of semiotic constellations, namely ‘abstract semiotic’ ones (RETH: 92), which have to do with signs taken in abstracto, and ‘pragmatic’ ones (RETH: 90, 95), which have to do with co-ordinates of communicative situations. The abstract semiotic line comprises Saussure’s two-place theory of the sign (signifier and signified, or expression and content) and the three-place variants including those of Ogden & Richards (word, concept, referent), Peirce (word, interpretant, object) and Morris.

If we focus on the pragmatic theories, the triad (Bühler, Marková, etc.) is, in my opinion, not sufficient, except of course for certain kinds of interactions (e.g. infant, carer, object); one needs (at least) a four-place relation, between (at least) four coordinates of communication. Developmentally, in an evolutionary perspective (RETH: 258), the evolution starts with only ‘I–you’, as in early infant-carer interaction. These are those participants which later develop into ‘primary participants’, the two categories of active sense-makers present in the situation (in real time or asynchronously). Quite early on, however, the two (infant and partner) go on to direct their joint attention to a third coordinate, that of an external object (‘it’). This external object, the outer “reality”, intervenes into the primary parties’ sociodialogue, and will then remain present in communication nearly always, providing it with content, extending the scope of communication to an infinitely more varied range of phenomena. (In some situations, especially the most intimate dyadic situations, the third item may of course be perceived as an undesired intruder and then sometimes successfully ignored.) The third item (the objects usually referred to by 3.person pronouns) is Bühler’s third node. They are not sense-makers, although they provide affordances for sense-makers; a
special categories are material artefacts that have been "inscribed with meaning". The pragmatic triad appears to stop at this level, with only these three nodes.

This interpretation would mean that the pragmatic triad remains on what Trevarthen calls "secondary intersubjectivity" (RETH: 258). That implies that it tends to ignore the enormously powerful new "inventions" a little later in the individual's (and the species's) evolution, that of discovering and developing language and other semiotic resources, and later, the written world. However, my impression is that Bakhtin was not primarily interested in referents, objects and topics, but rather all these `peripheral others´ that the primary sense-makers orient to in special ways (“with a sideward glance” in one of Bakhtin’s metaphors). These “peripheral others” (more on different subcategories below) are not active sense-makers in the here and now of the situated interaction (but they can become so in the next moment, if they are co-present as audience and intervene or are drawn into the overt sociodialogue). Thus, they are potential sense-makers, in contrast to inanimate objects etc., and the primary participants often have an interest in anticipating their possible understandings and responses, influence their reactions and pre-empt certain kinds of undesired reactions.

To capture the potential influence of secondary others (a.k.a. third parties), the dialogical diamond adds a fourth node, named "Socioculture" in RETH: 95. This node comprises many things, including some common, everyday language, which has to be assumed by sense-makers to be more or less shared. In trevarthen’s terms, we are faced with with different kinds of ‘tertiary intersubjectivity’. Sociologists and some philosophers, like Durkheim and Heidegger, have conceived of this as the “already there and formal” (Sinha & Rodriguez, 2008: 374) exteriority of norms and institutions (see ibid.: 373-4).

The introduction of the fourth node takes care of the fact that when we communicate amongst us (I and you) about something (it), we often also have to orient to what third parties (peripheral and absent others, including different groups, the comme-il-faut norms, etc.). That we often have to express ourselves “with a sideward glance” at others (“what will they say about this?”) is a basic point in DT.

Language belongs to the "tertiary intersubjectivity", a level that allows for a huge development and differentiation of cultures, specific languages and varieties, genres, communities and civilisations. These also have socio-histories pertaining to different time-scales. Therefore, one could argue for more than one fourth node. It would be possible to split the fourth coordinate, socioculture, into several subcategories. In particular, two classes of phenomena stand out as different kinds of third parties. These are:

(a) Peripheral others (individuals and groups), such as overhears and audiences, who are not active as speakers more than marginally, and remote audiences, that is, people who might get to know about the communicative exchange later, in other situations (e.g. through gossip, various reports, including written messages that can be read by many). The primary participants often take account of these remote recipients when they bring up topics and choose to say particular things in their exchange.

(b) Then, there are more abstract third parties that primary participants orient to as well. For example, one may want not to deviate too much from common sense and decorum (comme il faut). Norms in the languages and cultures involved are usually followed; for example, parties use a language the norms of which must be followed. The larger communities indirectly oriented to may be either in-groups (“we”) or out-groups (“aliens”; “they”); these heterogeneities of culture (“we” vs. “they”) allow us to use communication for creating or sustaining groups that includes yourself but either includes or excludes the addressee, and absent others. But the most important point from the point of DT is the introduction of at least one fourth node (called ‘we/they/one’ in RETH: 95). The abstract diagram of the diamond has stopped at this point.

So, the introduction of the fourth node takes care of the fact that when we communicate amongst us (I and you) about something (it), we often also have to orient to what third parties (peripheral and absent
others, including different groups, the *comme-il-faut norms, etc.*) can say about that. That we often have to express ourselves “with a sideward glance” at others (“what will they say about this?”) is a basic point in DT. The abstract communities hinted at under (b) may be seen as (indirect) superaddressees in Bakhtinian terminology.

It may be argued that the two categories of peripheral others (“they”) and one’s own community and its norms (“we”, “one”) should be distinguished as two additional nodes in addition to the original triad. The abstract diagram of the diamond in RETH: 95) has stopped earlier, with the addition of only one more co-ordinate (“Socioculture”). This has the advantage of making the basic distinction between object/referent/topic and the peripheral others. However, it is important to emphasise that each node is relationally constituted together with the others. That is, we are not analysing self, other, object and concept as separate items, but in relation to each other. For example, we are not dealing with ‘I´ as an independent variable that may enter into an interaction with an ‘other´, an ‘object´ etc. (cf. “interaction as “external”). Instead, we look at “I-in-relation-to-other-and object-and-culture” in an “internal” relational structure. Similarly, what ‘thou/you´ will attend to, understand, accept or respond to in a given moment is of course interdependent with what ‘I´ says or does, what the referents (‘objects´) are like, how they are made into discursive content by the primary parties, and how they are commonly understood, labeled and talked about in the ‘socioculture´. The distinction between “object” and “socioculture” with its language helps us to make the necessary distinction between the object/referent and the word used to label it or the concept used to understand it. The latter two (linguistic label and concept) are part of, or closely related to, conventional language and not part of the things themselves. The referent-concept distinction is part of another classical triad, the ‘abstract semiotic triad´ (RETH: 92) (e.g. Ogden & Richards), which, on the other hand, lacks the other communicating party, the addressee (‘you´). The diamond includes, at least indirectly, both concept and interlocutor.

However, this last point points to the differentiation between the object/referent in itself and that object seen as/under a certain linguistic description.3 Although objects may have default descriptors (“basic level categories”, Rosch), there are usually alternative descriptions, a fact that is associated with the presence of heterogeneities and special professions and kinds of expertise in communities and societies. This issue can be expanded from single referents to whole topics, that is, you have a topic (which may be built around a referent) and then there are different ways to treat this topic, different voices in the heteroglossic society. These latter aspects may be seen as belonging to the “socioculture” node. Thus, the elaboration of a topic in a text or conversation may indicate that there is, after all, a closer link between objects and different voices (belonging to or originating with different peripheral others). Marková (2003), who abstains from the fourth node, is primarily looking at ‘social representations’ (Moscovici) in the role of object/topic; the topic is understood in terms of a social representation (or several), which speaks for a close relation between topic and socioculture.

In conclusion, the fourth node of the diamond acknowledges the important roles of language and conceptual systems in communication and thinking. Nonetheless, some researchers hold on to the triad. Marková (pers. comm.) argues that the triad deals with epistemology rather than communication and that

---

3 Another point, which is also related to the distinction between object as such and object under a certain description, comes from Heidegger’s idea of *Vorhandensein* (being ‘present-at-hand’) and *Zuhandensein* (being ‘ready-at-hand’). We may be confronted with a thing as “present-at-hand”, when the object is there for you to explore but you do not yet understand what it can be used for. But if you have signs, language and/or concepts available (“ready-at-hand”), you may understand what the thing really is (according to the culture’s understanding).
language, culture and heterogeneities are included in this model of hers by being aspects of the relations between the three nodes.

**Dialogical pedagogy**

Education and pedagogy are areas in which dialogical theory has been applied frequently. It has often been debated if good pedagogy has to be dialogically staged, and if so in what sense. Matusov & Miyazaki (2013) have surveyed some important issues, and developed a rather fine-grained taxonomy.

Matusov & Miyazaki discuss primarily what they call ‘instrumental’ vs ‘ontological’ learning. Instrumental learning looks at dialogue as a method for teaching, in which an interaction between teacher and novice takes place. Socratic dialogue (in Plato’s dialogues) would be a case in point; here, Socrates usually uses the student’s questions as starting-points for his own teaching, or even preaching. We can compare a lot of modern education at different levels, when the curriculum has been determined by the educational establishment, with little openings for truly student-initiated problems. It is a question of internalising knowledge without transforming the learning person. Education is seen as “outside life”, scheduled at certain teaching hours; it is only a “preparation for future living” (Matusov & Miyazaki). Cramming up basic facts is the extreme case.

Matusov & Miyazaki sets up `ontological´ learning as the opposite of instrumental learning. This is an issue of “becoming wise”, i.e. transforming the person, and education becomes part of life. The problem-based learning tradition with roots in Dewey’s theories could be an approximation. (For more characteristics, see Matusov & Miyazaki, p. 3.) However, the authors also distinguish between several forms of ‘non-instrumental dialogical approaches’; ‘epistemological´ vs. ‘ontological´ approaches (p. 5). (The distinction is said to correspond to Aristotle’s notion of poiesis vs. praxis.)

These notions could be clarified by reference to Morson & Emerson’s (1990) concepts of different kinds of dialogicality. Following these conceptualisations, RETH (166ff) notes that monologising approaches (such as cramming) exhibits the dialogical properties of responsivity, addressivity and genre-belongingness too. However, more monologising and more dialogising activities differ with regard to a fourth property: mono- vs. multi-perspectivity and imposition vs. non-imposition of response. This kind of dialogism recognises that many asymmetrical situations are indeed rather monologising. In many educational situations, there is hardly any other possibility than accepting the monologising impact by a teacher, a curriculum or established knowledge bases (cramming being an extreme case). This is often functionally or practically motivated, and represents what the (initially) uninitiated or ignorant party wants.

The distinction between instrumental and ontological dialogue is partly reminiscent of scientific vs radical dialogism (see *dialogism, different variants).

**Dialogical "principles": sequentiality, joint construction, act-activity interdependence**

In *Approaching Dialogue* (Linell, 1998: 85-88, 210) I suggested that sequentiality, joint construction and act-activity interdependence could be seen as “dialogical principles”, as three fundamental dimensions of human sense-making. This idea was originally inspired by, among others, Duranti (1991), and was worked out as a theoretical backdrop behind Initiative-Response (IR) analysis (Linell & Gustavsson, 1987).

Sequentiality means that each unit of discourse, at whatever level, is interdependent for its meaning (especially interactional meaning) with its prior and possibly following units. This is not to say that other factors would be unimportant for situated meaning. A comprehensive theory of situated meaning determination would involve the interplay between the meaning potentials of various linguistic and other
Joint construction means that not only the single speaker or writer contributes to the situated meanings of his/her utterances or texts; instead, the author is directly or indirectly influenced by others. Here, direct influence or (inter)dependence refers to the interplay with co-present participants, whereas indirect influence refers to the impact of or orientation to secondary or remote others, “third parties” (RETH, 99). The impact of others, not in the least third parties, is of course massive as regards the use of language and many kinds of everyday or specialized knowledge.

Act-activity interdependency refers to the reflexivity between constituent acts and superordinate (*communicative and practical) projects and activities. The latter influence the interpretation of constituent acts, e.g. single utterances, but the former are also built up from (“consist of”) the latter. Thus, we argue for a (moderate) holism (RETH: 195), ascribing certain gestalt properties to sequences, rather than elementarism (meaning that all larger units are built "bottom-up" from more elementary units).

Sequentiality, joint construction and act-activity interdependence are present and at least potentially relevant in all sense-making, at all “levels”, but they may be brought into focus in different ways and varying extents in different analytic endeavours. Thus, we can perhaps set up the following tentative correlations.4

Sequentiality has often been discussed with regard to elementary contributions to discourse in their local co(n)texts. This holds for CA as well as IR analysis. It could also be applied to speech acts (Trognon & Batt, 2010), although Searle himself hardly focused on this (cf. the notion of ‘inter-act´ in RETH: 179f).

Joint construction as an analytic notion is perhaps preferably recruited in the analysis of texts and text paragraphs, sequences and episodes in talk etc. Often, we are then dealing with the understanding of a topic, the development of a topic, the emergence of an insight (cf. Trognon & Batt, op.cit.).

Act-activity interdependence, finally, seems particularly important in the analysis of a whole encounter as an activity with phases (each consisting of a specific mix of different specific acts and joint constructions). We could also apply the idea to the development of activity types across situations, at longer time scales, within organisations and cultures.

**Dialogism, different variants**

Considering the variation, and the convergences and divergences, among different dialogical theories, it may seem preferable to use the term in the plural (as here: dialogical theories) (RETH, esp. ch. 19). However, for short, the term dialogism is often used.

There are several important differences in the use of the term dialogism. Some “dialogists” seem to have basically dialogue philosophy and Bakhtinian theory in mind. This might be called a “narrow” sense of the term, as opposed to the “ecumenical” sense proposed in RETH. It should be noted that many of the scholars and traditions included in this “ecumenical dialogism” would not call themselves dialogists or dialogical. For example, this applies to cognitive scientists who take intersubjectivity to be a fundamental notion (Zlatev et al., 2008) or to the “distributed language movement” (Cowley, 2011).

Dialogism is a meta-theoretical framework dealing with human sense-making in interactivity and contexts (RETH) (so is eco-semiotic theory; van Lier, 2004: vii, 224). This applies especially to an “ecumenical” conception. The core of dialogism includes minimally a theory that a person’s sense-making is

---

4 I was made aware of such correlations reading a draft of Rajala (2013).
interdependent, at different levels, with (the sense-makings of) other sense-makers. Thus, dialogism is a counter-theory to a radical theory of autonomous individuals as the sole sense-makers. Since the eco-social environment is constantly made sense of interactionally, and with the help of others’ understandings, we can also talk of a “dialogue” between the person and this ecosocial world. However, if we stress the interactivity with the natural and social environment, there is a risk of marginalizing the dialogue with others (immediate others, groups, third parties etc.); this seems to apply to phenomenology (Thompson, 2007), to organism-environment theory in DLT (Cowley et al., 2010), van Lier’s (2004) “ecological-semiotic” theory of language (see below), and even to Donald’s (2001) theory of the co-evolution of “brain (biology) and culture (on these somewhat individualizing tendencies, see Linell, 2013e). At the same time, there might be another kind of risk of individualisation in variants of dialogical self theory, if this focuses only on the individual self (RETH: 112); here it is a question of reducing others to “voices” in the self’s mind. Thus, whether these risk perceptions are well-grounded or not, they serve to reinforce the point above, orientation to others and their sense-makings, as fundamental in dialogism.

Apart from this, one must concede that which features in dialogism are highlighted as central, rather than secondary, depends on which alternative theories are seen as opposites or competitors in the particular argument. Thus, if we take dialogism as opposed to eco-semiotic (van Lier) or phenomenological (Thompson, 2008; see also *enaction) theories, we would stress the role of the other (cf. above). If we make a distinction between core dialogism and ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis, on the one hand, and socio-cultural theory, on the other, we would stress *double dialogicality: we address both situation and tradition (situation-transcendence) (RETH: 51-53).

A rather different distinction would be that between “scientific dialogism” and “radical dialogism” (e.g. Shotter, 2012). The former would be at least partly monologising, especially if seen from the point of departure of the latter. The former seems to have some roots in the enlightenment; it is torn between enlightenment and the respect for the complexity of human cultures; one should be “be clear (analytically) about the complexity (in the data)”. Dialogism, for Shotter (op.cit.: 98), is “a kind of research conducted within specific arenas or spheres of practical activity with the aim of resolving specific confusions, disquiets, bewilderments, perplexities, etc., within them – it is not aimed at results of a general kind.” This kind of “radical dialogism” seems more squarely contained within a romanticist tradition (staying with the full vaguenesses, ambiguities, contextualities, specificities, unique situatednesses, perplexities, etc. of specific situated sense-makings). The distinction between “scientific” and “radical” variants does not only apply to dialogism; as regards ethnomethodology, see Arminen (2008).

“Dialogism” should be seen as an antidote to “monologism”*. While these two are comprehensive meta-theoretical frameworks, there are also others, such as enlightenment vs romanticism (cf. above), which in turn belong to traditions starting at least in ancient Greece with Plato vs Heraclitus, and others. These traditions have usually taken simplicity and clarity (of theories) vs. (preservation of) complexities in the (human) world as basic values. These traditions are universalist, rather than culture-independent; sciences should always be governed by the same norms and assumptions. Non-universalist are those who argue that the human sciences (Geisteswissenschaften; Dilthey) have other objects of study, the world as perceived, apprehended, experienced and operated upon by human beings. DTs (dialogism) define such a culture-interdependent meta-theoretical framework that do not primarily what things in nature are (as natural sciences might want to theorise them), but what things mean to human beings (cf. *meaning-making). Thus, the objects of human studies involve complexities of another kind and degree than objects of nature, and the reduction of these complexities to simplicity and elegance would amount to distorting the facts (RETH: 29). We cannot take for granted that human sense-making follows simple principles. The degree of complexity is an empirical matter rather than something axiomatic. Examples of “simplicity theorists” (many of whom are rationalists) would be Descartes, Galilei, Newton, Frege, Russell, logical empiricists, Chomsky, formal pragmatists etc. Among the “romanticists” we would find Hegel, dialogue philosophy, Bergson, phenomenologists, social pragmatists, etc. There are many more examples, but the classifications typically get dubious when details are being considered (RETH: 387). For example, we
should not assume that all “dialogists” are radical “romanticists”. On radical extensions of dialogism and other theories, see also “posthumanism.

“Radical” dialogism (*pace* e.g. Shotter, 2012) runs the risk of becoming sectarian. But couldn’t “ecumenical” dialogism be seen as all-inclusive, and therefore become very vague, abstract, underdetermined, even vacuous and inapplicable to specific research problems? My answer would, briefly stated, be the following: Dialogism is a meta-theory of human existence and sense-making, rather than a goal-directed theory of a special problem area. Specific problems (say the study of basic principles of conversational interaction, or of autism under specific conditions, of the teaching of mathematics in secondary school, of how to indulge in computer gaming, how to cook a meal together, how different people understand islam, etc.) need much more domain-specific theories and methods. But such theories can be inspired by dialogical (meta-)theories. Furthermore, even with a rather liberal definition of “ecumenical” dialogism, there are many assumptions more or less common to the various traditions considered “dialogical” in RETH, assumptions that are by no means shared by mainstream theories in the humanities and social sciences, such as:

- every individual’s social embedding and interdependence with others; thus against the notion of the autonomous individual;
- the mind as social, extended, distributed, shared, dialogical (interactional-contextual);
- the importance of interactivities and contexts;
- the necessity for understanding both situations and situation-transcending practices (traditions);
- the complexity of human interactions and sense-makings, and the need for (sometimes) preserving this complexity;
- and other points.

van Lier (2004) summarises an ‘ecological and semiotic’ approach to language and language learning in rather broad terms, indeed in ways that are somewhat reminiscent of my ambitions in RETH. There are many similarities between the dialogism of RETH and van Lier’s approach (page references to van Lier under each point below):

- relational theory (rather than one based on objects/entities) (53, 63);
- activity as central (but van Lier’s does not stress interactivity);
- action and perception as a crucial basis for cognition (99); action, perception, affordance, interpretation;
- *complexity (details) (196, 199);
- emergence in (biological and) cultural evolution (198);
- heterogeneities (van Lier talks about “variability”) (19);
- complementarity (198) (against Cartesian dichotomies);
- against linear (cause-effect) theories of *causality (199); language use and language learning cannot be reduced to such causal chains; causal explanation is different from understanding;
- *contexts and contextuality (72); preference for notions like ‘activity space’ (62) and ‘field’ (Lewin, Bourdieu) (203) (cf. *gestalt properties);
• signs in terms of affordances and mediation (63);
• embodiment (72);
• self as socially (dialogically) constructed (107).

However, there are differences in weightings between RETH and van Lier (op.cit.). van Lier has activity, perception and affordance as primary phenomena (63), but not interactivity and others. The terms ‘dialogue’ and ‘phenomenology’ do not appear in the subject index. Yet, there are occasional mentions of ‘dialogical’ (63, 109ff on self), 131). van Lier’s interest in learning seems to have implied more focus on the individual, since learning involves individuals’ abilities to establish relations across situations (although cultures and communities also learn, by establishing cross-cultural relations).

Dialogism and related meta-theories have sometimes been popularised in terms of different "e’s": extended (beyond the individual’s brain) (van Lier, 2004), enactive, embodied, embedded (contextually) (entrenched), ecological (as in ecological-semiotic theory (van Lier) of language/languaging), and emergent (engendered; van Lier, 65). However, some of these notions can also be combined with a fairly individual-based meta-theory. Dialogism therefore needs an explicit expression of other-orientation, as in various inter-prefixes: interactivity, intersubjectivity, interindividuality, interworld.

Dialogue, polysemy of the term

The original core meaning of the term dialogue is arguably ‘exchange of messages between two (or more) (co-present) sense-making organisms (prototypically: persons, human beings) using semiotic resources of some kind(s) (prototypically: language or languaging)’. One might call this the “extensional” or “concrete” sense. The term has then often been metaphorically or metonymically extended to other related phenomena.

However, ‘dialogue’ is sometimes used in a rather different sense, namely, “good” (e.g. equal, symmetric, open, sincere etc.) communication’. In such cases the term is often used for ideological or persuasive purposes. The same applies to the term ‘authenticity’ (Lacoste et al.). This “common sense” meaning of ‘dialogue’ is not suitable for dialogism in science (RETH) (but cf. *morality and ethics.)

Sometimes, ‘dialogue’ is used in more abstract and comprehensive meanings including ‘dialogicality’ or ‘dialogism’. Dialogicality refers to the sense-making ability or potential in persons, who make sense with or in relation to others, or the sense-making aspect of various activities (of persons or other sense-making systems) in perception-action, cognition or communication, in which the individual interacts with the environment or with others.

Dialogism* is a meta-theoretical approach to human sense-making that is based on the assumption that humans possess dialogicality, i.e. abilities to interact with others in trying to accomplish sense-making. (Others use the terms differently, see RETH: chapter 1.)

Oftentimes, scholars assign the attributes of ‘dialogical’ (adjective) or ‘dialogicality’ (abstract noun) to other phenomena than human beings and their situated sense-making activities. Dialogicality is sometimes assigned to texts, and other cognitive artefacts that contain or exhibit traces (signs, inscriptions) of people’s sense-making activities; these artefacts therefore mediate sense-making between people, for example, between a writer and a reader. Another example of a metaphorical use of “dialogical” would be the ascription of “dialogicality” to the human brain (cf. RETH: chapter 17.)

Other extensions pertain to “dialogue” across media, and across space and time. Diatopic relations and diachronic processes may be described in “dialogical” terms (Evensen, 2013).
Such extensions may point to similarities across different semiotic domains. On the other hand, they may lead to excessive polysemy and an attenuation of the concept of dialogue.

**Distributed cognition and holism**

In the context of cognition and understanding, we have to take account of the importance of local organisation, the limitations of consciousness, and sense-making as extending beyond the individual mind. Cognition is distributed and non-localisable. Distribution here means that functions and processes are not contained within one system (individual, organism, brain etc) but involve many, typically the individual’s brain and body, the environment and other sense-makers.

Non-localisability is the basic idea of the “inter-world” as explicated in RETH: ch. 7. It is a category mistake to try to localise cognition exclusively to the (embodied) brain or the outer world (environment). Rather, sense-making is relational. Cf. also Descartes’ notion of mind as res non-extensa, which might be understood (in a somewhat non-Cartesian manner) as a thing not localized as a body is.

Non-localisability is also related to assumptions of holism (Steffensen, op.cit.). Dialogism does not embrace a total holism, but rather a partial or constrained holism (RETH: 195). Unlimited structuralism, by contrast, may be seen as holistic; hyperstructuralism, including some versions of generative linguistics, has assumed that a language is maximally integrated. This is an extreme version of Saussure’s idea that in a language system every item is determined by its relations to all other items.

However, it may be important to distinguish between cognitive activities and cognitive content. The former is brain-centred (although not according to Steffensen, 2009). Compare distinctions between the extended mind (extended outside individual brain) and distributed cognition, and between meaning-making and meaning.

**Double dialogicality**

The term ‘double dialogicality’ seems to be used in at least two different senses. RETH: 51 interprets it in the following way:

- In communication (and cognition), people orient both to what’s going on in the specific situated interaction (occasion) with its specific participants, and to the embedding situation-transcending practices that the situated (occasioned) interactivity relates to (or is expected to relate to) (see also *practice). These last-mentioned practices have their home basis in, for example, a community, culture, communicative genres or communicative activity types. Double dialogicality thus refers to the fact that any interaction is both situated and situation-transcending. One may term this distinction “situation vs. tradition”.

There is, however, a competing interpretation of ‘double dialogicality’:

- The participant (speaker, writer, self, 1. Person, ‘I’) in a given situated interaction may (have to) address both “concrete” co-present others (2. person, ‘you’) and, more indirectly, various generalised others and third parties (secondary (“remote”) others, 3. persons; generalised others: ‘one’ (or generalised ‘you’, ‘people in general’; common sense) ‘we’ (own group) and ‘they’ (out-groups)). These third parties are in general quite abstract in the sense that they are not present in the situation (either not as primary parties or not at all) and are often not linked to (imagined or real) single persons (generalised others). This leads RETH (ch. 5.8) to the extension of the classical “semiotic triad” (‘I-you-it’).
Note, however, that these two distinctions are related. There is a close link between “the specific social situation”, and the “co-present others”, on the one hand, and another link between “the situation-transcending practices” and “generalised others”, on the other.

Let me dwell for a moment on the situation-vs-tradition distinction. The analyst may have difficulties in seeing how participants may orient to situation-transcending practices and abstract communicative genres; in one sense, there seems to be only specific situations, with their participants, artefacts, physical scene, specific time and space, time constraints etc. However, participants must utilise their knowledge of cultures, genres and activities too, as they have experience of them from before. Without this, in a new situation they would have to improvise completely, in which case they could probably not accomplish very much. But with the expectations and norms of genres and activity types behind themselves, they can trust them, and trust self and others to comply with them, at least in the “normal” case, “until further notice”. Accordingly, the notion of (communicative or speech/interaction) genre has been used and developed in literature and media studies, often inspired by Bakhtinian theory. Thus, within the practices of an art, e.g. poetry, drama, painting, architecture etc., one has to start out from traditions; one can then (wittingly or unwittingly) decide to conform more or less totally with the norms and preferences of an established genre (discourse type) or activity type, or one can modify the norms, play with them, oppose them and break norms, use irony and parody, mixed genres etc. All the latter “modifications” will normally acquire communicative meaning, provided that the audience is familiar with the conventions of the existing relevant genre(s). (On this, Bakhtin, 1968.)

Thus, it is clear that artists orient to the preferences and dispreferences of generalised others in cultures and communities. But the same applies of course to the participation in mundane social interactions, where people usually conform to the expectations tied to communicative activity types (how to behave in other people’s homes, in queuing for services, in court trials, doctor consultations, sports games etc.). However, here too, participants can deviate from norms and thus generate reactions from addressees, audiences and observers. Quite often, these reactions involve negative sanctions, from those in power or from the general public (and media). Nonetheless, deviations seem to proliferate in the arts, and in “non-serious” (Goffman) modes of activity like joking and cheating in everyday life. In professional-client interactions, which are “serious” (and often paid for by clients or society), flouting rules and maxims, as in joking, seem less common.

Interesting cases which demonstrate people’s orientation to norms of genres and activity types concern what to do when there seem to be no established norms (institutions) available for the social situation in which the persons involved have ended up in. What they seem to do then is to borrow norms from similar situation types (communicative activity types) that they do have some experience of or some assumptions or knowledge about. Examples are the novel activities developed in the “youth projects” organised for young unemployed people in Sweden and studied by Persson Thunqvist (2003), or the somewhat “experimental” situations with elementary school children teaching each other songs, a partially new kind of musical education (Kullenberg, 2014?).

The notion of situation-transcending practices ties up with the position that semiosis (sense-making) works with different time-scales (RETH: 58; Lemke, 2000; Steffensen et al, 2010: 214ff). There are important phenomena that may be difficult, or even impossible, to analyse only in limited situated sequences (as in CA), because they require a longitudinal perspective. Such phenomena include culture, identity, learning, and trust.

Streeck & Jordan (2009) have theorised time-scales and nested contexts in ways that are linked up with and broaden the concept of double dialogicality. The primary example that these authors bring along is an analysis of the bodily behaviours of two people, an owner/seller and a customer in a shop for used cars, as they walk about on the premises and focus on particular cars and one another. As the authors demonstrate, “the multiscale work of maintaining certain gaze and overall body configurations serves to sustain the immediate interactional context, as well as the larger-scale, culturally embedded context of one
participant as customer and the other as sales person." (Streeck & Jordan, 2009: 454/ italics added/PL). These italicised contexts correspond to my “situated interaction” and “situation-transcending practice”, and these “multiple contexts” are simultaneously present, being related roughly as acts and overall activities (*dialogical principles), or lower-level processes and higher-level processes. Streeck & Jordan work with many levels of systems of processes, from neurons, neural networks and brains via behaviours and thoughts to group interactions, while all constitute “self-sustaining systems of work” (op.cit.: 460), and they are of course all (more or less) embodied.

Dynamics

‘Dynamics’ is a word that turns up pretty often in dialogist accounts. Outsiders often interpret it as a praise-word devoid of rational or empirical content. (‘Dialogue’ runs a similar risk.) However, ‘dynamics’ is used about several factual aspects of cognition and communication as dialogists conceive of them.

Perhaps the most important application of ‘dynamics’ concerns the assignment of meaning to an action or utterance. Whereas monologist theories often think in terms of fixed, stable or static meanings in categories of actions and verbal expressions, dialogical theories assume that situated meanings are always the product of an interplay between linguistic (or other semiotic) resources and situational or contextual factors (resources, conditions). Meanings are dynamically assigned in potential dependence on situated factors, which vary without limit. As a consequence, gestures or words and constructions in language do not have meanings that are completely fixed in advance. Instead, these resources have specific non-arbitrary (and non-random) potentials to contribute to situated meanings in interdependence with the situational factors. Thus, situation-transcendent aspects, such as linguistic *meaning potentials, must also be construed in dynamic terms. Accordingly, “dynamics” refers to meanings actively composed, situated, and temporally distributed. Rommetveit (1974) talks about “partial and temporarily shared social reality” (TSSR) in communicative activities (RETH: 97).

A related dynamics holds between *analysts’ and participants’ categories. In addition, there are numerous interdependencies between major concepts in the meta-theory, such as biology – culture, discourse – contexts, cognition – communication, remembering – forgetting, etc., that must be seen as dynamic, rather than as Cartesian dichotomies, as in most monologist theorisations (RETH, ch. 19). In general, ‘dynamics’ refers to the adaptivity and sensitivity of phenomena of language and semiosis to various sociocultural, contextual and environmental conditions, which themselves fluctuate and vary (partly with the discursive actions). The assumptions of dynamic interdependences and emergences over time, instead of static links between phenomena like discourses, contexts and meanings, are what is at stake.

Enaction

The “enactive approach” is laid out by Thompson (2007) as a continuation of Varela, Thompson & Rosch, (1991). It builds upon biology (Varela etc.) and phenomenology (*Merleau-Ponty) as sources of inspiration. Thompson (op.cit.: 13) formulates five constitutive “ideas”:

1. “living beings are autonomous agents that actively generate and maintain themselves, and thereby enact or bring forth their own cognitive domains”
2. “the nervous system is an autonomous dynamic system”
3. “cognition is the exercise of skillful know-how in situated and embodied action. Cognitive structures and processes emerge from recurrent sensorimotor patterns of perception and action”
4. “a cognitive being’s world is not a prespecified, external realm, represented internally by its brain, but a relational domain enacted or brought forth by that being’s autonomous agency and mode of coupling with the environment”

5. “experience is not an epiphenomenal side issue, but central to any understanding of the mind”

This approach shares many features of an extended (ecumenical) dialogism, such as assumptions of the dynamics of life, the importance of action/activities/agency, the organism-environment interdependencies, the close relation between perception and action, the general relationism of sense-making, and the centrality of experience. Nevertheless, it lacks a (or the) central assumption of dialogism, namely, the crucial role of other sense-makers. Indeed, the enactive approach, like a lot of biosemiotics (Cowley et al., 2010) focuses on the single individual/organism in its interdependencies with the environment (Linell, 2012a). Cf. *dialogism, *self-organisation, *semiotics.

Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis

Ethnomethodology (EM) was created and developed by Garfinkel (1967, 2002, and other sources). A cooperation between Harold Garfinkel and Harvey Sacks gave rise to a particular development, ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis (CA) (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970; Sacks et al., 1974; Sacks, 1992). CA was thereafter developed primarily by Emanuel (“Manny”) Schegloff, largely into a very data-oriented method of analyzing verbal interaction, first in “ordinary conversations” and later in many other exchange systems, notably within “institutional talk” (Drew & Heritage, 1992), especially professional-client interactions of different sorts. The dominant mainstream (“orthodox”) kind of CA focused on sequential analysis of primarily short sequences (extracts) from talk-in-interaction. The rather narrow focus on details in verbal interaction distanced this kind of CA from EM origins, and some of its practitioners have consequently dropped the attribute “ethnomethodological”. From the 1980’s onwards, several of the traditions originating in Garfinkel’s EM diverged from the origin and each other. Thus, on the one hand we have Cicourel’s (e.g. 1981, 1992) discourse studies which looked at interaction within its various contexts, and on the other hand mainstream CA that developed into a rigorous method of analyzing verbal interaction with a rather “endogenous” notion of context (only context made manifest in the overt interaction itself). At the same time, proponents of Garfinkelian EM sometimes focused on philosophical aspects of human sense-making (especially the Manchester group with Watson, Sharrock, and others). In recent years, a new generation of EM researchers have moved into empirical analyses of (primarily) workplace studies and interactivities involving professionals, which has resulted in a new convergence with CA. Yet, there are also divergent trends, some researchers being closer to CA and others trying to create a new empirical EM.

It is impossible to account here for all the similarities or differences that may exist between (various applications of) CA and EM. Nonetheless, I shall sketch some of these, at the risk of simplifying matters considerably. The background is partly that of characterizing the two, along with several other kinds of (largely) empirical approaches to human sense-making, as belonging, more or less, to the kind of “ecumenical” meta-theoretical framework of DT sketched in RETH.

The first point is obviously that both EM and CA look upon communication, as well as cognition and apprehension of the world, that is, sense-making in general, as based on action and especially interaction and interactivities. This implies a counter-theory to the individualist theories that have dominated many disciplines in the human and social sciences, including linguistics, psychology and sociology. This places EM/CA squarely within *dialogism/DTs. Secondly, EM and CA focus on how sense is made in situ and often in real time, that is in concrete situations (or situation types). They do not primarily focus on more abstract or comprehensive levels, as is often done in sociocultural studies (which are also largely
dialogical, according to RETH). However, EM and CA also exhibit significant mutual differences, at least to some degree. Some of these will be highlighted here.

As a coarse-grained characterisation we can say that EM is considerably more oriented to theory, whereas CA (of the orthodox type) is relatively hostile to theorising and stands out as quite descriptive. This is not to say that CA lacks a theoretical foundation, but the theory is often largely implicit, at least in particular studies, and in effect limited to aspects of verbal interaction. This delimitation is – for CA – primarily methodologically motivated (only that which is clearly manifest can be rigorously and scientifically studied), but methodology easily spills over into ontological assumptions (*ontologisation of method). Within these confines, there are hardly any convincing methods competing with CA, as regards the detailed descriptive vocabulary of verbal interaction and the rigour of the method deployed. Therefore, nobody seriously interested in the empirically accessible realities of human interactivity can afford to disregard CA.

Another point regarding methodology might be that EM works with more varied data, and therefore also might need a more varied repertoire of methods. Among CA theorists, there has often been a reluctance to combine CA with any other methods5, with the possible exception of ethnography. There seem to be a relatively clear difference between CA proper and its practitioners, and researchers who use CA-inspired methods while at the same time embracing some other methods and theories. DT in general would be positive to the use of multiple *methods.

All in all, however, in my opinion CA must be seen as an application of a somewhat delimited version of dialogism (RETH). CA’s somewhat myopic concentration on short sequences have often resulted in a neglect of the overarching communicative activity types (and, indeed, smaller *communicative projects too) in which these sequences are embedded (see (d) below).

On these points, EM is different, at least in degree, from CA. EM is a radical theory within sociology (but see Arminen, 20xx, on radical vs scientistic ethnomethodology, cf. *radical dialogism). Garfinkel (2002) distances himself very much from “formal theory”. Forms of CA, reaching from Schegloff (sceptical to quantification) all the way to Heritage’s partly quantitative attempts, surely fall under Garfinkel’s concept of formal theory.

But there are several other (often mutually related) differences between CA and EM. Here is a candidate list:

(a) For Garfinkel and EM, talk is indexical to understandings. What is explicitly expressed in interaction, and especially linguistic interaction, is more or less “incomplete” and “allusive”, in relation to what is usually meant by parties to communication. According to Garfinkel, talk and other aspects of (material) aspects of situations must be interpreted, by both participants and analysts, by means of a ‘documentary’ method (with a concept borrowed from Mannheim). The observable aspects must be treated as “documents of” something more, “pointing to” or “standing on behalf” “presumed underlying pattern[s]” (Garfinkel, 1967: 76-103; Heritage, 1984: 84-97). Such patterns may consist in routines entertained and theories held by community members, for example, by professionals in an organisation. CA, by contrast, claims that participants’ understandings are observable for others, visible or hearable in local sequences (and if filmed, available for analysts); thus, meanings – at least to the extent that they can be analysed – are accountable and reportable. This seems to amount to a neglect of the documentary method of interpretation. At the same time, the attitudes may reflect a traditional difference of data studies in CA and EM; CA, especially in Schegloff’s variant, focuses on “ordinary conversation”, in which

analysts as native speakers usually have extensive and sufficient competence, whereas EM often use data from specialised work-places and professional organisations.

(b) In professional organisations people may use a good deal of technical concepts, and there are "good organisational reasons" (Garfinkel) for not spelling them out in routine interaction. (In situations with novices present, more knowledge may be spelled out, e.g. in instructions etc. (Lindwall, Koschmann, etc.).

Professionals’ talk often appears to outsiders as fragmented and only partially understandable; analysts can not completely see what insiders understand. Other problems concerned so-called messages with entirely different meanings than what can be inferred from their verbal composition, e.g. Örnen har landat, literally 'The eagle has landed' meaning 'plan X should be initiated'.

Thus, analysts are often handicapped in comparison with (acculturated) participants; they cannot get at members’ understandings since it is not made observable. This reflects the perspective of EM. In my view, it makes CA’s ambition of accounting for “members’ (or “participants’) perspective” partly vacuous. If analysts base their interpretations only on what is made manifest in interactions, they cannot account for all the sense-making. Or rather, their (the analysts’) sense-making is another (secondary) framing of the participants’ first-hand sense-making (RETH: 29).

Everything that – according to CA – is assumed to have an impact on meaning-making has to be made manifest in overt interaction, albeit not necessarily in only verbal interaction. This is a characteristically methodological, rather than an ontological, assumption. Yet, it becomes in itself highly problematic for the theory, if – in practice – all sense-making is assumed to be public. It amounts to ignoring the role of silent thinking due to the argument that it cannot be systematically observed and studied. The neglect of inner reactions and auto-dialogue even implies a risk of simplifying the nature of the sense-maker, the subject who relates – silently – to other ‘voices’ than those made public in the interaction (e.g. the influence of third parties).

CA may have difficulties in distinguishing between genuine or faked (feigned) forms of understanding or trust. Thus, CA would probably not acknowledge any analytic value to such a distinction. But participants oftentimes experience a distinction between, for example, genuine trust and simulated trust (cf. EM accounts of trust in Garfinkel, 19xx, and Watson, 200x).

(c) A closely related point concerns the understanding of relevant contexts. Both CA and EM stress that discourse/interaction and contexts are strongly connected and dynamically intertwined. But the CA perspectives would, in theory, only refer to contexts that are made manifest in actual interactions; analysts’ talk about other contextual aspects as being relevant would amount to speculation. EM, by contrast, has a concept of ‘gestalt contexture’, which (I believe) must incorporate also “underlying patterns” that are not made fully manifest, at least not in limited sequences. These patterns are constituted in long-term perspectives; participants get the “hang” of them only after (a more or less long) time (Wieder, 1974). They may either be slowly dawning on participants, although the self-same participants may retrospectively have a feeling of sudden insights, often involving perspective shifts.

CA is based on elementarism (RETH: 184ff). It seems to strongly prefer ‘upward causality’ (see *causality); e.g. in overrating the role of adjacency pairs (Schegloff, 2007). Adjacency pairs are just one type of sequential relation between actions (utterance acts). The basic phenomenon is not this sequence of elementary acts, but the dialogical relations between prior (“first-positioned”) actions and possibly ensuing (“second-positioned”) actions. The same utterances can be second-positioned (or third-positioned), that is, locally responsive, to prior actions, and first-
positioned, i.e. locally *initiatory*, with respect to possibly following actions. Similar relational links may exist between larger "units" (or *communicative projects*), such as topical episodes.

CA shuns holism, even a relatively moderate form of partial holism. The concept of adjacency pair (Schegloff, op.cit.) exhibits a tension between a minimal relationism (utterances can be first- and second-positioned only with respect to one another) and elementarism (the pair is built on two elementary contributions). The strong role of sequences may also be related to this. However, there seem to be openings in more recent CA, in Schegloff, (2007:ch. 13) and later, in which a recognition of larger units, like "projects" and such like, seems at least latent.

Sequentiality is perhaps exaggerated at the expense of other insights in mainstream CA. There is a certain tinge of behaviourism in this. But as hinted at above, there are different interpretations of CA: (a) (= behaviourist interpretation) utterances are taken as "proximate causes" of following utterances, as in a stimulus-response chain (cf. Steffensen & Hodges, forthc.), (b) (= dialogical interpretation) utterances taken as phenomena that require interpretation (must be made sense of) by active interpreting work (ibid., p. 8). I would lean against the latter.

Meaning-making according to CA seems to focus on the interactional meanings of conversational contributions, rather than on content in discourse. This has to do with the fact that CA, despite its focus on languaging*, is expression- rather than meaning-based.

(d) CA largely misses out on the nature of activities, including communicative activity types (CATs) in e.g. professional practices, despite important work such as Drew & Heritage (1992) with its emphasis on "overall structural organisation". As argued in Linell (2011), CA tends to treat (communicative) activity types as pre-theoretical notions. In Linell (2011) (also RETH: 201ff), I develop 'communicative activity type' (CAT) as a kind of extended CA. CAT theory aims at capturing the 'raison d'être'/deep characteristics/focal themes (Roberts & Sarangi, 2005) etc. in specific CATs, e.g. in police interrogations, genetic counselling, multiprofessional team talk, etc. This implies a partial holism. Without seriously considering the overall CAT, one runs the risk of radically and unduly reducing the complexity of what is activity- and organisation-wise something quite complex; for example, surgical theatre talk can then be broken down into only local sequences that could have occurred almost anywhere.

(e) Both CA and EM (especially in recent years) build upon *recordings* of real interactions. In practice, video recordings are preferred wherever possible. But some CA practitioners use video recordings primarily to assist the deciphering of talk (verbal interaction). Thus, a proper video analysis, in which all (possibly) significant visible behaviours are taken into consideration, is more typical of EM. Thus, EM might be more geared towards multi-modal analysis of recorded interaction.

A possible overall conclusion is that EM is more generally in line with DT than CA is. But then one must acknowledge that theories (EM and DT) need empirical substantiations, and CA can often provide the suitable methods of analysing interaction. (See again radical vs. empirical *dialogism.)*

See also Gillespie & Cornish (2009).

**Extended cognition (and extended mind)**

Many theories argue for a conception of cognition as extending beyond the individual embodied brain, mind or human organism. These dialogist theories argue that thinking and interpersonal interaction are much closer to each other than according to monological theories; they are often tightly interwoven. In this perspective, thinking is an “individualised form of interpersonal communication” (Sfard, xxi). Since
thinking and communication would then be aspects of the same activities, Sfard coined the term ‘commognition’ (references in Sfard).

Yet, the idea of an “extended mind” raises a number of problems. According to Steffensen (2009), there seem to be two major versions of the extended mind theory:

(i) the brain-centred theory, in which the individual brain remains the centre of thinking. Steffensen (2009, in his review of A. Clark, 2008, *Supersizing the Mind*) criticises this rather strongly.

(ii) Steffensen’s organism-environment system (OES) theory (also Järvilehto, Cowley (?) and others; cf. Cowley et al., 2010; Cowley 2011), in which the organism or the embodied (individual) brain is only part of a larger system.

However, Steffensen’s objections seem to face a problem. There would be no sense-making without the sense-making organism. An “environment in itself” (if we are allowed to hold on to this term) is necessary but not sufficient for sense-making. In addition, a person can think of things (originally encountered in the outer world) in the absence of the objects in the situation of thinking (see *Inter-world*). Thus, there is an asymmetry in the organism/environment system, with regard specifically to sense-making (cf. the asymmetry between inside and outside proposed by Barandiaran, according to Thompson, 2007: 79). Two other issues seem to be involved in resolving this problem:

(a) Steffensen’s organism-environment system (OES) seems to downplay the role of human beings with agency, possibly putting them at the same level as other parts of the system, parts of the environment. (However, we must recognise Steffensen’s partial support of dialogism.) Most dialogical theories (including Bakhtin) would insist on a distinction between others (with minds) and cognitive artefacts (e.g. books). This seems to be blurred in OES theory (Linell, 2012).

The extended mind theory in a dialogist version would assign a particular importance to the individual (mind)’s interaction with others, in direct interaction with specific others, and in indirect interaction, via (traces in one’s mind of) previous interactions with many others (even generalised others) (*dialogical diamond*).

(b) The distinction between (mental) process(ing) and its content (directedness, intentionality, reference, meaning, which all concern the conceptualisation of the world in language and languaging). In my view, the processing takes place in the organism (although the organism usually makes use of situations extending beyond the boundaries of brains and bodies), but the meanings can not be similarly localised; they exist in the relations between sense-maker and environment. (See also below on **“Inter-world” and “Thinking: Processes and content”**).

In one sense, the mind is “extended”: if we take “the mind” to be a person’s sense-making ability (which has dialogicality, RETH: 12), it makes use of brains, bodies and the world (including other people’s sense-makings, languages and language, etc.), and is therefore “extended” beyond the skin. However, only organisms possess the hardware to perform the processing. In the latter sense, the mind is not extended.

**Face-to-face interaction**

Interaction between co-present participants in a shared situation is often loosely described as ‘face-to-face’. But in many (most?) cases conversations are not literally face-to-face. Verbal exchanges by means of vocal (acoustic) signals (speech) are often accompanied by face-to-face visual contact, but need not be so, at least not all the time. It can be side-by-side instead (van Lier, 2004: 73), or in another kind of ‘F formation’ (RETH, 159). Vocal communication can take place in the dark, or when parties cannot see each other, because of physical obstacles in between them. It can take place, when one (or several)
participant(s) are simultaneously occupied by an unrelated practical task that calls for their attention elsewhere. In addition, during utterance production, especially production of long turns, speakers regularly shift between gaze contact and avoidance of gaze contact.

Face-to-face contact (mutual gaze) is true more for mutual visual communication, by visual demonstration or gestures (e.g. between deaf participants). Visual demonstrations are not always face-to-face either, since the person who demonstrates an object or an action often needs to focus her attention on the things demonstrated rather than looking in the listener’s eyes. In infant-carer communication, mutual gaze is also a frequently used resource.

**Feedback**

The notion of feedback (Sw. återkoppling) refers to the recipient’s manifest uptake of a message (text, utterance) seen from the sender’s point-of-view. The sender may be the author of a text or article, or web message, or a lecturer, a politician giving a speech, or simply the speaker (enunciator) of an utterance. The term is thus sometimes used about the uptake of a lengthy communication.

But “feedback” can also be used about how a single contribution to, or turn in, a conversation is (immediately) taken up or spontaneously understood by a recipient who signals his/her attention, immediate (preliminary) understanding or possibly agreement or alignment during or directly after that contribution or turn. This is quite different from delayed extensive feedback (cf. previous paragraph). In conversations (the latter case), other terms than “feedback” are often used: ‘continuers’, ‘listener support items’ or ‘backchannelings’ (there are more terms), i.e. minimal uptake tokens with little or no contribution of content to the discourse by the feedback giver (recipient) and no request to take over the turn from the speaker (the current turn holder).

The use of the term feedback may in fact reflect a monologist inclination on the part of the analyst. The concept presupposes a unidirectional transfer of messages from A to B, as feedback is information going back in the other direction, from B to A, regarded as support for A’s message-building. The model is that of a ‘from-to’ rather than an ‘inter’ process.

**Form in language and formalism and formalisation in linguistics**

Formalism in linguistics builds on the assumption that a language is a well-defined system of symbol strings defined by formal (mathematical) rules.

Linguistics has almost always given priority to form. Ever since Aristotle, notions of ‘form’ has had many interpretations, including formative functions or purposes. However, within mainstream language theory, the emphasis has been on the material side, on the expressions, that is, the conventionalised forms that decide which (“codified”) linguistic meanings there are in language (semantics). However, particularly in structuralist linguistics, expressions have often been thought of as very abstract; for example, phonology (the linguistic theory of sound systems) has often been far removed from phonetic realities.

If a language is assumed to be an abstract formal system, it seems logical to demand from linguistic theory that it indulge in formalisation of language (universal patterns as well as language-specific structures). Formalisation has indeed a major goal, a sine qua non, in many modern theories of language. Usually, theorists then assume that formalisation is simply providing an adequate (valid) representation of (the true nature of) the language system. However, studying the processes of real situated languaging*, it is hard to see any formal entities as the underlying structures of actions and interactivities. Instead, the
formal approach is part of monologism* as applied to language (RETH: ch. 3). As such, it is strongly biased towards certain forms or genres of written language (Linell, 2005).

Few theories in linguistics have put expressions and meanings on a par (although, Hjelmslev (1953/1943) tried). If meanings (units of content) are treated in terms of a formal(ised) language system, it means that one ignores meanings and content that have no, or cannot be given, any linguistic expression. (And there are such aspects of content (concepts in perceptual domains; colours, smells, tastes etc.).

"Form" in linguistics also relates to the notion of "internal grammar". There are two (related) interpretations of this term: (1) the inherent general patterns (structures) of language (a position which in a suitable form could be compatible with a theory of languaging*); (2) the "grammar" which is supposedly represented in the head/brain of the language user (a formal theory which is very seldom made part of any theories of languaging, if these are thought to deal only with utterances*).

The above remarks on formalisation of language are not meant to imply a rejection of formalisation as a method. It may well be a fruitful discovery method for linguistic structures, and may serve to define some aspects more exactly. In addition, formalisation is of course necessary in computational linguistics, which is a successful and necessary part of the language sciences. However, formalisation is not a method of merely representing what is already "out there" in languaging. Rather, it is a method of transforming language into something quite different, a formal system of symbols (Linell, 2006).

Gestalt properties

Many psychological theories (not to speak of physical theories) are based on some kind of elementarism, that is, the idea that all complex units and processes are built, perhaps in multiply hierarchical tiers, out of elementary units and processes. Examples are behaviourism and many theories of mental processes (Kurzweil, 2012; as for memories, cf. Donald, 2001) in psychology, and aspects of Conversation Analysis in micro-sociology (RETH: § 9.4). By contrast, dialogical theories posit a partial holism (RETH: 195), that is, it is assumed that communicative projects* have certain gestalt properties. This applies to projects at several levels. However, there does not seem to be any fully comprehensive holism; projects are planned and remembered only selectively and fragmentarily. Donald (2001) assumes the existence of an ‘intermediate-term governance (or awareness)’ (as regards memory, not just short-term and long-term). Compare also ‘cognitive events’ in DLT (Cowley et al., 2010). So-called optical illusions (Necker, Kanizsa, Müller-Lyer etc; e.g. Nørretranders, 1993: 244ff.) also presuppose some gestalt principles operating in visual perception. And so on.

I – me (Mead)

G. H. Mead suggested a theory of the self based on the concepts of ‘I’ (Sw. jag, subjektsjag) and ‘me’ (Sw. mig, objektsjag) (RETH: 109, 122). This is one out of several variants of theories of a structured self, a dialogical self or a (partially) split self. In Mead’s terms, me is the result of interpretations of others’ conduct towards me/(my) self. It creates my apperception of myself, based on my (largely internal) responses to others’ perceptions, cognitions and evaluations. Me presupposes the internalisation of you and, above all, generalised others (cf. *dialogical diamond).

I is the origin of active thoughts, interventions in the world, the expression of self’s agency. As such, I operates on me.

The dimensions of I and me are related to the concepts of initiative and response (RETH: 179).
**Individualism**

“The notion of a person (or individual/PL) as a substance (i.e. a body/PL) stresses autonomy and independence rather than interdependence and relatedness.” (Dinis, 2010: 76) Dinis emphasises that Western culture has fostered individualism, and “created big cities and the anonymity, separability and individuality of social life” (ibid.: 76). Dinis points out that individualism has been boosted by ideologies of autonomy and independence (cf. liberalism, capitalism): “Individuals tend to see themselves, not as interdependent beings in relation, but as independent ‘substances’.” Another source of reinforcement is “neuroscientific models where brains determine human thoughts and actions” (ibid.: 77). However, contrary to Dinis’s claims (which are hardly unmotivated), one must point out that the term ‘person’ is commonly thought to denote a social being, rather than a “substance” or an individual body.

The priority given to the autonomous individual in monologism comes with an assumption of an objective physical and social environment, including a supraindividual structural system of language. The individual subject is assumed to receive input from the environment, and create, or “internalise” representations of the environmental realities, including the language system. Accordingly, notions like internalisation and representation are linked to individualism. “Representationalist epistemology, as noted by Ihde [e.g. 1993/PL], has the problem of needing some kind of guarantee of external reality, and this “external reality” is often seen as “nature.”” (Hasse, 2008: 15). (Dialogism might need some notions of both kinds, but kinds of “looser” counterparts. On dynamic “representations”, see *Representation below.)

Another notion which occurs together with the individual is the notion of the homogeneous speech community or interpretive community (Piippo, 2012). Individuals are assumed to belong to such communities. Cf. for example Chomsky’s (1965: 3) (in)famous definition of the idealized individual’s ‘competence’ as dependent on a “completely homogeneous speech community”. Searle (e.g. 2009) has developed a more realistic theory of “collective intentionality”. However, this too builds on individualism (*Searle’s theories).

Dialogism would argue that many of the above-mentioned notions should not be construed as either subjective or objective (existing “out there”), but as relational between sense-maker and environment (see *Interworld). Most DTs do not deny the existence of the “outer world”, but claim that external entities are to be conceived of as sets of affordances that are realised in the sense-maker’s perceptual or cognitive acts of making sense of them. In these activities, individual sense-makers are interdependent with other sense-makers (individuals or groups). McCloskey (1994) provides some pertinent formulations:

“The Objective is supposed to be what’s really there; the Subjective is supposed to be what’s in our minds. Unhappily, both are unknowable or, what amounts to the same thing for practical purposes, untellable. What we can know is what one might call the Conjective, which is to say, what we know together, by virtue of social discourse, scientific argument, shared language; even, if you wish, by virtue of the social relations of production.” (p. 347 / italics original).

“Amitai Etzioni has a nice image here (Etzioni 1988.) He says that methodological individualism is like studying a school of fish by taking one fish out of the school and watching what he does in a fish bowl by himself.” (p. 352; reference to Etzioni, 1988; no page ref.)

**Intentions and intentionality**

In most philosophy, ‘intentionality’ has come to mean directedness or aboutness (Searle, 2009: 25-26). For example, assertions, requests, declarations (in fact, all communicative acts) are directed towards something in the world. They involve a (mental) intentional state, consisting of the type of state and its propositional content (ibid.: 27). This applies to emotions too, with the possible exception of diffuse emotional states, such as a general feeling of stress, anguish or fear. Intentionality is tied to individuals,
but can also be collective (see *Searle’s theories). Intentionality of this kind must be clearly distinguished from intentions (cf. German Absicht), which is just one kind of intentional state (ibid.: 25). Searle writes about prior intention and intention-in-action, which are different in several ways (33).

Let us focus on intentions (of both the above-mentioned kinds): Is intention a mental state? Is it a dialogical notion? There are several aspects of a dialogical notion of intention:

- Intentions are related to *agency* and *meaning*: according to this idea, what I mean is what I intend.

- Intention means *direction*: the action is directed/oriented towards achieving something in the world. It is part of meaningful action, rather than something that exists before the action (although planning stages do occur, cf. below). We have ‘intention-in-action’ in Searle’s terminology.

- In accordance with the first points: intentions are not entirely prior to the action. *Responding* also plays a part in communicative projects. Utterances are inspired by and respond to prior actions, these actions evoking incipient actions, with their aspects of intentionality, in the responder. A similar principle holds for the “internal” progression of a speaker’s utterance, which is usually *incrementally* produced; what has already been said projects or anticipates more to come, and new parts thereby develop their progressing intentionality (Auer, 2009; Linell, 2013b). The speaker’s utterance may also invite other participants’ contributions to interaction; others’ actions evoke new actions and intentions in a collective, rather than individual, process. Bearing such questions in mind, it seems better to regard intentionality as a property of the entire action, subject to development in and through the course of action (cf. Searle’s ‘intention-in-action’). This corresponds to the view advocated in most dialogist accounts (RETH: 239f).

- Is intention mental, or must it also be *on display*, i.e. be part of behaviour and action (an integrated part of action: meaning)? Are there unconscious intentions too? We just noted that the content of intentionality progresses in the course of the communicative project. But this does not exclude that agents may entertain (even explicit) intentions that are never put into action. However, such thoughts can not be substantiated by interaction analysis.

- The notion of ‘prior intention’ behind actions like verbal utterances (see above) is linked to the idea of utterance planning (e.g. Levelt, 1989). It cannot be denied that speakers must have local plans for their incipient utterances (or utterance parts), but these aspects of planning are best accounted for in terms of responding and projection/anticipation (Linell, 2013b).

- *Intention* seems to presuppose *attention*. Figuring out what to do and say about something involves attending to this something; attention – intention is therefore related to subject – predication in utterances. Here attention precedes intention, but intention is still subject to later modification (see above), and verbalisation may also retroactively modify one’s attentional focus (apperception).

- Intentional behavior can be observed by a second or third person; intentions are not wholly inside the agent/1. person. This argument goes against *Theory of Mind, the idea that intentions are entirely private and can only be inferred, not at all observed, by others. Thus, interaction and participation are more basic than intention. Searle puts these relations upside down (Sinha & Rodriguez, 2008: 362-3).
One of the basic meanings of ‘dialogue’ is the external, denotative sense: interaction between two or more persons (or a person and a system, such as a computer) who are mutually co-present in a situation in real time. However, this is not the main sense of dialogue in dialogical theories. Nor is ‘interaction’ to be understood in a sense merely corresponding to external dialogue.

Mainstream psychology tends to entertain an “external” (Marková’s, 2003, term; cf. “exogenous”) conception of interactions, according to which individuals are there first, and then they start to interact. DTs, on the other hand, assume that individuals, or rather persons, are emergent products of people’s interaction; dialogue or interactivity are primary, and interaction “intrinsic” (“endogenous”) to human existence (Linell, 2013e). Theorists of distributed cognition similarly point to such distinct concepts of interaction at different levels or of different orders (Slife’s weak and strong forms of relationality, according to Dinis, 2010: 94). Some prefer to call internal/intrinsic interaction ‘intra-action’. (The prefix ‘inter-’ is taken to be associated with “external” interaction between preexisting entities.) Another concept close to “intrinsic”/“endogenous” is “emic” analysis, which takes its point of departure “from within the system”, often seen as the “participants’ (members’) perspective”. The “externalist” point of view would then be the “etic” one. (The terms “emic” and “etic” are derived from Pike’s (1952) distinction between phonemics and phonetics; cf. listening to utterances knowing the language (usually resulting in deciphering the utterances) vs. not knowing it (leading to hearing utterances as gibberish).)

Yet, socio-dialogue, a.k.a. interaction, in the above intrinsic sense is basic to dialogue. Interactivity is the driving force in the development of dialogicality (Linell, 2013e); it is the basic phenomenon in the human world, when it comes to developing sense-making abilities. Outer interaction comes before inner dialogue (Vygotsky), and interaction comes before language. Levinson (2006) speaks of the basic “interaction engine” in human sociality (implying that the “engine” provides power or energy). Linell (1990) spoke about the “dynamics of dialogue” in referring to (basically) the same phenomenon. Being within an interaction is different from perceiving the world or looking at the interaction from the outside. Social (interpersonal) interaction is therefore a root metaphor for DTs (RETH: 27).

Levinson explains that sense-making interaction is cooperative in a basic sense. (This comes before Machiavellian interaction both logically and empirically.) Interpretation from within the interaction involves the ability to simulate the other’s point-of-view and imagine what the other thinks that your point-of-view is. Once you are within the interaction, you are caught in a response-initiative interplay, and it takes some effort to escape from this. This is different from interpretation of action/behavior simpliciter.

But there are many more nuances. Those who are not (fully) copresent and participating in interaction can take (partially) the participants’ perspective, for example in CA, which involves imagining as-if one takes part inside the interaction. This is combined with the stance of an observing-and-interpreting distanced observer.

Another concept/term which has recently become popular is ‘intercorporeality’ (e.g. Csordas, 2008), the idea that interactions always take place between bodies and bodily systems (cf. embodiment, embodied mind, embodied cognition). There are no entities that are purely symbolic or immaterial; they have to be bodily at bottom. These ideas may be traced back to Merleau-Ponty (1964).

On interaction and interactivities*, especially in relation to intersubjectivity* and subjectivity, see Linell (2014).

Internal dialogue

According to RETH: section 6.7, there are two major types of a person’s internal dialogue: auto-dialogue in solo thinking and internal dialogue accompanying external dialogue. The latter is either interspersed between spurts of external dialogue, or simultaneous with listening to other’s talk.
Cornejo (2012) points out that when conducting an internal dialogue while listening to others we take a (potentially) critical attitude to the other, questioning the other’s content rather than only taking it in and affiliating with it. This critical attitude entails retreating to a distanced position; we become observers rather than remaining dedicated partners. Otherwise, the critical attitude is easier to adopt if we just listen to somebody other (who is perhaps talking with another person than ourselves); thus, in part we take a third party’s position. By contrast, while we are engaged in dyadic communication with the other, that distanced thinking implies preparing for an overt response. Cornejo relates this critical observer’s attitude to (incipient or real) doubt or mistrust, as opposed to the “genuine” trust (“trust and distrust”) when we fully take in the other’s perspective. Cornejo raises the question if this critical internal dialogue is dialoguing with another version of the other.

**Intersubjectivity**

Intersubjectivity takes many forms. Trevarthen (RETH: 258) distinguishes between at least three: primary (immediate, direct, unreflected, authentic, "genuine") intersubjectivity between, first of all, infant and carer, secondary intersubjectivity (shared attention to a third phenomenon intervening: the `object´), and tertiary intersubjectivity (the “split” attention, with a "sideward glance" to third parties, remote others). The third (tertiary) level (largely also Bråten’s notion) is complex with many dimensions; “higher” (nth, rather than third, level) is perhaps a better, more comprehensive term (provided that “higher” need (must) not be taken to mean “better than first/second”). Intersubjectivity in communicative projects (episodes) or cognitive events (Cowley et al., 2010) also involves internal dialogue.

Different forms of intersubjectivity can be linked to different stages of development (ontogenetic, socio-historical, micro-interactional). In early infant-carer interaction, there is (in certain moments of mutual contact, in particular through mutual gaze) immediate, embodied, felt contact, sometimes unmediated by language, when parties (especially the infant) are unaware of the surround, embedded in a cocoon comprising only the two. Primary intersubjectivity is usually considered to be more “authentic”, yet it is culturally penetrated too.

Such “authentic intersubjectivity” can be accessed also later in life. Also adults can in exceptional cases establish dyadic high-intensity embodied contact. Hodges (2011: 152) (in Cowley, 2011) refers to exceptional instances of conversational contact involving 'flow' or 'lostness' ("lost in the moment"): “a fabulous conversation over a great meal with friends illustrates such unselfconscious closure. Even the burden of time seems absent. The experience is like “a taste of heaven”. Another case might be certain erotic situations, with lovers being blind to the outside world. Or two dancers or several people in musicking totally engrossed in their activities. (See also mutual gaze*). Authenticity is a multi-aspectual notion, not easy to pin down (Lacoste et al., 2013).

van Lier (2004: 61 et passim) reminds us of Charles S. Peirce’s notions of firstness, secondness and thirdness. These are not the same as Trevarthen’s levels of intersubjectivity, although there might be some connections. Rather, Peirce is interested in the individual’s relation to a thing in the environment: firstness means perceiving the thing as such, secondness the individual’s reaction or conceptualization of the thing, and thirdness involves his/her representation of it, its mediation and symbolism. Thus, this tends to be about the single individual’s (“subject’s”) relation to the external world, rather than his/her interrelations with other sense-makers. Despite van Lier’s claims to the contrary, Peirce does not come forth as particularly “dialogical” in spirit (cf. *dialogism).

Returning to the example of infant-carer interaction and Trevarthen’s forms of intersubjectivity, they indicate that interactivity is more basic than, and comes before, intersubjectivity (cf. similar formulations such as “dialogue is more basic than understanding, but dynamics is more basic than dialogue”, “participation is more basic than knowledge” etc). Individuals are not there (in any strict sense) before
interaction; they are constituted, in important respects, in and through interaction. Intersubjectivity (partial sharedness) comes about on the basis of interactivity:

- Persons, social beings, are partly constituted in/through self-other relations.
- A person (self) can embody "dialogical" emotions: shame, guilt, pride, complacence, complaisance, conscience, consciousness, compassion, empathy/sympathy, morality (right/wrong), etc. are all emotions that would be impossible without direct or indirect relations to others (situationally but above all culturally).
- The distinction between individual freedom (at the expense of others’ subordination) and solidarity (actions in others’ best interest) are based on dialogicality and interactivity. Searle (2008) discusses other related notions like the phenomenon of human civilization, and monologisation with the consent of others (e.g. in some democratic organisations).

There are many other issues associated with intersubjectivity. I will mention a few here, and refer to Linell (2013e):

- There are several levels of intersubjectivity, different in degree of awareness and other dimensions. One distinction, with intermediate degrees, concern taken-for-granted (unreflected) intersubjectivity vs. reflected intersubjectivity. Rommetveit (1974: 56; RETH: 81) says about this: "Intersubjectivity has to be taken for granted in order to be achieved." That is, we must trust that there is some common ground to begin with, if we want to achieve more reflected types of intersubjectivity, e.g. through negotiations or through bringing something into language. This raises the issue of the relation between intersubjectivity and trust: everything that we cannot know for sure but must take for granted or shared (intersubjective). Trust is a phenomenon closely linked to dialogicality; it is at the same time elusive and ubiquitous (Linell & Marková, 2013a, b, and references there).

- Another issue links up with the relation between interactivity and intersubjectivity. Linell (2013e) argues that interactivities (participation in interaction) are more basic than intersubjectivities (partially shared knowledge), whereas Duranti (2010) seems to come to the opposite conclusion.

- A third issue relates intersubjectivity to subjectivity and objectivity. Some scholars argue that intersubjectivity presupposes subjectivity as a more basic notion, a position which is associated with classical phenomenology (Husserl; Duranti, 2010; see also *dialogicality). Most phenomenologists and dialogists would probably hold that objectivity should be understood as interactively (dialogically) achieved intersubjectivity.

- Yet another issue concerns the relation between intersubjectivity (in the sense of sharedness) and alterity, the fact that others are always different from oneself (RETH: 82f). Others always come with at least partly different perspectives. As a speaker, self is often aware of anticipated other-reactions; objections, evaluations, points-of-view. Alterity provides a dialogical counterpoint.

- Intersubjectivities can be disturbed in more fundamental, and abnormal ways. We have mentioned aberrations like ADHD and autism as *disturbances of dialogicality. Another aberration is extreme egoism and Machiavellianism, extreme forms of monologising attitudes (RETH: 171).

Intersubjectivity is a multi-faceted phenomenon, and a multi-ambiguous term. It is not a specific, easily localisable phenomenon, nor a precise descriptive notion. Therefore, one may wish to talk about intersubjectivities and interactivities in the plural (Linell, 2013e).
The `interworld´ (world in-between) is a recurrent concept in dialogical thinking, and can be understood in several, complementary ways (RETH: Ch 7). Some phenomena (meanings, meaning potentials, linguistic resources) live in the relations, interdependencies and interactions, in a kind of “interface”, between individuals and environments, rather than either in the individuals themselves (or their brains) or in the objects and events of the outside world.

The notion of interworld was explored, and the term introduced, by Merleau-Ponty (RETH p. 153), although several others have similar ideas. On the whole, Merleau-Ponty’s “phenomenology contains many dialogical ideas. (I summarise some here, building on Nordin’s (2011: 418/ my translation) account.)” Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology links up with both Husserl’s Lebenswelt and Heidegger’s “being-in-the-world”. A human being does not exist as pure consciousness separated from the world. She lives from the very beginning in a life-world that is at the same time objective and subjective, material and the carrier of meaning and content. Already in and through perception reality becomes structured, interpreted, related to our needs, wishes and fears, determined by our senses’ capacities and ways of functioning. As humans we live in an interpreted world, where interpretations are always influenced by the culture we belong to, the language community we participate in. We do not meet any naked, contingent matter nor any things-as-such, but only phenomena that have already been loaded with human content. Therefore, there is no total freedom à la Sartre either.”

The idea of the interworld can be further illuminated by quotes like the following (see also RETH: ch. 7):

“[N]either dualism nor behaviorism really permit us to talk as we do in life. A conversation does not take place inside each other’s heads alternately, nor at the surface of our bodies in their overt behavior; it is really in the region between the speakers that the conversation takes place” (Barrett, 1979: 184, quoted by McCloskey, 347/ italics added/PL)

In other words, the ‘abstract’ phenomena mentioned in the first paragraph of this entry are not located physically, neither in brains nor outside objects. Steffensen & Cowley (2010) argue, in a similar vein, that these phenomena are ‘non-local’ (‘non-localised’ would be a better term, since ‘non-local’ may be taken as meaning ‘global’). These authors include many things within this category of non-localised, or non-localisable, phenomena; their main example is health. Of course, all concepts and meanings may be seen as belonging to the inter-world, thus being non-localised in a basic sense.

But it is important to avoid mysticising ‘non-localisability’. First, meanings are often assigned to objects and bodies that are perceived and thus in one sense localised to specific places in the world. The concept of ‘bottle’ is used about certain kinds of artifacts out there, which are designed for their function of containing fluids, and health and ill-health are said about bodies and embodied minds. (Would not bodily diseases (cancer) and malfunctions of the body itself be central to ill-health?) Similarly, ‘language’ is action by (social) individuals. On the other hand, concepts like ‘language’, ‘words’ and ‘meaning potentials’ are more difficult to localise, since they would not work if they were not partially shared by several individuals (and an assumption of a ‘group mind’ is not a viable alternative, #14 of section 3)

Secondly, it seems essential, when we are talking about minds, to make a distinction between the embodied processes (largely in the *brains of individuals) that are necessary in order for these individuals to make sense of the world and of themselves. But these processes, dependent as they are on the physiological substrate, work in interaction with the world (and self’s own body) as the content of thoughts and utterances, and these processes need concepts (and usually linguistic resources) to sustain this sense-making of the world. It is these meanings, concepts etc. that live in the relations between selves and world. Thus, it is crucially important to distinguish between localised processes in the body (and
events in the world) and the meanings/content that is their intended and sensed outcome, which are non-localised (and yet related to localised bodies and aspects of worlds).

What is partially relativised with the thesis of non-localisability of meanings (and of thought contents, concepts, ideas, images etc.) is the dichotomy of inner/outer (things inside the body/brain/head vs. in the environments) (Button, 2008). It would be better to talk about meanings as made with the head, in the presence or absence of external aids, such as cognitive artefacts or other phenomena in the ecosocial environment. The brain is a resource for sense-making; it is where (most of) the processing is made, but it is not the location where the meanings are. The confusions created by talking about meanings in the head, due to a category mistake in Ryle’s (1963 [1949]) sense, are not the only ones with a firm place in everyday talk about thoughts and meanings. It seems to me that some of the confusions originate in accounting for situations in which people think about, imagine or visualise things, such as the Eiffel tower, in the absence of “real things”. (Coincidentally, Thompson, 2007: 292, uses exactly the example of the Eiffel tower in a similar context.) In such cases, we have been accustomed to saying that the tower is seen by an inner eye, and that the image is inside the head. Similarly, when we think about something, such as the present king of Sweden (when he is not physically present in the situation where we are thinking), or for that matter, something non-existant, such as the present king of France, we say that the contents of these thoughts are inside our heads. But they are not; only the thought processes are there, not the objects/contents of the thoughts.

Let us now turn to some other issues related to non-localisability and inter-worlds.

Steffensen & Cowley (op.cit.) build upon biogenetic (organism-environment) theory (Maturana, Jär vilehto etc.), which seems to have a weakness in not attending to individuals (with agency, dialogicality) and their dialogical interactions; the theory is built upon impersonal interdependencies between organism and environment, and fits the description of living organisms better than sense-making persons (Linell, 2013c).

As we have just seen, RETH denounces (in some specific regards) the concept of the inner world, in favour of the inter-world. Meanings are co-constructed in the inter-world: in inter-action, inter-view, inter-face; not in the speaker, nor in the recipient (reader, interpreter), nor in the outside world seen as independent of the situated sense-maker. But while we denounce the inner world, we still talk about internal (inner) dialogue. Isn’t this an inconsistency in DTs? Here again we can, however, invoke the activity/process – content distinction: meaning, content are immaterial as inter-world phenomena, but the sustaining processes originate in and to some extent occur within the material body, although they are sometimes inaccessible to others (and one’s self!)

What is the relation between the ‘inter-world’ and Popper’s ‘third world’? (cf. Piippo, 2012: 115, 121). There might be some similarities (some phenomena cannot be localisable to brains or outside physical environments), but Popper’s third world is about absolute abstractions, whereas the inter-world deals with aspects of the embodied and socially embedded “real” world. The latter assumption is necessary, since aspects of the inter-world may be consequential in the “real” (physical) world (Thomas’s theorem).

**Kant and Hegel**

Dialogism has a long past, with roots far back in the history of Western philosophy. It would be an unsurmountable task to trace this history. However, it would be more than motivated to go back and note some ideas by influential thinkers at the turn between the 18th and 19th centuries. It would be logical to start with Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), and mention a couple of ideas that seem to point forward to 19th century philosophy and especially the developments that later turned into dialogue philosophy (cf. Marková, 1982, 1990).
Kant was obsessed by the relation between rational ("a-priori") and empirically-based knowledge. In dialogist terms, we could say that he emphasised that we experience situations, and derive a lot of our knowledge from there. But he was keen to point out that we have an ability to transcend specific situations to develop knowledge of the (experience-based) conditions of possibility that define the types of social situations (and in my terms: communicative activity types). I believe that this type of transcendence from (specific) situations to practices or traditions is central to dialogism (cf. *double dialogicality), something which would distinguish theories of action from, say, behaviourism. This is a relatively mild form of transcendence; it is still based on social experience (Kant’s *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781), *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788)). Thus, we do not take up Kant’s metaphysics (*Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790)), the attempts to transcend the boundaries of the conditions of attested possibilities (Lübecke, p. 24).

Kant was interested in man’s ability to develop knowledge of, and categorise, the world. This points forward to the epistemological and phenomenological theories of later times. Both these traditions are concerned with human abilities of sense-making and thus important for dialogical theories. But Kant’s categories tended to be universal; he had no place for specific cultures and languages in the practices of sense-making (as Giambatista Vico (1668-1744) had had). In other words, Kant did not seem to forebode socio-cultural theory (see below on historicism), another cornerstone of dialogical theories.

Hegel was a rather different philosopher, from whom we might derive quite other insights than from Kant. Marková (1990) regards Hegel as a forerunner of dialogist thought, along with Herder and Humboldt, among others. What Hegel contributed above all was a *dynamic developmental perspective on history*. But he tended to look at development as necessarily progressive, and his dialectic thesis-antithesis-synthesis cycles tended to be seen as conclusive, unlike Bakhtin’s dialogical idea that the dialogue is always (in principle and theory, though not of course in situated practice) unfinalisable (see *completion*) (Also, modern dialogical theories would not claim that developments always lead to higher levels (as also assumed in classical Marxist theories of societal developments).

Hegel’s philosophy later gave rise to historicism (socio-cultural theories), for example in Herder and Humboldt; historical circumstances condition cultures, in processes that are sometimes due to historical incidenitals (Marková, 1990). Human beings therefore develop partly different understandings, different methods of sense-makings, and historical events often bring about mixtures of cultures and languages. Bakhtin would talk about tensions and heterogeneities.

Hegel’s philosophy inspired widely political philosophies, from right-wing to left-wing (Marxism). This, I think, is remotely similar to dialogism, the ethical applications (*ethics*) of which clearly range from social conservatism to left-wing socialism. (The opposite of dialogism, based on the recognition of others, is rather radical individualism and (neo)liberalism.)

In the late 19 century there was a resurgence of interest in some aspects of Kant’s philosophy, known as neokantianism. It is commonplace to point out that neokantianism split up into several rivaling understandings (Lübecke, 22ff.). Yet, one may conjecture that these different (three?) traditions all contributed ideas to the dialogical theories of the 20th century. And they seemed to have something in common, after all. Perhaps the most important commonality is that the focus is on how human beings make sense of the world; we are dealing with human sense-making activities (epistemology), sometimes in particular how this happens in the sciences, rather than with the structure of the physical world as such, let alone some unattainable Ding an sich (Platonic idea).

The forerunners to dialogism within neokantianism have usually been identified in the so-called Marburg school (Cohen, Natorp, Cassirer). Perhaps, this has to do with the fact that it is known that Bakhtin read these particular scholars. Cohen stressed that ideas, thoughts, cannot be given any value if they are ripped out of the processes and activities of thinking of which they are part (cf. quote in Lübecke, p. 28). One may construct a similar argument about linguistic resources in relation to languaging (RETH: ch. 13-15).
However, the contributions from other branches of neokantianism are also relevant. This applies to the interest of natural scientists, such as Helmholtz, in how scientists develop knowledge with the help of methods and material instruments is also relevant to dialogism. One may suggest that there is a line here to theoreticians of natural science such as Bohr (RETH: 418). Methods of perception and cognition, perhaps reinforced by instruments and other cognitive artefacts, methods of languaging and interaction (cf. Conversation Analysis), methods of building narratives and using metaphors, etc., have an impact on the resulting scientific knowledge. Another neokantist of interest is Windelband, who stressed the differences between natural sciences and the arts and humanities, as regards the conditions of sense-making, thus foreboding Dilthey, Schütz and others (RETH: 29).

Naturally, the roots of dialogism are mostly to be found in scholarly work from the 20th century. However, this is so intimately conflated with dialogism itself that it would break the frames of any comprehensive attempt to treat it in one text.

**Knowledge; knowing; learning**

‘Knowledge’, ‘knowing’ and ‘learning’ are well-known everyday phenomena that can theorized in several ways. Let us start with the notion of ‘knowledge’.

If we simplify matters a lot, one could distinguish between two conceptions of knowledge. One of them, dominant in the sciences, is that knowledge is an abstract and often objective phenomenon, yet somehow existing “out there” in “reality”. It is disembodied, but can and must be internalised and somehow represented in the brain, otherwise it won’t have any causal impact. This is the ‘cognitive’ approach, often also presupposed in theoretical and applied linguistics.

The other approach would prefer to talk about ‘knowing’ (a form of the verb, presumably referring to actual or potential processes), rather than the noun ‘knowledge’. Knowing something (competently) is being able to *participate* competently in relevant activities, such as activities of talking Swedish, dancing (Keevalik), driving a car (Broth, Cromdal & Lewin), doing certain physical movements in physiotherapy (Martin), or just doing being ordinary (Sacks), or whatever. This is embodied knowing (knowledge), yet it is interdependent with others’ knowing, acting (behaviours) and participating in activities. Note that this ‘dialogical/praxeological’ conception would be applicable also to ‘theoretical’ knowledge; to know e.g. theoretical physics is to be a competent participant in activities of accounting for or arguing about relevant issues and theories within that field. In a sense, it is like becoming more competent in "playing a game".

In SLA (the domain of Second Language Acquisition) one would talk about *having* (access to) (possessing) language vs. being able to *participate* in activities involving language (acting (competently) in/through language/languaging), or about acquiring knowledge vs. *acting* out or displaying modified participation patterns (or the like). (REF)

Notions of ‘learning’ are parasitic on understandings of knowledge/knowing. Thus, the first-mentioned conception of knowledge of the prior paragraph would correspond to a view on learning as internalising input knowledge that was not possessed before by the individual. The second-mentioned dialogical approach would prefer to talk about becoming able to participate more competently and with more situation-appropriate variation in relevant activities (of languaging) and somehow sustaining that competence over time.

There is an important distinction between competence retained over time (remembering and learning), and simply getting to know something in situ (which may or may not be sustained over time). Just observing singular events of the latter kind doesn’t put us in a position to say that we have documented learning. Redefining ‘learning’ as simply ‘getting to know’ (or the like) will not be a solution in the long
run. (This is why CA/EM, as conventionally carried out, is a set of methods with limitations with regard to learning. Dialogical meta-theory would stress the importance of situation-transcending practices.) Situated events, in themselves, are more like learning opportunities, occasions for possible learning, or affordances for learning, rather than observably demonstrating increased (sustained) competence at later occasions.

There may be other differences between perspectives on learning. It seems to me that true cognitivists tend to look at learning as particular kinds of activities, whereas the dialogical/praxeological approaches would rather see learning as one (potential) dimension of all (or at least most) situated activities. Thus, learning is not all that is going on, for example, in the SLI classroom.

Dialogical approaches would also stress the asymmetries (in knowledge, status etc) between participants, and the differences in communicative labour in different types of situations. There may be situations with instructions from an expert to an instructee (Zemel & Koschmann, 2013), or situations without instructional activities. Performance by novices is often scaffolded by others. Thus, learning is usually not a purely individual phenomenon, at least not as regards the exercise of competences.

See also *dialogical pedagogy.

**Language: a self-organising system?**

If language is not prespecified in the human biology, as Chomsky would have it, an alternative theory has often been that languages self-organise* as systems.

Self-organisation (s-o) has been launched as a basic explanatory concept, specifically as an alternative to theories of innate linguistic structures (Chomsky). S-o derives from dynamic systems theory (Varela etc, cf. Steffensen & Hodges). Languages self-organise as emergent products of interaction (Račzaszek-Leonardi, 2009). Thus, it is also connected to emergence theories. Structures and symbols are patterns in (repeated) languaging. Once established, they act as constraints (ibid.). "Symbols is an outcome of a selection process, compressing dynamical information into a variable relevant for an organism" (ibid.: 672, n. 3).

S-o seems to be more relevant for language (systems) than for languaging. Are interaction and dialogue also self-organising? What about active sense-making in dialogue? Dynamic systems theory have a feature of impersonality; the absence of personal agency. It may overstate the similarity between living systems (organisms) and semiotically sense-making organisms/minds/persons who act with agency and willfulness (RETH 415ff) (see enaction*).

But languages (language systems) cannot be the result exclusively of self-organisation either (cf. Linell, 2012b). Some reasons for this are the following:

- We are raised in a world which has already been made meaningful through language, literacy, institutions, professions; we cannot freely self-organise in relation to environments.
- Historical accidents: mutually foreign languages meet, and the resulting hybrids are only incompletely integrated; for example, many loan-words continue to stand out as "loans".
- The role of conscious language planning and regimentation.
- Language can be used for meta-linguistic critique.

**Language: Is natural language a set of codes?**

Linguistic signs are, according to some linguists (Saussure), pairings between fixed expressions and stable meanings. While such a situation may be approximated in exceptional cases, for example, in using strict
terminologies (if users are able to stick to them), but it does not hold for words of normal languaging: language as indexical, allusive, incomplete. Words have flexible meaning potentials, rather than fixed meanings (RETH, ch. 15). Related to this is the ubiquitous use of metaphors, that is, non-literal language use.

Metaphors involve an as-if logic, in which only some properties are transferred from the source concept to the target domain, while others are bracketed or ignored. For example, I recently heard a customer complaining about a parking meter that didn’t function optimally (it didn’t take cards, as it should according to the inscription, only coins); he said “This one is not feeling quite well” (Den här mår inte bra). While this expression made perfect sense in the specific situation, it couldn’t be taken literally, since parking meters can not have feelings, nor do they have biological bodies.

Metaphors are everywhere, also in science. For example, we talk about utterances as buildings (structures), language as a code, genetic information as a language (Linell, 2012b), memory as a storehouse where things can be deposited or retrieved, the mind as a computer, etc. Many of these have been taken as literal scientific theories (models), i.e. their metaphorical nature has not always been acknowledged. What about the neural network in connectionism? Is this also a metaphor (brain as a neural network), as Thompson (2010:7) argues?

Metaphors are everywhere in mundane languaging, for example, in extending a concept/term to marginal, uncertain cases: e.g. what is a shrub, as compared to trees and herbs, in various marginal cases?

**Language: its whereabouts**

Broadly put, there are two alternative ideas of where language exists: Language is in the individuals’ brain, or language is social, existing in interactions between people, and/or between individuals and their ecosocial environments. Compare interactivity vs collectivity (SDS: Lecture 4).

The dialogical stance would tend to say: in both places. But the outside world of social interrelations and interactions is primary. Minimally, the dialogist would say: language is at least *not exclusively* in individuals’ brains.

Brains are necessary but not sufficient for language and languaging. Brains are part of the necessary physiological substrate; the rest of the body is also necessary, that is, brains are necessarily embodied. The ecosocial experiences are also necessary (but of course not sufficient; we must have a material processing system too); without the experience from the outside, we would have nothing to talk about. The brain is “controlled from without”, through stimuli, Roth (2013: 22) says, with a reference to Vygotsky. The ecosocial world provides the content of talk and texts, and the semantic potentialities of linguistic items.

But there is a certain asymmetry between brains and ecosocial experiences. We must know something about the world in order to talk meaningfully. By contrast, we need not know anything about the brain in order to talk; humanity developed civilisations without any such knowledge. (But knowledge about the brain is useful if we want to cure certain physical or psychiatric diseases, or develop therapies for dysfunctions.)

Language is not a private property of individuals. Instead, it is quintessentially social (or dialogical). It is used in talk and texts by members of a community (usually with rather fuzzy boundaries), a community consisting of those who know the language in question. By having access to a language that is “owned” more or less by a specific community, others are excluded from participating in and understanding that talk and those texts.
Language derives from the social world of languaging. Through socialisation and acculturation into the social world of a language community, individuals appropriate knowledge of the language. Without individuals “in the know” the language in question would not exist. There is no other supraindividual entity in which language could exist, only the world of social interactions between real people.

But grammars are culture-specific; they are specific ways of using linguistic (and extra-linguistic) resources. Only very general conditions or constraints are universal (UG, “universal grammar”, is indeed minimal, in some sense.) That something is culture-specific, or culture-interdependent, means that it must be developed, sustained, negotiated and possibly changed in and through social interactions. Languaging deals with “content”, contents of conversations, text, thoughts, memories etc. derived from the ecosocial world out there, or from fictive (imaginary) worlds built upon experiences, elements originating in the world out there.

So brains provide the material substrate for cognitive processing (thinking, remembering, etc.), but the content of the processes comes from the world outside of the brains. However, it may be too simplistic to look upon the world’s “contribution” as just providing content. Actually, sense-making, the actions or practices* of thinking, remembering, also take place in situations, in the world, by the person (rather than his/her brain). Thus, we must distinguish actions from the brain processes. In this context, Husserl proposed a distinction between noema, conceptual content, and noesis, roughly sense-making practice (Roth, 2013: 3, n.3).

Social phenomena cannot be explained by brain sciences: it is, for example, meaningless to try to find exact brain locations for phenomena like marriage, identities, morality (what is good or bad), economic transactions, e.g. taxation systems, governments, institutions like courts or educational systems, technologies, written language, identities, literacy. Searching for locations of such phenomena would amount to a category mistake in Ryle’s (1963) sense. This is not to deny that literacy, for example, the activities to read and write texts in general, engage certain brain systems more than others. But learning takes place in the ecosocial world, even though the effects of learning naturally have neuropsychological correlates. This applies to all phenomena in which cultural learning plays a major role, both wide-spread cultural phenomena such as the ability to read and write, and highly specialised and exceptional capabilities as achieving competitive results in high jump.

Despite all this, the ‘primacy of the brain´ stance is often unquestionably assumed by linguists. For example, SAG, which of course deals with the language-specific grammar of Swedish, i.e. something which must be observed, described and largely explained in terms of what happens in social interaction and languaging, says things like:

“One may distinguish between the mental grammar, which is stored in language users’ brains1, and a description of the mental grammar, for example, in a book like this one. Those grammatical descriptions that exist (in the literature on grammar/PL) are just incomplete depictions/reproductions (“avbildningar”) of the mental grammar2. Even though our knowledge about the grammar of Swedish or about grammar in general has grown very much during the latest decades, we can hardly provide a complete and warrantably justifying picture of the brain’s system of linguistic rules.” (I: 16; my translation/PL).

SAG has a predilection for the term ‘mental grammar’, which implies that the grammar is located in the minds or brains of individuals (cf. subscript 1 in the quote above). In essence this is the world-view of generativism that is reflected here. It would have been better to speak about the grammar of Swedish *languaging, that is, in interaction, utterances and texts in Swedish. What SAG does in actual practice is to try to describe the kind of “knowledge” participants in Swedish languaging need in order to be able to use the Swedish language in an idiomatic manner (“correctly”) in public, social contexts. By contrast, the quote above suggests that the allegedly mental grammar is the “real” one, something which is only inadequately represented or reproduced in our scholarly language descriptions (cf. subscript 2). This is a perspective
going back to Plato, and today propounded by Chomsky. The “external language”, to use an expression used by Chomsky and his adherents, that is, our means of thinking and communicating in social contexts (in society, social interactions, as well as in individuals’ solitary thinking), is only an inadequate reflection of the real language, which is an “internal language” (Chomsky) with an “internal(ised) grammar”. It is correct that there is not yet any complete and justifying description of the grammar of Swedish (cf. sentence 3 in the quote above). However, we expand our knowledge of Swedish and other languages by investigating practices of languaging even more carefully not by speculating about some underlying UG (Universal Grammar; Chomsky). Therefore, the word ‘brain’ should be deleted in the third sentence above.

To sum up, the dominant view of contemporary theoretical linguistics often suggests that the brain controls people’s language and languaging. There is some truth in this. But the primary perspective must rather be the reversed one: people use their brains in order to indulge in competent and situationally appropriate languaging.

### Language: the issue of its uniqueness

A classical issue in language studies concerns the specificity of language. Is there nothing else in life, especially in human life, that is comparable to language in power and use? If the answer is yes, it probably also means that language is specific for the human species.

Most, if not all, commentators would probably claim that language and languaging (including not only spoken and written language but also signed language) would be unique in the (human) world. It lies behind culture, civilization (Searle, 2008), institutions, literacy, social organisation, technology, etc., i.e. what makes us human, or defining the human ecological niche.

Note, however, that this hardly means that human language and languaging lack connections with other sensori-perceptual, motor, cognitive, communicative etc. abilities in humans. On the contrary, an increasing amount of research into evolutionary biology and infant development has shown that languaging develops out of prior pre-linguistic, pre-semiotic and pre-conceptual interactions with the environment, including others. What it means, however, that once language and languaging are there, they have made an enormous, cumulative cultural development possible.

Another issue is what accounts for the uniqueness of language. Different linguists have opted for different properties (RETH: ch. 13). One candidate property which comes up as a result of comparing language to other semiotic resources is the capacity of language to be used about itself (reflexivity, meta-language). Another proposal was formulated by Searle (REF) as the ‘principle of expressibility’, i.e. the assumption that each human language could be developed in order to express every possible content. This idea has been popular among linguists. However, it cannot be upheld, since there are clearly aspects of the world that cannot be adequately captured by language. Central among these are perceptual or sensory properties of, for example, smells, tastes, colours, individual human faces.

### Language: Origin and evolution

One of the fundamental problems for linguistic science ought to be the origin and evolution (O/E) of language. Yet, this is something which has traditionally been shunned in linguistics. This statement does not apply to the origins and cultural developments of specific languages. Here, a great deal has been done, particularly before structuralism. The studies concern the sociocultural history of language communities their possible contacts across time, and also the political history of languages. Especially in the latter case studies have in practice been focused on written language. (In addition, it must be said that a great deal of the studies have dealt with isolated details.) The research mostly rests on the availability of written...
sources, that is, samples from texts from different times. Here, I will leave aside this kind of studies (historical linguistics), and focus on the problems of the O/E of the language faculty in the human species in general.

Chomsky and generative linguistics took on the study of universal properties of the language faculty, at least in their rhetoric. It was hoped that their kinds of structural analyses of a few languages would provide some hints. The outcome was largely negative; Chomskyan linguistics largely failed to provide explanations of the language faculty (Linell, 2012b). In fact, Chomsky declared that one cannot find out the O/E of language; instead, one has to admit that language “just is there” (see language: its whereabouts*).

In language sciences outside of “theoretical linguistics” (generativism and other formal approaches), the problem of the O/E of language in general has indeed been approached in recent decades. The relevant research fields include animal communication (especially primate communication), infants’ development of pre-linguistic and early linguistic communication, communicative disabilities (e.g. congenital deafblindness; Souriau et al., 200x), evolutionary biology and anthropology (Donald, Tomasello), experimental phonetics (MacNeilage, 2008), interaction studies (CA/EM) and utterance production (online syntax; Auer, 2009; Hopper, 2011). Most of these have a developmental (genetic) approach in common (cf. RETH: 252f), which distinguishes them from structuralist approaches, which tend to start out from a rather static notion of the fully developed adult language system. The language faculty is seen as emergent from earlier interactional practices. This of course raises the issue how these practices in their turn came about (MacNeilage, op.cit.).

The O/E of language in general has been a non-issue in linguistics. In fact, the French Academy in the 18th century issued a prohibition to indulge in these problems, since they would assumed to involve too much speculation. In fact, linguists have shared Chomsky’s poition that “language just is there” and cannot be explained. Just to take an example of an otherwise highly relevant study, Recanati (2004) carefully treated different positions on the issue between semantics and pragmatics, or linguistic meaning and contexts (especially with regard toword meaning), but he never asks the question how linguistic meaning and its context-interdependence came about in the first place. I suggest that one explanation for linguists’ inability to tackle the question has to do with structuralism and its tendency to start out from the fully developed adult language (whatever that might be) (RETH: 254).

Language within a theory of languaging

What would the term “language” mean if we adopt the concept of languaging along the lines described in the section on *languaging? If Goodwin (e.g. Streeck, Goodwin & LeBaron, 2011) talks about resources of language, gestures and manipulation of the environment, among other things, as semiotic resources that mutually elaborate each other’s meanings, what does “language” mean? It may seem that the notion of language, previously relatively self-evident and unquestioned in linguistics, has become somewhat blurred. On the other hand, it is still used.

That is, when – within this interactivity approach – we still talk about “language”, what do we mean? What are “linguistic resources” within such a world-view? The core is still, I believe, the spoken (or written) words, and combinations of words according to syntactic rules, which are products of utterance building (an incremental process; Linell, 2013b). Languaging, on the other hand, is integrated multimodal practices in which saying and interpreting spoken or written words are at play. (Of course, the notion of “word” must often be made more precise, and depending on the context and purpose of the activity in question that definition can be made in different ways. However, I will not delve deeper into this matter here.) These linguistic resources (“language”) sometimes need to be explored in their own right, even if we recognise that they are abstracted from integrated, practical, cognitive or communicative activities (“languaging”). Hence there is both a segregated, disciplinary (linguistics-internal, and perhaps more
static, even formal) perspective on language, and an integrated, dynamic perspective on language and, in particular, languaging. Perhaps the very terminological distinction between language and languaging provides the solution to the dilemma. Sometimes, we focus on words, and how they are said and understood, including their interplay with as well as differences with regard to other semiotic resources. At other times we need to focus on the integration of the array of different resources in embodied interaction, especially face-to-face interaction (Goodwin). Included in this view on language there is the insight that there are other semiotic systems that are just as powerful as spoken or written language, in particular sign(ed) language. We can "say things" also with signings. Another relevant distinction is between what is said and what is meant in interaction.

The point is that the interactivity is regarded as intrinsically integrated, yet we cannot help sometimes separating out language. There seems to be a need to talk about language even in a world of languaging (and other kinds of sense-making). So, leaving aside inscriptions in texts etc, focusing on "language" in embodied interaction, what do we mean? Some thoughts:

a) On the one hand, "language" is a general term about all phenomena involving certain advanced symbol systems (that which we are accustomed to calling "language"; this would cover languaging itself as well as spoken utterances and written texts (products)). On the other hand, "language" only comprises the abstract(ed) linguistic aspects of embodied interactions involving spoken utterances (or written texts, electronic texts). The latter meaning is the one we are interested in here.

b) As said, in adopting the second meaning of "language" (i.e. language system) we exploit the distinction between languaging and language system: first-order languaging vs. second-order language (Thibault, 2011)

c) Languaging does not exclude structural aspects of linguistic resources (cf. language as a system); language can be seen as structural constraints on utterances (and units of text). These constraints are both enabling and restraining (e.g. Rączaszek-Leonardi, 2010). We can also think of them as methods of constructing utterances so that the utterances are both recognisable as part of a language (such as English) and as contributions to cognitive or communicative projects of sense-making (Linell, 2012c).

d) Something like the distinction between what is said and what may be meant (including implicatures, indirect meanings etc.) is honoured in society. What is legally binding in formal contexts is only what is said/uttered (often only what is said in writing), whereas in real life, especially face-to-face communication, indirect or implied meanings are quite significant. However, what is "said" is already less clear than what is "uttered"; the "said" is somewhere between the "uttered" and the "meant", exactly where is open to debate (Grice, 1975; Recanati, 2004). The distinction between expression and (ascribable) content seems to be involved too.

e) Another, related distinction is: activities of languaging vs. products of this, i.e. utterances and texts; also speaking vs. speech.

f) In terms of means of expression, "language" concerns the symbolic core ("form", structure) of utterances. In this prosody is partially included, partially not. For example, prosodic (vocal) expressions of emotions, e.g. surprise or disappointment (Couper-Kuhlen REF), are not part of language-specific prosodies, at least not in their entirety. Also outside of language (but not of languaging) are gestures, facial expressions, body positions, manipulations of objects etc.

g) "Linguistic aspects" tend to be ascribed to different systems, so-called specific languages (although the notion of a national language is an academic and political construction;Linell, 2005).
Another way of developing thinking about language and languaging would be to contemplate their contributions to various kinds of practical, cognitive and communicative activities. That is, languaging is not only “conversational” activities such as having a chat with a friend or participating in a formal meeting, that is, situations in which talk is the dominant medium. What about other activities in which talk is not dominant? Consider examples such as the following:

(1) driving one’s car (alone or in company with somebody) from home to some destination, e.g. one’s workplace;

(2) visiting an arts museum looking at paintings and sculptures, alone (2a) or together with a friend (2b);

(3) having sex with somebody (a joint activity considered in relation to discourse by Clark, 1996);

(4) vacuum-cleaning one’s flat in the absence (4a) or presence (4b) of somebody else (a spouse or co-habitant) (which is mainly an individual activity, in contrast to (3)).

Some of these are to some extent permeated or punctuated by spurts or episodes of talk (occasional social languaging; open state of talk (Goffman); incipient talk (Schegloff)), e.g. (2b), (3) and (4b). But there are also other kinds of languaging, such as reading sign-posts (1, 2), listening to the radio (1), silent, private thinking (which is at least partly dependent on language) (1-4) and even self-talk. (2) normally involves eaves-dropping parts of strangers’ conversations, etc. This kind of exercise may force us to distinguish more clearly what we would mean by language and languaging in practice.

We might also need some kind of distinction between speech (talk, the production of spoken words) and speaking (embodied talk considered as multi-modal). Speaking face-to-face would involve more than speech, e.g. gestures accompanying (or sometimes independent of) speech. Such analyses would fit also the gesture studies by specialists like Kendon and Goodwin.

**Languaging**

The term languaging has been used in the Maturana & Varela biosemiotics tradition (cf. Cowley et al., 2010), as well as in the Hallidayan linguistics tradition. Some scholars in applied linguistics have used the term too (Becker, 1991). In RETH, the term was extensively used, as a better alternative than “language use”. The main argument for this is that the latter term suggests that the language systems are there first, to be “used” by language “users”, before any situated processes of languaging.

In the following text (and throughout in my writing), I take ‘languaging’ in the sense suggested in the first paragraph of this section. ‘Languaging’ applies to any kind of actual linguistic practices in any medium: spoken, written, electronic or mixed. However, some analysts seem to use the term in more specific senses, such as linguistic practices (hybrid languages, ”superdiversities” etc) that cannot be ascribed to any particular single language (such as Swedish or English).

Common-sense conceptions of language are cognitively and historically connected to linguists’ theories of language (e.g. Linell, 2005). Both these knowledge spheres take for granted that language is some kind of abstract system that is put to use in situated action (“language use”, or to adopt dialogist terminology, in situated activities of “languaging”). In modern structuralist linguistics, formal theories of the supposedly underlying, logically prior language systems (e.g. in Hjelmslev’s or Chomsky’s work) have been almost exclusively regarded as basic. Especially in formalist (structuralist) traditions, the language system is unquestionably the only relevant object of study for linguistics. The literature is replete with statements to this effect. Just to take one single example, consider Fischer-Jørgensen’s (1975: 119) succinct formulation
of Hjelmslev’s (1953/1943) position: “The existence of a system is assumed to be a prerequisite of the existence of a process [language use, parole, performance, text etc /PL], and it is the system which is the object of linguistics.” This position was already clearly stated by Saussure (1964/1916) as well. Within dialogism, the language system is instead regarded primarily as a second-order abstraction from first-order language (Thibault, 2011).

However, there are other implications and associations connected to the preference for the term languaging. Thus, ‘languaging’ should not be taken as just another label for ‘language use’; it implies another conception of the phenomena involved:

• First of all, languaging, and not language, is where meaning is made. Meaning-making is the primary function of languaging (and other semiotic practices). By implication, it is also the ultimate context of possibility and motivation for language systems. Entries in the language system have (abstract) meaning potentials, not communicative/cognitive meanings (RETH: ch. 15). Languaging is not primarily about producing utterances as such (products which linguists discuss as structural objects) but about participating in cognitive and communicative projects in (co-)action.

• The theory of languaging belongs to a dialogical, contextual, and dynamic process approach. From a dialogical point-of-view, language systems are also dynamic, yet they are relatively stable across situations, situation types and sociolectal diversities.

• Whereas structure-based theories of language tend to assume that structures are prioritised, or even exclusively determinant, in the explanation of situated languaging. Theories that assume languaging to be primary assign importance to the agency* and decision-making of the participants involved. However, there are other aspects too, in particular natural biologically induced predispositions (e.g. articulatory movements are constrained by limitations (inertia) of the speech apparatus), automatisation of socioculturally acquired patterns (automatised behavioural movements, sedimented as patterns in spoken dialects), and improvisation (Streeck et al., 2011). But there is also decision-making and responsibility on the part of speakers (and other participants), especially at certain points, e.g. in utterance-building (Linell, 2013b).

• As stated in the first point, languaging consists in coping with cognitive/communicative projects (and overarching activities) in situ, intervening in, and hence to some extent constructing, the world; in interaction we talk tasks and their solutions into being. Languaging is not just about using ready-made linguistic objects, nor about producing or perceiving language per se. Instead, linguistic structures emerge from languaging (Hopper, 2010).

• Linguistic projects/activities (which end up in utterances) are subordinated to other *projects and *activities (practical, communicative, cognitive; often these are integrated aspects of the same complex activities)

• Languaging is multimodal, and involves aspects that have not traditionally been seen as belonging to language. It involves the orchestration of many semiotic (embodied and ecological) resources, that is, in addition to language: gestures, facial expressions, bodily comportment, manipulation of objects, use of artefacts, etc. (Streeck, Goodwin & LeBaron, 2011)

• Languaging emerges from pre-verbal communication (but in ontogenesis it takes place in a world which already contains languaging in the ecosocial environment).

• Languaging may be both “inner” and “outer”, transcending the conceptual distinction between cognition and communication (cf. Sfard’s term “commognition”).

• Languaging covers talk, texts, electronic media etc.

However, this raises the question if there is a proper place for language systems in a theory of languaging. See the section on *language within a theory of languaging.
Life and living organisms

Many researchers, for example, many phenomenologists (cf. Thompson, 2007), do not only distinguish between the realm of nature and matter and the realm of mind and consciousness (and language), but postulate another level/realm in between, namely biological life. Life straddles the gap between nature and consciousness. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty (The Structure of Behavior, 1963) inserts, according to Thompson (2007: 66ff), a third term between the two, namely behaviour (in French comportement, which has less of behaviourist overtones than behaviour). Comportement has structure and form, and function in a dialectic manner (non-linear causality*, Thompson, op.cit.: 68); two aspects A and B are not mechanically related in that A linearly causes B, but they have close interdependencies, and "can be regarded as parts of a larger global whole or pattern" (ibid.: 69). Merleau-Ponty (and later Varela, ibid.: 78-79) thus follows Aristotle rather than Descartes, in postulating a closer relation between mind and biological life. (This also has repercussions on the brain–behaviour [comportement] relation, ibid.: 83-84.)

Thompson repeatedly comes back to discussing what biological life has in common with material processes vs. mind and consciousness.

"Meaning"

The semantics and pragmatics of the central term ‘meaning’ (Sw. mening, betydelse) feature several interrelated potentialities.6 At the same time, these phenomena are central to dialogism. DTs brought meaning "back to psychology” (Rommetveit, 2008). Linguaging is centred around the interactivities in which human beings make meaning, typically together.

"Meaning is not conveyed by speech or pointed to by speech; it is speaker and hearer making sense to one another in a situation" (Goodman (1971: 34), quoted by McCloskey (1994: 346) / italics original)

Meaning is usually explored in semantics and semiotics (but these theories can be non-dialogical). More dialogical are:

One might discern two roots of dialogical theories on the issue of meaning:

(i) A phenomenological tradition, dealing with content of communication and thinking, representations and conceptions of the world, culture-specific social representations, both common-sense and scientific, in different cultural contexts. We are also constructing the world: From physiologically-based construction (the senses can only see certain colours, hear certain sounds, smell certain things, etc, in the interplay with the affordances of the world. Phenomenology* is thus concerned with how the world is perceived and apperceived, rather than how it is physically constituted.

(ii) Praxeology, action philosophy and the Verstehende Soziologie (after Dilthey, Rickert, Windelband in philosophy: M. Weber, Sombart; according to House, 1936: 393-402): acknowledging and describing the meaning of actions, (organisations, etc.), rather than just their forms or mere occurrences (quantifying

6 There are differences between English meaning and Swedish mening. As regards Sw. mening, its dialogical significance has to do with several (mainly everyday) dimensions in the meaning potential of the (the polysemous) word:

Funktion, avsikt (med handling) (göra något vs. något händer med en)
Betydelse; ord, yttrande, handling står för något annat än sig själv
Värde, värdering (att något har mening innebär att det har något värde)
Omdöme, utsaga, jfr grammatikens mening
We do things when we make and create our concepts, conceptions, meanings in situated interactions and situation-transcending practices (*double dalogicality).

Together these traditions emphasise contexts, interactions, the other (i.e. dialogical axiomatic assumptions); we organise and transform the world by cognitively constructing it, and by action on it.

Despite its centrality, “meaning” was largely left undefined in RETH. Following are a few remarks.

Meanings can be attached or ascribed to objects, persons, groups, events, actions, utterances, institutions etc.

A meaningful object (etc.) stands for (represents) something beyond its physical constitution or mere existence or occurrence; this something is related to "sense, significance, value, import, etc". Meaning is related to representation (imaging, labelling etc.); x standing for y (thereby adding something to y, in comparison with what y is in isolation). Relevant notions are sense, concept, semiotic resource, representation, semiotic mediation.

Meaning is related to action, to what people mean by doing x, uttering x, saying x about y etc. We assign significance to an object by using it in a specific way.

As regards the relation between action and meaning, action theory going back to Weber (Piippo, 2012: 16). Meaning is also related to norm, rule, habit, routine, regularity of behaviour, convention, law. Weber worked with two kinds of norms (ibid: 4): unconscious norms, akin to habits, as regards language typical of spoken vernaculars, and conscious, normative, even promulgated “norms”, as regards language typical of written standards, which are taught, meta-linguistic, and molding linguistic awareness.

Action and representation are interdependent. They are two aspects related to “the action of meaning something in a specific situation” and “semiotic resource representing/meaning something across situations”, having a conventionalised semiotic value. These aspects are related to the distinction situation – situation-transcending practice (*double dalogicality). Both these must be attended to in any analysis. But at the bottom, actions and situations are more basic.

a) There would not be any living conventionalised meanings unless people (re)create situated meanings over and over again.

b) Objects, utterances represent something only because people mean something specific by using them in particular ways.

c) Representation is itself a kind of action, but not all actions are representational in nature.

See also semantics vs. pragmatics*.

Meaning-making in relation to understanding

Understanding something (a message) implies fitting it into some kind of already (at least partially) known phenomenon (derived from prior experience, including one’s communicative biography with others). Oftentimes, this is related to multivoicedness and heteroglossia, and alterity, self’s awareness that there are other(’s) (partly alien) perspectives.

Understanding is closely related to meaning-making, which regularly involves combining aspects of meaning from different (re)sources, e.g. meaning potentials of semiotic resources (including words and grammatical constructions) and contextual resources. An integrating dimension is that of recontextualisation of prior knowledge into new contexts, thereby creating new situated meaning.
Meaning-making is enriched if there is space or opportunities for self to make a contribution of one's own, that is, not just being constrained by demands by others or (e.g.) the computer system (Ligorio), i.e. having one's interpretations (responsive understandings) imposed from outside.

**Meaning-making vs. sense-making**

These two terms are used almost synonymously in RETH, but:

Sense-making is broader than meaning-making. Sense-making can be automatic and impenetrable as a process, e.g. in sense-making in perception, through the senses (RETH). We can even say that physical reality, the objects in themselves etc. can make sense (to people, beholders) (cf. *affordance*).

Sense-making can be more or less immediate, or even subconscious. 'Meaning-making' can be reserved for (more or less) conscious (accountable) actions, related to the act of meaning ("to mean"), i.e. meaning-making for which you can be held accountable. Meaning-making would then be linked to language and other conventionalised semiotic resources. On the other hand, subconscious sense-making is a prerequisite also for meaning-making in languaging. On spontaneous perceptions and mishearings, see Linell (2013d).

Sense-making and understanding involves fitting the things to be made sense of into knowledge that the sense-maker already has (*meaning-making and understanding). Zlatev (2009) suggests that understanding involves assigning a value to things understood. Another way of putting it might be to say that one assigns relevance to the things in a context at hand (or context adopted).

**Mediation**

The term ‘mediation’ is often used in discussions of sense-making, particularly if semiotic resources, such as language, are involved in the processes or practices. The role of semiotic mediation is salient in Vygotskian theorising (Wertsch, 2002). Many dialogists look upon mediation through language as a *sine qua non* in human sense-making, or at least in "dialogue" (RETH: 415ff).

However, there are different ideas about the nature and effects of linguistic mediation:

a) the monologist view is that language is a means of transferring or transporting messages, ideas, meanings from the sender to the recipient;

b) the dialogist theory holds that the mediation always involves a (potential or actual) transformation or even transmogrification of content. A weaker term is translation.

Moreover, not all interaction is mediated by semiotic resources like signs or concepts. James Gibson argues that most perception is immediate (unmediated), and sees 'affordances' in objects etc. as "perceived directly" (van Lier, 2004: 63). The same may be true of pre-semiotic communication (cf. *intersubjectivity). Rommetveit and others have made distinctions between immediate and mediate morality and communication (RETH, 416).

**Memetics**

Memetics is an idea launched by Richard Dawkins (REF), which tries to use evolutionary theory as applied to genes, as a theory or metaphor for cultural evolution. The so-called memes are described as spreading like infections by contagion; here a metaphor source lies in talk about cultural fashions in clothing, music,
certain linguistic innovations, etc. Memes are concepts, ideas, figures of thoughts, arguments, as well as whole systems of thought (theories, ideologies, religions). The whole idea is based on evolutionary theory, and its idea of the struggle for survival by natural selection from a variation, under the pressure of the environment (favouring or disfavouring certain variants). Genes copy themselves (being replicators), cultural phenomena also do so. (Other darwinists, like S.J. Gould, assign more importance to organisms, in addition to genes.)

Frostegård (2009), in a popularising book in Swedish, argues that memetics is controversial, although it cannot be refuted; data viruses may turn out to spread by natural selection in computer networks. But, from a humanist, dialogist point of view, several points must be raised:

- Meaning makes a crucial difference; meaning is connected to signifying (standing for something else) and action by agents (with a "free will"); genes are not ideas, and ideas are not genes.

- Concepts and figures of thought have meaning. Data viruses, by contrast, are basic uninterpreted information bits (units and their combinations) in machine hardware; they don’t have meanings. Only humans can assign meanings to computer inputs and outputs.

- Meaning is not part of Darwin’s theory of evolution (although there has been the outdated idea that evolution has a meaning, a direction towards improvement governed by a supreme intention); the Evolution, or genes as such, do not make or create meaning, higher “organisms” (esp. Man) do so.

- But evolution has created individuals (and collectivities) who can create meaning. Meaning-making takes place in situated local actions and interactions. This is not the same as the aggregated results of meaning-making over time, e.g. in the form of “movements of meaning” when we ignore who generated (situated) meaning (the substance of meaning and therefore of aggregated patterns) and why.

- We can critique our own social systems (e.g. social representations) and language practices: This is only possible in (with) language, not in genes. Memetics seems to ignore complex organisms, with self-consciousness and abilities of mentalisation (Theory of mind*).

**Merleau-Ponty**

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) (M-P) is without doubt one of the most important forerunners of modern dialogical theories. The following bullet-list is a summary of some scattered points in M-P’s thinking assembled largely from Lübcke (1987: 325ff.).

- His major works are: *La structure du comportement* (= SC; 1942), *Phénoménologie de la perception* (= PP; 1945).

- He critiqued subjectivism as well as objectivism: There is no “inner” subject; a human being inhabits the world, it is in the world that she comes to know herself. This links to the concept of the life-world (Husserl, Heidegger). The life-world is pre-subjective and pre-objective. The world has meaning before we consciously assign meaning to it. (This points to the fact that M-P was not particularly interested in interactivities, cf. below.)

- M-P criticises Husserl’s idea to use the individual mind as the point of departure (which also amounts to critique of many others, e.g. Augustine, Descartes, Kant, Sartre etc.). Husserl’s subjectivism also reduces the world to something purely external. Phenomenology is for M-P not an idealism. The human being is already “out there” in the world, when he begins to understand
self and the world. One can understand one's self only through the world (être-au-monde). The subject must be returned to the contexture from which Cartesian reflection took him away. Instead of idealism, let's go zu den Sachen selbst!

• Instead, M-P utilises the concept of the inter-world (intermonde), both between the individual and the environment, and between self and others. M-P proposes a triadic conception of the interworld: être-pour-soi (consciousness, freedom; self?), être-en-soi (the objects), être-pour-l'autrui (?) (the other) (342).

• We have primary access to the world through the senses, our perceptual experiences (PP). Apperception (Sw. varseblivning) is not the passive reception of impressions, but the bodily experience of a world of sounds, forms, colours, smells in which we are immersed. Experience is immersed in sense-making.

• Consciousness (perception, cognition) is always directed towards something. Conscious intentions are not prior to thinking and action. When I extend my hand towards something, this something is not imagined or thought, but it is the specific object I want to use or explore. Consciousness comes from "I am able" rather than "I think".

• Knowing is corporeal. The blind man's stick is not an object among others, it is an extension of the person's ability to navigate in the world. Getting accustomed to artefacts like a bike, a flight of stairs, a water-tap or a car involves acquiring bodily knowing. We are in the world through our corporeality.

• Transcendentalism concerns finding the things or phenomena in the given world. Science and technology are secondary, abstract ways of conceiving the world, dependent on primary perception of the world.

• The mistakes of empirism and rationalism alike is that they forget that perception takes place against a (back)ground, a horizon, a context.

• Both empirism and rationalism treat the world as a ready-made ("tout fait"), as completed frames for everything that is possible. But the world is opaque, unfinished, open (multi-ambiguous), contingent (not necessary) (334, 344). It is an open totality (partial holism?). Objects as perceived and the stream of experience belong together in a meaningful whole (332).

• As regards the world at large, there are three kinds of existence: physical (objects), vital (organisms), and human (humans can create their own environment) (SC). This implies at least a partial holism; M-P was against the idea of "objective thoughts", seeing the world as composed of determinate entities that stand in external, causal relations to one another ("entification"; RETH: 252).

• Objectification of e.g. language has infected our natural way of thinking.

• The cultural world is historical. It builds on praxis (*practice), in which the other, and others, are seen as sense-making creatures (M-P says autonomous; 339). History and language are mediating contexts (343). The perceptual world is extended into and transformed in the cultural world. There are simultaneously both embodiment and cultural embeddedness, corporeality and history.

• M-P takes up Sartre's insistence on engagement, but claims that the conscious engagement must build upon a prior, "tacit" engagement in situations (341). Thanks to our corporeality we are engaged in a situation before we choose to engage consciously.
• Sartre was too rationalist, idealist (L’être et le néant, 1943), in his philosophy of existence, creating the negated, and freedom.

Many of these ingredients in M-P’s version(s) of *phenomenology are resonant with DTs, e.g. the importance of embodied action-based perception in sense-making, life in an already meaningful world, the notion of the *inter-world, etc. However, M-P is not very dialogist in spirit on one important point; he does not explicitly take *interaction (and other-orientation) as basic, but prefers to deal with the individual’s interdependence with the environment. On this point, he follows a phenomenological tradition.

Meso-level

Sociological theories often contrast descriptions on micro- vs. macro-levels. In addition, there is sometimes an intermediate meso-level, especially within organisational sociology. In RETH a similar notion was used about organisations in communicative activity types (cf. Linell, 2011), which is arguably a necessary level, bridging situated interaction and sociocultural practices. (Notice that I am concerned with communicative practices, rather than organisations and communities, cf. Wenger, 1998.) In developmental psychology, the concept of “meso-level” is linked to the work of Bronfenbrenner (1993); there, it is part of a fourfold stratification: micro, meso, exo, macro (van Lier, 2004: 208-9).

Meta-linguistics

The adjective “meta-linguistic” is commonly used about “meta-language”, i.e. the use of language in discussing properties of language itself (see * language: the issue of its uniqueness). However, it could also be used about “meta-linguistics”, that is, the theorisation of basic issues about the nature of language. Such issues include:

• The whereabouts (localisation) of language in terms of individual competence and/or collective culture
• The dependence of language on biology vs. culture
• The role of agency in languaging (as opposed to theories that languaging “just happens to us”)
• And many others (cf. RETH: ch. 19).

Meta-linguistics is often backgrounded and implicit in theories of particular linguistic domains, e.g. phonology, prosody, grammar, semantics etc. Many issues discussed in dialogism are meta-linguistic in this sense.

Method

DTs constitute a meta-theoretical framework for looking at human sense-making in language, discourse, communication, cognition and other domains. One might say that they summarise certain perspectives on human beings and their doings, especially their sense-making. However, they are not a set of analytic methods. Methods are not inherently dialogical or not; accordingly, dialogism is not defined by a particular method. Conversely, many methods can be used in dialogist studies, which tend to be multi-method in nature (Gillespie & Cornish, 2009).
However, having said this, one can nonetheless argue that some methods are more resonant with DTs than others. In discussing DT and method, one should distinguish between dialogical data and dialogical methods of analysis. (In addition, we must of course consider what kinds of research interests govern particular studies.) As regards types of data, we can consider for example:

- Participant observations
- Real-world interactions (e.g. conversations)
- Qualitative interviews (seen as interactions and/or in terms of thematic content)
- Focus groups (seen as thinking societies in miniature)
- Innovative use of interactive digital technology
- Some experiments (e.g. possible continuations from a given point in an interaction or conversation)

As far as data analyses are concerned, we can list for example:

- In-depth studies and “thick” descriptions of cultures and activities
- Case studies of interactions (e.g. in CA, EM, gesture studies)
- Mainstream CA studies (collections of short sequences)
- Coding of interaction preserving some dialogicality (e.g. “initiative-response (IR) analysis”)
- Coding of episodes or other larger “units”
- Analysis of communicative activity types (e.g. in terms of multiple framings)
- “Dialogical discourse analysis” focussing on themes, voices, arguments, analogy-distinction cycles (e.g. in focus groups)
- Methodological critique of interviews or psychological experiments with individuals

Dialogists are not in agreement as regards analysis vs interpretation. Some researchers (CA, EM) strongly emphasise that analysts must work within “participants´ (members´) perspective”, and thus avoid interpretation based on analysts´ “theories” that are bound to be based also on independent data and theorising. Cf. *ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis.

Intuition, documentation and analysis (of authentic activities) and experimentation are three types of systematic exploration in science. Intuition-based analyses take place in “armchair sciences” such as philosophy and Chomskyan linguistics. (There is a discussion about whether Chomskyanism is an empirical enterprise.) Documentation and analyses of authentic interaction are characteristic of e.g. ethnomethodology and CA, and a good deal of empirical human and social sciences. Experimentation is typical of natural sciences and psychology, but should not – despite some problems with ecological validity – be alien to DT.

Marková (e.g. 2003) has often warned us not to start with method in a scientific project. Indeed, a methodology easily becomes ontologised*, which is a clear danger. Marková´s admonition implies that the problems set up for the study should always be the primary concern. Moreover, as argued above, dialogism is not primarily about method.
Mimesis

Mimesis [mi-] meaning approximately "imitation" is primarily used about representing the ("real") world by means of language or other semiotic means. But in dialogical theory it also refers to one party imitating the other, in particular infants and children "imitating" others (carers and other elders but also peers). Zlatev (2008: 219ff) has introduced a developmental "hierarchy" of different forms of mimesis, which can be related to theories of primary, secondary, tertiary intersubjectivity* (Trevarthen, RETH: 12.5) and "mentality forms" of different orders (Zlatev: p. 237):

(a) Proto-mimesis: neonatal mirroring, contagion; mutual gaze; lack of complete differentiation between self and other; Trevarthen’s primary intersubjectivity

(b) Dyadic mimesis: action imitation, shared attention, primitive turn-taking, some cognitive empathy

(c) Triadic mimesis: declarative pointing, iconic gestures, full joint attention, having and understanding communicative intentions; Trevarthen’s secondary intersubjectivity

(d) Post-mimesis1: as (c) plus proto-language ("one-word sentences"), semantic conventions (language/community, fourth party coming in, cf. "the dialogical diamond" (RETH: 95))

(e) Post-mimesis2: (d) plus spoken/signed language incl. syntax ("semi-compositionality" ("loose compositionality"?); Linell, 2013a); (d) only conventionality; p. 219); also (false) belief understanding (cf. "Theory of Mind); Trevarthen’s tertiary intersubjectivity.

Barresi & Moore (2008), in their IRT ("Intentional Relations Theory") delineate stages very much like Zlatev’s, grounding them in neurobiology (about the brain). The "sharing mind" and the "understanding mind" (cf. *ToM) belong to different stages. There is an integration (in and through brain area connections) of 1. Person perspective (self) and 3. Person (PL: and 2. Person?) perspective (other). Evidence from *autism supports this (op.cit.: 60-61).

Mind

Accounts of languaging, cognition and communication often make reference to “the mind”. (This word in English has no exact counterparts in many other languages, for example, Swedish. Other terms in the same semantic field are "soul" and "psyche"). There have been many theories in the history of philosophy about the relations between body and mind. In earlier philosophies (e.g. Descartes), dualist theories considering body and mind as completely different phenomena were more or less legion. Present-day theories embrace, or approach, a monist theory, in which one assumes a close interdependence between the "minded body" and the "embodied mind". Many varieties of DT belong here. Other theories regard "the mind" as an epiphenomenon, entirely secondary to the physical systems, i.e. the brain or various parts of the whole body. It is common to find the expression "mind/brain".

The new developments, especially in biology, neurobiology, cognitive science and phenomenology, have also diminished the role of *consciousness. It is no longer possible to claim that "the mind equals consciousness". However, we may still have to refer specifically to "the mind" (mental phenomena, mindfulness etc.). The meaning of the term "mind" must then be respecified, by incorporating some of the insights mentioned here. RETH proposes to understand "mind" as the sense-making ability (of a human being). Large parts of *sense-makings are not accessible to consciousness (see also *agency).

Monologism
Monologism appears to be a rather unusual or even far-fetched term. Why should it be used at all?

Mainstream theories of cognition, communication, languaging and sense-making in general tend to try to derive meaning from one single sovereign authority over action and sense-making (as opposed to co-authorship, shared responsibilities, etc. in dialogism). Most of these theories are individualist, but some are in fact collectivist (structuralism in the social sciences). As stated in RETH, individuals are believed to determine the situated meanings of utterances (those produced by them), whereas the collective system of language delimits what the specific language accepts as possible forms (phonemes, morphemes, words, sentences) and lexical meanings in that language. A forced choice between these two is unreasonable. In the absence of a truly bridging theory, they do not work together either. (Chomsky’s, 1965, attempt of collapsing the two – individualist and collectivist – ideas in his notion of ‘competence’ is a pseudo-solution (Linell, 2013e).) That bridging theory is a dialogist one, one which is based on interactivities and intersubjectivity* (rather than individual competence or a collective langue) as the fundamental phenomena (Linell, 2013e).

The individualist dimension claims that the speaker, one single individual, reigns over utterance meaning. The collectivist dimension claims that one monolithic community culture, and one single linguistic system, determines (correct) language use. In each case, we would then have only one causal factor (one-directional explanation), instead of multiple causality and interdependencies (from -> to explanations, instead of dialogism: between, inter).

Monologism and dialogism appear at several levels of the theories of language, discourse, cognition and communication. For example, they have different views on what might constitute elementary *contributions to discourse and interactions; individuals’ utterances or (local) communicative projects.

However, a dialogical world includes monologising tendencies (RETH). Generalising sciences are a case in point (RETH: ch. 18). Lévinas (2008 [1993]: xvi, London: Continuum, Fr. orig. Hors Sujet 1987):

Monologising science and philosophy (L. doesn’t use the term monologism): Monologism brings order to the world (cf. order ‘command’ & ‘system’), objectifies the subject, knowledge as violence (cf. ‘know’ & ‘master’), violence in objectification when applied to human beings. See also ontologisation of method*.

Monologising tendencies or practices may apply to sense-making both by participants and analysts (cf. RETH: 29). For example, a person engages in a “monological” or monologising activity if he monopolises the floor in a social situation (RETH: 170). However, this activity can be accounted for in DT, recognizing its “dialogical” properties (addressivity, responsivity, genre-belongingness; RETH: 167). Conversely, a dialogical (dialogised?) activity, such as a conversation, can be explicated by a monologist analyst (see e.g. *contributions to discourse).

**Morality and ethics**

There are close connections between the evolution of dialogicality (primary, secondary, tertiary *intersubjectivity, RETH: p. 258ff.) and morality (pre-morality vs reflected morality). These are also related to different forms of *trust (Linell & Marková, 2013). Yet, dialogical theories (according to RETH) strive to account for all cultural forms of human sense-making, including their (sometimes radically) monologising aspects. Such DTs should be capable of accounting also for such manifestations as excessive egoism (with its strategic calculations of others’ positions in the service of self’s interests), totalitarianism and dictatorship. This empirical approach may be seen as a secular and descriptive-explanatory theory of human sense-making.
At the same time, it is possible to derive an applied ethics from dialogical assumptions of self-other-interdependence and self-other-interpenetration (if the first-mentioned term can be misunderstood as referring to “external” interaction, the latter is more about dynamic “internal” interaction). Such an applied ethics has been developed specifically in dialogue philosophy, in somewhat divergent ways by scholars like Buber, Bakhtin and Levinas. One succinct formulation is the so-called Golden Rule, formulated in various ways in the Old and New Testaments (Leviticus (3. Book of Moses), Matthew 7:12), and similarly in other script-based religions. (This rule is often referred to also in theories of communication that are not particularly “dialogical”, e.g. the ethical considerations in Allwood, 1976.) This brings some aspects of dialogism rather close to certain trends in theology.

One ethical aspect concerns the recognition (Hegel: Anerkennung; Nordin, 2011:699) of others as human beings with rights, indeed the same rights as are self-ascribed to oneself (cf. Golden Rule). The German philosopher Honneth (2005) argues that modern Western rationalism and liberalism run the risk of forgetting the recognition of others, as a consequence of reification (Verdinglichung) (Nordin, p. 699). Cf. the discussion between Habermas and Ratzinger, also related by Nordin (p. 696). This idea too has a certain affinity with dialogism, although Nordin only mentions Hegel, Heidegger, Dewey and Habermas in connection with Honneth.

A dialogical idea is that even principles like the Golden Rule, and other abstract rules, must be interpreted contextually, rather than be given one absolute form. Dialogism seeks a position between absolutism and relativism (Allen, 1996) (cf. *dialogism, different variants). Ethics must be exercised “with reason” (act with distinction, practical ethical intelligence = practical *phronesis*??); the individual has a responsibility for creative ethical work. Allen (1996) discusses the ethics of virtual (computer-supported) worlds and research conducted on such phenomena (which involve perhaps fundamental changes in our understanding of anonymity, privacy and reality). Different contexts (“worlds”) require partly different sorts of actions and responses.

**Mutual gaze**

Intersubjectivity* takes many forms. In early infant-carer interaction, there is contact (in certain moments of mutual contact, in particular through mutual gaze) which is immediate (unmediated by language), embodied and felt, when parties (especially the infant) are unaware of the surround, embedded in a cocoon comprising only the two (cf. also proto-mimesis under *mimesis*).

Also adults can in exceptional cases establish dyadic high-intensity embodied contact. Hodges (2011: 152) refers to exceptional instances of conversational contact involving ‘flow’ or ‘lostness’ (“lost in the moment”): “a fabulous conversation over a great meal with friends illustrates such unselfconscious closure”. Even the burden of time seems absent. The experience is like “a taste of heaven”. Thus, “authentic intersubjectivity” can be accessed also later in life.

Mutual gaze is a strong resource in establishing dyadic contact. Lévinas wrote at some length about this; when a potential killer looks his prospective victim in the eyes, he cannot go ahead with his ominous plan; the murderer must avoid mutual gaze contact. In the first act of Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde*, Isolde wishes to take revenge on Tristan’s killing of her former betrothed (Morold) and raises her sword against him with the intention of killing him, but when she meets his gaze, she realises that she cannot do it.

**(The) Other**

Other-orientation might be the most basic assumption in DT’s theories of sense- and meaning-making*. There is often references to “the other” or “Alter” (e.g. in Markova’s (2003) model). What is the relation
between Alter and the Other? I suggest that these two, Alter and the Other (in the singular), are equivalent, abstract term for all kinds of other sense-makers than one’s own self/mind. Of course, there is nothing remarkable about the fact that other people make sense for and in themselves. But this is not the dialogist point. This is rather that others are oriented to and make contributions to the individual self’s meaning-making (in sociodialogue and individual thinking, writing, reading etc: the internalisation of other voices, perspectives, ideas etc, which the self may appropriate or oppose).

But the Other/Alter is an abstract, comprehensive and varied category in DT. It is important to make distinctions between different kinds of other sense-makers. This “other”/Alter covers the concrete thou (the addressee co-present face-to face in the situation (cf. *mutual gaze) who is the other primary sense-maker/participant (alongside with Ego/Self). A group of present people may also belong here. But in addition to this, there are peripheral second parties (or “third parties”, called “third” because they are peripheral): overhearers (present but momentarily inactive in the overt sociodialogue) and present audiences, and remote audiences, i.e. absent but “real” individuals and groups, the generalised you (any next person), various other generalised perspectives (common sense, common language, “comme il faut” expectations). Bakthin even talked about the “super-addresssee” who is always potentially “listening” (God?). All the latter are included in the we/they node of the “*dialogical diamond” figure (RETH: 95).

In other words, the most basic distinction is that between

- the concrete you ‘thou’ (the one whom you meet IRL as your direct partner and addressee in social encounters and interactions); ‘the other’ (in this particular singular senses; not the abstract other = Alter, see above), thou, Sw. du, related to Sw. nästan, (individuell) granne (Engl. neighbour), medmänniska;

and

- peripheral others (or third parties), who may be “alien” to you and are usually absent from the situation; ‘the others’ (plur.), they, Sw. dom (andra), those who are absent or more or less strangers but whom we also need to learn to understand (according to our wishes and abilities)

Cf. Russian drugoj vs chuzhoj (RETH: pp. 82-83).

**Ontologisation of method**

Both cognitivist and behaviourist ontology and theory are heavily influenced by their respective method, such as controlled experiments, methodological individualism (e.g. “only individuals can be observed or interviewed”; cf. *units of analysis), and concentration only on manifest behaviours in interaction (e.g. in behaviourism and CA). Many philosophers have theorised theory and method thoroughly (to say the least), often in relation to language and representation, for example, in defining truth (e.g. in terms of truth conditions) and truth-finding (e.g. methods of determining truth or falsehood) (e.g. M. Dummett).

Methods tend to be monologising (RETH ch. 17; *method above), and are often turned into ontology. A dialogically oriented philosopher who put an effort in warning for the ontologisation of method was Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975 (1960); *Truth and Method). Methods may implicate decisions to impose on data a structure or interpretation which is ill suited. Methods may reduce the object of study to a theorisation that is determined beforehand. Rather, Gadamer recommends an openness with regard to theorisation and method, if we are to achieve a true understanding of reality.

One way of talking about the ontologisation of method (in psychology) is James’s (1890) notion of the “psychologist’s fallacy”, that is, “to confuse the construct that is in the psychologist’s mind with the phenomenological experience in the research participant’s mind” (Gillespie & Cornish, 2009: 26).
Dialogism is not that obsessed with method. Rather, theories must be reasonable, given that empirical evidence concerns human sense-making. (Is, for example, “ToM reasonable?” Gillespie & Cornish (2012) argue that dialogism implies a multi-method approach to intersubjectivity.

Perception

The senses are interactive, in a way that would fit dialogical theories (RETH, § 6.11). Perceptual activities can be pursued in interaction with others (e.g. guided by others, as Goodwin (REF) has demonstrated), but usually, perception has been analysed as a single perceiver’s activity. Thompson (2007: ch. 11) reviews in considerable detail an essentially Husserlian analysis of perceptual activities, from primal impressions (perturbations of a resting mind) via (immediate) retention-protention cycles to percepts (presentational in nature, immediate “understanding”), and then perhaps to reflection (recollection, expectations, representations). Here, perception and action are integrated (see action-perception*). Retention-protention (related to response-initiative, response-anticipation) are integrated. Retention is first directed toward “the just-elapsed phase” of primal impression, but contains at the same time a protention “in a more indefinite way toward the immediate future” (p. 319) (sometimes, Husserl calls this “primary memory”, in contrast to recollection, which is “secondary memory”, p. 320). “Retention [...] includes not just simply retention of what has just occurred, but also retention of just-having-been pretending in this or that way. Retention always includes retention of protention and of the way protention is fulfilled or unfulfilled” (p. 361). The relation between retention and protention exemplifies kinds of highly nonlinear causality*.

Protention in perception is related to motivation, affect and emotion (pp. 361ff.). This kind of combination of neurology and phenomenology (“neurophenomenology” in Varela’s terminology) builds upon “dynamic systems approaches” (p. 363).

Phenomenology

DT owes a lot to phenomenological philosophy. In RETH I deploy phenomenological ideas in referring to and explicating phenomena like: experience as always perspectivised, the mutual interdependencies between concepts like body and mind (proposing, instead of the ideas of the separate (material) body and the separate (spiritual) mind, those of the living/lived/minded body and the embodied mind), and the relations between perceiver/knower and the perceived/known (percepts/concepts are not passively received by the perceiver/knower, but are emergent from the interaction between the sense-making agent and the environment). (See also Merleau-Ponty* above.) In RETH it was particularly Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty among phenomenologist philosophers who were used. Gadamer could have been brought up more (cf. Linell & Marková, 2013b). As regards Husserl, the founding father, I find him too monologist (even Cartesian) in orientation, in his point of departure being decidedly in the human mind (but cf. Duranti, 2010; Zahavi, 2012). Among the most “dialogically minded” phenomenologists, one should mention Scheler (the nature of sympathy), Schütz (the role of the other, the structure of the life-world) and Lévinas (the role of face-to-face interaction; one’s responsibility for the other).

Thompson (2007), in discussing “mind in life” and the enaction* theory, builds very much on phenomenology, in particular Husserl and Merleau-Ponty (whereas Heidegger is accused of “neglect[ing] the lived body”, p. 380). Thompson speaks of three generations of phenomenological philosophy, which are also three steps in the development of Husserl’s thinking. In the first period, “static phenomenology”, it is primarily the interdependence (“correlational structure”, op.cit.: 24-5) between perceiver/knower and the perceived/known object that is analysed. This is seen more or less as a static relationship. Later, in “genetic phenomenology”, Husserl went on to think about the development (genesis) of the intentionality of experience, for example, how experiences emerge “from pre-given to given” phenomena; experience is not something prespecified or given, but “come[s] to be given”, emerging out of previous
experience (op.cit.: 29). One has to be "affected" or interested in something in order to engage in perceiving it. Thus, cognitions are driven by motivations.

In Thompson’s third and final stage, “generative phenomenology”, Husserl is said to turn his interest to the life world, the world in which the knower is raised (“thrown into” in Heidegger’s jargon). “Generative phenomenology concerns the historical, social, and cultural becoming of human experience.” (op.cit.: 33), and it deals with intersubjectivity and culture (op.cit.: 78). The life world is a pre-given horizon for sense-making (cf. Gadamer’s notion of horizon), and it involves others.

Thompson (op.cit.) ends his chapter 2 (on phenomenology, p. 36) by saying: "[T]he enactive approach, particularly when guided by genetic and generative phenomenologies of the lived body, intersubjectivity and the life-world, offers a different version (different from the abstract and reified models of the mind in classical cognitive science/PL summarising the previous section in Thompson, op.cit.). I will argue that self and other enact each other reciprocally through empathy and that intersubjectivity emerges from developmental processes of enculturation and is configured by the distributed cognitive web of symbolic culture.” Here, Thompson becomes quite “dialogical”, in particular by emphasising others and intersubjectivity within culture. However, most of his book is, in my view, still concerned with the structures and genesis of the single individual, and the individual embodied mind’s experience of the world. In this, it follows early phenomenology, and Husserl’s influence is very significant.

By way of conclusion, “classical” phenomenology was/is mostly individual-based, and is accordingly not sufficiently grounded in an appreciation of the importance of interactivities (and *intersubjectivity). In Cornejo’s (2008) terms, we need a ‘co-phenomenology’.

Political ideologies

Dialogism is not linked to any political ideology in any simple manner. Rather it follows on a Hegelian ideational heritage, which tries to capture the tension between the individual ability to develop new ideas, and the interactional-cultural-social interdependence between individuals. Monologism might want to prioritise only one of the poles of individual freedom (liberalism) and social solidarity (socialism, social democracy). Dialogism tries to overcome the dichotomies (RETH ch. 19) (cf. Hegel’s concept of Aufhebung). However, the emphasis on the role of others may lead to an applied ethics that insists on the importance of social relations, rights and obligations (see also *morality).

As regards the interpretations of Bakhtin’s work, these have to some extent tended towards individualism in the East and towards collectivism in the West.

Posthumanism

The term ‘posthumanism’ has been used in recent years, with several meanings, and roots in as different traditions as, e.g., relativity theory in theoretical physics (e.g. Bohr), cultural criticism, feminist and queer studies, and organism–environment theory (Varela, Thompson; cf. also intercorporeality). One might see posthumanism, partly divergent as it may be, as a radicalization of DTs. Here are five points from posthumanism, based on Barad’s (2003) account:

1. The primacy of performativity rather than representations: Posthumanism would see the world as built upon processes and performances, rather than on objects. “Things” are better seen as processes with a shorter or longer life-time. “Thingification”, the turning of relations (cf. #2) into “things”, “entities” or “relata” (Barad, op.cit.: 812), implies a mistaken world-view. Many posthumanists seem to prefer notions like “events”, rather than “actions” done by human agents (#4 below). Conventional theories have a
"representationalist fixation on words and things". Posthumanism is therefore firmly against "representationalism" (cf. *representations), which is "so deeply entrenched within Western culture that it has taken on a commonsense appeal" (p. 806).

2. **Relationism**: The conventional view on "things" sees them as antecedent components of relations, that is, they preexist relations and interactions. Barad prefers the term *intra-action* to 'interaction', which she takes as "external interaction" (in e.g. Marková’s terms; see *interaction*), i.e. things, humans etc. are then assumed to exist before they start to interact or set up relations amongst themselves. We then erroneously represent relations as secondary to relata. Instead, phenomena are produced through "agential intra-action" (p. 814). Phenomena are "the ontological inseparability of agentially intra-acting "components" (relations without preexisting relata)” (p. 815). This is akin to many dialogist analyses, e.g. the relation between self and other.

3. **Materialism**: The world consists of "matter", rather than things and concepts. The slogan is: "matter matters". This makes posthumanism akin to intercorporeality and interobjectivity theories (bodies rather than humans (and higher animals) interact).

4. The ‘human’ – ‘non-human’ dichotomy is an unacceptable dualism: This again invites an inclusion of organism–environment theories within posthumanism. It also motivates the opposition of posthumanism against classical humanism.

5. **Onto-epistem-ology** (p. 829): The monist materialist world-view (#3) calls the distinction between ontology (how the world is) and epistemology (how we humans apperceive it) into question (cf. RETH: 420).

There are tensions between different dialogist conceptions (cf. dialogism) as to how far one should go in the direction of posthumanism (if we adopt this term at all). Classical dialogism has a lot in common with action theory, phenomenology (how human minds apperceives the world) and symbolism and semiotics (including the role of signs, concepts of language). On the other hand, there has been a movement towards materialism (instead of pure idealism) and emphasis on the importance of bodies (intercorporeality etc.). But it seems that DTs, if taken to mean the meta-theory of sense-making embodied minds, retains the role of human minds. It belongs to a humanist tradition (as against #4 above). DTs assume that language and other semiotic resources play a crucial role in the human world, even though the view that languages are superior semiotic systems in all respects (*languaging) must be abandoned.

An interesting point concerns the position that the world, as perceived by human beings and higher animals, contains "things" or thing-like entities. It is commonly assumed that we "construct" the world in such ways, even if this would amount to an illusory theory from the point of theoretical physics. Human sense-making in terms of objects like tables, chairs, toys, people, animals etc. start at an early stage of infants’ perceptual construction. It seems obvious that this also holds for higher animals, such as dogs, cats and horses, and many others, but probably not for ticks (von Uexküll’s famous example). Perceptual construction seems to take place also without a symbol-based semiotic system. But the tendency to entification is probably more or less strongly reinforced by the acquisition of oral language (or other semiotic body-based systems) and then by cognitive technologies (writing, computer systems). While it may be true that languages have been "granted too much power" (Barad, p. 801) during the "linguistic turn" in the human sciences, DTs would ascribe an important role to language, even if there are considerable differences among dialogists as to the impact of semiotic mediation (RETH: 415ff.).

It is debatable if posthumanism is capable of liberating itself completely from the references to “things”. What about "bodies" and "organisms", for example? Barad repeatedly talks about "components" that "intra-act", even when talking about the non-preexistence of relata (e.g. p. 815). (Usually, she uses so-called "scare quotes" (" " ) around the mention of "components".)
Practice

The term ‘practice’ seems to be equivocal. I use it roughly in the sense of praxis, that is, established or conventionalised ways of doing things (thus, about categories or sets of action types) within an organisation, a profession or a larger community (e.g. a linguistic community). Accordingly, this use of the term concerns “situation-transcending practices” (cf. “double dialogicality”).

However, some scholars seem to use ‘practice(s)’, often in the plural, in the sense of singular behaviours (“practices of conduct”, Schegloff, 1997: 539) or linguistic (and other semiotic) devices in use, when one needs to talk about these without (or before) considering their status as meaningful actions (Schegloff, op.cit.). Schegloff prefers to use ‘practice’, rather than ‘process’, in this context, when one wishes to distinguish linguistic devices (in “practices”) from the “actions” that they are used in, in particular contexts. Roughly the same practices can be used in different actions. For example, certain questioning practices can be used in repair activities (“actions”), but also for other purposes and actions and in other contexts, for example, when a participant tries to challenge the prior speaker’s stance (ibid.). (For some Swedish data on vadd+x ‘what do you mean x’, see Linell & Norén, 2012).

Pragmatics and pragmat(ic)ism

‘Pragmatics’ and ‘pragmat(ic)ism’ are two terms with different meanings and origins (although they are both etymologically associated with Greek pragma ‘action’). Pragmat(ic)ism was a tradition in American philosophy, with four major figures: W. James, Ch. S. Peirce, J. Dewey and G.H. Mead, all with their own scholarly profiles and all very important for DTs. Pragmatism may certainly be taken to be one of the early 20th century currents in dialogism.

Pragmatics is used in linguistics, to denote one largely field dealing with aspects of language (and languaging) that were not covered by other parts of linguistics, such as syntax, semantics or lexicology. Usually, pragmatics has been described as an additional “level” of language structure, although not dealing so much structured units as with (rules for) action and interaction, and with utterances and their meanings. Standard textbooks normally treat certain areas: speech acts, implicatures and inferencing, indexicality, contexts and utterance meaning, sequencing in interaction, etc. One might imagine pragmatics to be the study of *languaging, but the common understanding is that of a level of linguistic structure and rules. Indeed, a significant number of pragmatic theories are formal theories, just as in other parts of structuralist linguistics. Pragmatics is a within-linguistics notion, rather than a part of interdisciplinary studies of sense-making in communication, cognition etc. While the area as it exists is relevant for DT, its inclinations are segregationalist rather than integrationist, to use Harris’s (1997) terms.

Process-based vocabulary

In dialogical theories, and related approaches (see *dialogism), it is often stressed that the world is largely made up of processes (or *practices) of various kinds, rather than of entities, objects and static structures. Trends towards processual accounts are nowadays all over the place, in physics, biology and theories of sense-making. This implies a preference for verbs (or verb derivatives), rather than nouns, in many contexts. In (socio-)cultural theory, it has been stressed that “culture is a verb” (Sarangi, 1995). Compare Giddens´ ‘structuration’ (rather than ‘structure’), and terms like ‘acculturation’. In the context of language, we have terms like *languaging (Linell, 2011), ’wording(s)’ (Cowley, 2011), and even *grammaring (Larsen-Freeman, quoted by van Lier, 2004). For many linguists, such terms seem to be
horrifying. We need, it is claimed, to discern patterns in terms of words, structures (and parts of structures) and grammars as targets for utterance-building actions (cf. Linell, 2013b, on the interpretation of 'grammatical construction').

Recontextualisation

Talking about and trying to understand a topic or data domain implies that by necessity we use language, ideas and knowledge that we have used before, although perhaps in different contexts; we cannot start entirely from scratch. Knowledge is therefore recontextualised from a source domain (or many, perhaps vaguely defined or understood domains) onto the problem domain under study or topicalisation.

Recontextualisations are a fundamental property of communicative and cognitive processes (Linell, 1998, 2009). A recontextualisation involves bringing along some properties of the source domain(s) (source context(s)), while leaving other aspects behind, as partly new meanings are created in the target domain. (Thus, recontextualisation is akin to metaphor.) In the cultural history of language sciences, Linell (2005) describes the shift from prescriptive, language study into (the more) descriptive, modern linguistics as a set of far-reaching recontextualisations. The former language study was (originally) practice-oriented, literacy-based, with the assumption that writing is the most important realisation of true language, while the latter linguistics is “theoretical” and mostly spoken-language-based, building on the assumption that speech is the primary modality (although the linguist’s models are usually abstract and concerned with an allegedly modality-neutral language). As a consequence, modern linguistics, despite its focus on spoken language and language in general (in abstracto), remains “written-language-bised” (ibid.).

Gadamer (1975), in his dialogical hermeneutics, emphasises that understanding necessarily starts out from some pre-understanding. This is often non-reflected; it constitutes a background from, rather than about, which we think (Rommetveit, 1992). The person interpreting something cannot be completely liberated from prejudices but is part of a tradition and acts against a “horizon”. The tradition and the pre-understanding are necessary for all understanding, which therefore constitutes a meeting between horizons, and a “merger” of these (Nordin, 2011: 398).

Representations

As noted by Ihde and others (see *Individualism), a representational epistemology is connected to the static idea of a stable external reality. Dialogism calls for dynamic notions of representations and of the environment.

Any notion of representation is connected to the notion of ‘seeing something as’ and thus to conceptualisation and knowledge. Monologist notions of representation, however, have several conceptual problems:

1. If seeing something, say a birch tree, as a birch presupposes a concept, a.k.a a representation of ‘birch’, and if all concepts presuppose representations, what does the notion of representation contribute in addition to ‘concept(ualisation)’ itself?

2. The monologist notion leads to talk about ‘inner worlds’; a person sees the birch tree as a birch via the representation/concept ‘birch’ of the inner world, “in the mind’s eye”. So what about ‘direct perception’; seeing the actual birch tree out there? (cf. *mediation)

Gärdenfors (2000:55), in his popular introduction to cognitive science, works with central notions like "representations", “inner worlds” and “disconnected representations (i.e. disconnected from perceptions; Vorstellungen). This makes perception parasitic on representations or inner worlds, rather than the other
way around: making imagining without present external objects (as it were, simulated perception) parasitic on real perception. Why localise the content of perception or cognition in an inner vs. outer dimension?

In DT, representations are just one form of human sense-making. Dialogism would explain representations in terms of what agents do in the world (or in solo thinking) as part of their praxis, in their interactivities and context-interdependencies. Representational activities can then be performed silently and individually (Vygotsky’s internalisation). To imagine (visualise) the Eiffel tower in absentiam is to perform mental operations that are partly the same as those in which one is involved when actually seeing the real tower or a concrete picture of it.

3. Researchers make representations, that is, models of (e.g.) a human being’s perception, conceptualization and meaning-making. Is it these representations that get projected onto the primary sense-making in real life? This would be like projecting a “theory of mind” (ToM) onto the child itself (or, for that matter, adults), or projecting the linguists’ grammar (a formal model) onto the speaker-listener himself (Chomsky)?

4. Concepts or representations are connected to abstract categories. Are such categories comparable to concrete entities in the environment? Are they some kind of “things”? Concepts, general categories, build upon perceived similarities between entities in the outer world. Suppose we discover some kind of similarity between, say, old men’s head shapes and a mountain configuration such as Hoburgsgubben on Gotland. Is such a similarity itself an abstract entity, a concept?

DTs prefer to see concepts and similarities as properties of relations between sense-makers and environments (see *Interworld).

5. Representations get reified as static models.

Sandra Jovchelovitch (2007), who is a dialogically minded scholar and aware of the critique of mainstream psychology, yet argues extensively in defense of “representations”, in the tradition of Moscovici’s (1984) notion of ‘social representation’ (N.B. not individual cognitive representations) (RETH: 241). She claims: “Representation is a fundamental process of all human life” (p. 10), and defines ‘representation’ in the following terms: “To represent is to make present what is actually absent through the use of symbols” (p. 10). But we must “unsettle the old idea of representation as a copy of the world outside” (p. 13).

Representations are tied to passions, affects, interests, but at the same time epistemic, social and personal (p. 26). Jovchelovitch dismisses as untenable positions both Cartesian individualism and the attempt of *radical dialogism to abandon the notion of representation altogether:

(i) Cartesian individualism implies a radical separation between self and world: representations are thought to exist in the “inner world”. “The new subject’s location is his own internal world, a new inner space, from which he draws the tools and procedures to confront the world outside” (p. 19).

Representation is moved from its ‘between’ position to an ‘inner’, internal one (p. 21). This idea is further intensified by Locke and his theory of mind and procedural reason (Taylor 1989); now representation becomes separated from the self itself, “from its human sources and its context of production but also, and equally important, radically dehumanis[ing] the subject of representation” (p. 19). This is a “second separation between self and itself” (sic!) (p. 23). The idea of “the lonely individual knower” (p. 23) is “an impossible dream: to construct knowledge based on a ‘view from nowhere’ (Nagel 1986), excluding the “dynamic exchanges between knower, others and contexts” (p. 22)

(ii) Dismissing the notion of representation altogether (Gergen, Shotter, Rorty): According to these postmodernists, according to Jovchelovitch (op.cit.), “representational processes cannot be understood outside the psychosocial and historical circumstances that make them possible in the first place” (p. 25). “The child’s knowledge of the object-world does not, and indeed cannot, emerge as dispassionate cognition” (p. 25); nor can the adult’s explorations be entirely disinterested: “there must be desire to
know” (p. 25) “Without a clear account of how psychological structures evolve we cannot have a full understanding of their mature form” (p. 26). The idea that the child is just preparing for adulthood is connected to individualism (p. 8): a self-contained system developing, for example, in accordance with Chomsky’s ideas.

Scaffolding

The notion of scaffolding is central in Vygotsky’s and neo-vygotskian theories, where it is connected to the idea of the “zone of proximal development” (ZPD) (also RETH: 135, et passim). This has been connected mostly to tutor-apprentice settings. However, van Lier (2004: 144ff.) draws attention to the fact that there are also symmetrical (in terms of authority) settings between peers, e.g. as pointed out by early Piaget. Accordingly, one could talk about the interlocutor in any sociodialogue as a scaffold for one’s thinking. van Lier (p. 149) proposes a distinction between ‘structural’ and ‘interactional’ scaffolding.

Searle’s theories

John Searle is primarily a philosopher of mind and language, with numerous books on his publication list. For our purposes, the most interesting parts of his theories are perhaps his speech act theory (SAT) (1969, 1975) and his theory of social realities (1995, 2009: Making the Social World = MSW)). In both domains he moves into social terrains, from semantics and language into pragmatics (SAT) and from individual intentionality into collective intentionality in his theory of the construction of the social world (MSW). Obviously, these areas are related. As we shall see, Searle remains a monologist in both domains.

SAT was developed in great detail in (1969, 1975), and the author still endorses the theory in all relevant respects (2009: 69). There are five major classes of speech acts: assertives/representatives (e.g. statements/assertions, descriptions), directives, (e.g. requests, questions, orders), commissives (e.g. promises), expressives (e.g. apologies, congratulations), and declarations (declaring war, christening, wedding). Searle (e.g. 2009) observes that there are essential deontic elements (commitments) involved in all speech acts: for example, commitments to the effects that assertions must be true and that the speaker cannot ignore them without some interactional work, that the issuer of questions and requests must be interested in responses, that promises must be kept, that apologies must be sincere, and that the social consequences of declarations must be honoured (by speaker and recipients). In EM terms, any speaker will be held accountable for his acts (unless he can be taken to be insufficiently acculturated, mentally disturbed, etc.). The major SA types, as well as different intentional states (each of which is, by and large, linked to a particular SA type), embody different relations between the speaker’s mind and the world (different ‘directions of fit’: MSW, pp. 27-28): assertions (and beliefs) from-world-to-mind, and directives and commissives from-mind-to-world (cf. desires, intentions), while expressives (cf. pride, shame, love) presuppose that the world is in some specific way (ibid.: 69) and declarations have both directions of fit (they create aspects of a social world, which then becomes a social fact) (this also applies to “status function declarations” in society: “let x count as y (in C”).

Searle argues that all main categories of SA’s have pre-linguistic counterparts in humans and some higher animals. This holds with the exception of but declarations, which is therefore the most remarkable achievement of language; declarations underlie human civilisation (2009: 69, et passim).

The speech act types have been much used in linguistics (pragmatics, applied linguistics, psycholinguistics), and after all, they are similar to traditional sentence-types in grammar: declaratives, interrogatives, imperatives, etc.

Despite its moves into pragmatics, SAT exhibits several properties of a typically monologist stance:
1. The starting-point is clearly in language (the language system or its internalised version): SAT is about speakers’ use of linguistic expressions, rather than grounded in a theory of *languaging. “Semantics is sufficient to account for the existence of the statement or the promise” (MSW: 14). The notion of ‘counting as’ is analysed in terms of semantics, rather than pragmatics; wouldn’t ‘counting as’ belong to realm of SCRM? (cf. *semantics vs pragmatics). (Yet, there are perhaps some minor alterations in the theory from (1969) to (2009).)

2. The performative effects of speech acts are considered to be due to pre-existing conditions and properties of speech act types (part of a language system, at least in an extended sense); they are not emergent from practices, involving power, authority, legitimacy (Hanks, 1996: 236), or in general: situated interaction.

3. Speech acts are active interventions (initiatives) by (relatively) autonomous speakers. Second-positioned (in the *CA sense) utterances in language use are ignored: there are no categories for responses to others, such as answers, feedback, counter-arguments, declinations, acceptance, acknowledgement etc, repair. (Some practitioners of applied SA add a category of “responses”. However, this breaks up the system: see Linell & Marková (1992) and literature cited there, also RETH: 181-183).

4. SAT describes only one (autonomous) participation role, that of the speaker (cf. #3). A dialogical theory would posit several roles among participants: main speaker, subsidiary speaker, next speaker/main addressee, indirect addressee etc. In addition, SAT only talks about singular acts; where are adjacency pairs, sequences, episodes, phases etc.? (Some scholars, who have based themselves on SAT, have talked about “large” SA’s, such as a narrative being a large assertion, a multi-unit question a large directive, etc.).

5. Other points largely ignored in SAT are the ambiguous SA status of many utterances. What looks like a assertion can be a promise (*I am coming/ will come on Wednesday. His father will come on Wednesday*). What about other categories, such as attention-getters, simple acknowledgement/acceptance (*okay*!), greetings, closing initiatives (*that’s it!*). Many utterances are phrases rather than sentences, and their SA determination may require a contextual analysis. There is no mention in MSW about discrepancies between linguistic form and speech act function (although admittedly, Searle earlier on dealt extensively with “indirect” speech acts). Indeed, Searle’s “meanings” seem to be “literal meanings” (as distinct from (more open) meaning potentials; RETH: ch. 15).

Schegloff (1992: 1339) summarises, commenting on Habermas having appropriated Searle’s speech-act theory: “[he relies on] an analytic resource that in effect casts action as atomistic, individualistic, atemporal, asequential, and asocial”. Searle’s notion of language can be likened to those of Chomsky (from the 1960’s); it is clearly WL-biased. Consider the following (MSW: 63-65):

6. Phonology “can be ignored” because it is not essential (in Searle’s account) that language be spoken (MSW; 63). In other words, Searle deals with “speech acts”, yet ignores the spoken modality.

7. Syntax is crucial, and is said to be based on “three distinct features:

(a) discreteness; there is a well-defined number of words in each sentence. What then about [pɔl je (ne) sais pas ’I don’t know’, [kju:] thank you, and countless other vernacular expressions fusing word forms that are separated in hyperarticulated talk?

(b) compositionality: but compositionality does not hold (in a strict sense) in communication!. Utterances are not contextless sentences (Linell, 2013a).

(c) generativity: there are infinitely many sentences. Searle uses the example of relative clauses, which can give rise to infinitely long sequences (sentences). Again the idea seems to build upon the notion of (a) language as a set of sentences, an extensional definition nowadays abandoned by Chomsky. In addition, the notion of sentence (in a well-defined sense) is not a useful descriptive notion for the analysis of
It is better to posit a limited number of constructions; in a chain of relative clauses, there is basically only one construction being applied many times (recursively).

I will now proceed to Searle’s (2009: MSW) account of the construction of social realities, in which language plays a crucial role. This is basically a form of constructivism or constructionism (RETH: 105), although Searle avoids these terms (cf. 1995). Searle constructs an ontology of social phenomena (p. 7ff) (“social ontology”, 25) and of institutional facts (such as Obama is president, many people are married) (as opposed to “brute facts”, that is, aspects of/ by nature). This theory involves a number of assumptions or steps:

1. **status functions (sf):** x counts as y in C

2. **collective intentionality:** collective acceptance, recognition and maintenance of status functions

3. **deontic powers:** persons, organisations, institutions (e.g. private property, marriage), authorities, governments involve rights, obligations, duties, authorisations, entitlements etc. (“deontology”)

4. sf’s provide desire-independent reasons for actions (they make people act intentionally in certain ways irrespective of whether they actually wish to do so or not)

5. sf’s are created by status function declarations; similar to speech acts, can be regarded as “standing declarations” (13); “declarations are at the bottom of all institutional facts” (no other animals can make declarations).

As seen, Searle assumes the existence of collective intentionality, which cannot simply be reduced to individual intentionality. According to MSW, individuals make meaning collectively, by recourse to “collective intentionality”; they are thereby indulging in social construction (although, this is of course not social **tout court**; it also has biological and individual aspects). Importantly, Searle assigns great importance to writing and literacy, providing enduring representations of status functions, thus making social institutions possible. Nevertheless, Searle maintains that “to understand [collective intentionality] you have to understand individual intentionality” (MSW: 26), and moreover, “all intentionality, whether collective or individual, has to exist inside individuals’ heads” (44, 55). Although there are passages in which MSW deviates from extreme individualism (50), e.g. conversation is said to presuppose collectivity (38), Searle makes no distinction between the physical or (neuro)physiological machinery in which activities of sense-making take place, on the one hand, and their content, on the other. Would the social institution of marriage, for example, be inside individuals’ heads/brains in the second sense? Furthermore, Searle uses the term “collective”, as if the collectivity was just the sum of individuals. But the social world is stratified, with individuals interacting with each other while at the same time operating at different levels of intention and understanding. Collective intentionality and collective recognition empirically require feedback from recipients (others) in order to be sustained. Interaction and social participation are basic. Individuals (in a qualified sense: with individual ideas, thoughts, intentions, self-consciousness, etc.) co-develop with (heterogeneous) social communities. This is not accounted for in MSW. Also, MSW provides a rather conventional picture of perception, memory, action, intention (38) in terms “direction of fit”, i.e. whether they are imposed (received) from outside or chosen from inside. Actually, these processes are more of interactions; what about perception as *action? Briefly, Searle has no dialogist theory.

---

7 Initially, and still to some extent (cf. above), Searle’s theories are reminiscent of Chomskyanism. But there is a great difference; Chomsky’s theorising stays within the structural relations of language, in the end producing an absurd meta-theory. But Searle’s philosophy sees language in society; language makes human societies and civilisations possible. Moreover, Searle has declared that the Chomskyan revolution has reached its end (cf. Linell, 2010).
Searle belongs to a logical-philosophical and formal-linguistic tradition. He calls his MSW theory a “conceptual evolutionary account” (94). Its analyses may have some attraction on an abstract level, but on closer empirical examination they do not hold true. Why? Because they build upon a simplistic non-dialogical (non-interactional, non-contextual) theory of the relations between individuals and their environments, e.g. in assuming unidirectional causal processes, *representations etc. (MSW: 40). Searle (e.g. MSW: 4) wants to stick to an ontology going from “basic” levels to higher levels: physics > chemistry > neurophysiology > biology > mind > organism + environment > social world. But this hierarchy is not absolute. Arguably, there is also “downward” causation and feedback. For example, the mind is influenced, indeed constituted, by having the environment as content.

Self: Perspectives and positions

RETH (ch. 6) discusses the individual self against the backdrop of the work of, among others, Freud, James, Mead, Bateson, Goffman and Bakhtin. The question is, among other considerations, whether the self is united (coherent) or split (or both). A recent theory is that of Salgado & Gonçalves, who claim that the self contains both continuities and discontinuities. van Lier (2004) also discusses self as multi-aspectual vs. different (split) selves. In particular, he raises Neisser’s (1988) five aspects of the self (van Lier, op.cit.: 115ff.).

The nature and relations of the self to others and the environment is today the favourite topic of ‘dialogical self theory’ (various works by Hubert Hermans and collaborators). The various voices of the split self are internalisations of different ‘I-positions’ (RETH: 136), i.e. position(ing)s that a person can occupy in relation to other individuals and groups, within different activity types and situations, etc. Here I will not attempt to characterise the dialogical self theory in any detail (see the work of Hermans). One point is that the theory focuses very much on the self (‘I’), perhaps at the cost of attending to interactivities between sense-makers, arguably the home basis of DTs. Dialogical self theory seems to appeal to clinical psychology, psychotherapy and Bakhtinian texts analysis (polyvocality).

Here, I shall instead focus on a few general relations between the individual self and his/her interrelations with the ecoshocial environment. One important distinction in psychology is that between a participant’s perspective (‘I’ is an agent who participates with others and experience social relations from the point of view of co-action, empathy, and morality; an existential perspective cultivated by, among others, Kierkegaard) and an observer’s perspective (‘I’ is a neutral and distanced observer who tries to describe the social world, not just te physical world, objectively). Gillespie (2012) notes that these two attitudes are related to identification and distantiation, which – he argues – are two complementary aspects of “agency. Sometimes these relations of self to the social environment are called “1. person perspective” and “3. person perspective”, respectively. Both are well-known in the theory and methodology of psychology. The discussion can be recontextualised into one of *morality and ethics.

Within dialogism one can associate these two relations with Buber’s (1922) famous "I-thou" (ich–du) and "I-it" (ich–es) relations. In the first case, self looks at the other as another sense-maker, with potentially the same, or similar, mental abilities, value, rights and obligations as oneself. In more religious terms, it implies treating the other as “one’s neighbour”. It could therefore also be called “2. person perspective”, since it implies that self also tries to look at him/herself from the other’s perspective; what is commonly called “1. person perspective” is rather “2. person orientation framed within a 1. person perspective” (after all, there is an asymmetry: self is the origo of the outlook, one cannot completely take another’s position/perspective).

For Buber the application of an “I-it” perspective onto other human beings implies (ultimately) that one looks at them as “things”, objectively, as one looks at nature. Of course, in mundane reality, we cannot avoid mixing perspectives in our relations to other people, oscillating between more of co-participant’s
perspectives and observer’s perspectives. Buber suggests that God is the ultimate addressee of our attempts at being human (Nordin, 2011: 211). This resonates with Bakhtin’s idea of God as the super-addressee (cf. RETH: 133).

Semantics vs pragmatics

This distinction has been conceived of in several ways (Allwood, 1981). A standard view is that of meaning as codified in the language system (these “linguistic meanings” are to be seen as meaning potentials according to RETH: ch. 15) vs. the creation of situated sense-making in * languaging (language use). Sinha & Rodriguez (2008: 367) provide a semiotic interpretation in terms of the notions of ‘counting as’ (cultural, therefore abstract-contextual) vs. ‘standing for’ (situated). But there appear to be other cases, such as “Vygotsky’s handkerchief” (the meaning of the knot as a mnemonic device) which is seemingly “half cultural”. Zlatev (2008: 219) also talks about “standing for” as part of an embodied semiotic act.

A matter of dispute is the relationship between semantic meaning and pragmatic meaning (speaker’s or situated meaning). One extreme view is that situated meaning is simply an token (occurrence, occasioned copy) of the semantic meaning of the linguistic resource (e.g. lexical item, sentence meaning). This would only apply to ‘literal’ meaning, not to indirect, implied or metaphorical meanings and tropes. This theory would mean that a language is a code, a set of fixed pairs of meanings and expressions. More specifically, the idea of literal meaning is untenable as a general theory (Romme, 1988; Linell, 2005). These theories cannot be made compatible with dialogism, which instead may posit semantic meaning as meaning potentials (RETH).

Semantic meanings (potentials) interact with situated resources in the generation of situated meanings. (For a discussion of spontaneous mishearings according to this theory, see Linell, 2013d.) Semantic meanings contribute to, rather than determine, situated meanings. Yet, the relationship between semantics and pragmatics is often discussed in terms of ‘determination’. Interestingly, one can talk about both over-determination and under-determination in this context. It is often said that utterances are redundant in that the same meaning aspect is expressed by several expression aspects. For example, temporal relations are often expressed by both finite verb forms and time adverbials. Thus, situated meaning would be partly “over-determined” by semantic meanings. If language units are designed for use in discourse, then these different resources of language may contain the same semantic information at several locations in language as a totality. Empirical research also supports the idea of “rich” linguistic resources and semantic memory (Bybee, 2010).

However, language as such also under-determines situated meanings, since the specification of situated meanings presupposes the use of various other semiotic and situation-bound resources (cf. above on *meaning-making). Hanks (1996: ch. 7) talks about as “saturation by context”. However, it is not only a question of situated “enrichment” (cf. below), but sometimes also of downplaying or even cancellation of parts of semantic potentialities in the linguistic items deployed (RETH: ch. 15). Hanks also points to the fact that in many situations a common language is neither necessary nor sufficient for people to understand each other (op.cit.: 229).

The theses of semantic under-determination and pragmatic enrichment in context are legion in modern pragmatics (e.g. Carston, 2002; Recanati, 2004; RETH, p. 331ff). Since situated meanings are seldom determined by language itself (language is not a code), participants in interactions often negotiate meanings. In order to achieve some mutual understanding, they may need minimally three turns (A’s first utterance (U1), B’s response (U2) to U1, A’s reaction to U2 (in relation to, among other things, U1) (Clark, 1996; RETH, p. 183). This “interlocutory logic” is demonstrated analytically and empirically by Trognon & Batt, 2010). RETH discusses this in a critical assessment of the CA idea of the adjacency pair as basic. (The adjacency pair is, according to RETH, a secondary consequence of the relationality of dialogue.
contributions, their responsive-projective/initiatory (backwards vs. forward-pointing) properties. See *ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis). Actually, Schegloff and CA embrace the idea of the importance of the third-positioned turn. This is clearly demonstrated in Schegloff’s discussion of “third-turn repair” (Schegloff, 1991; cf. Trognon & Batt, op.cit.: 14).

**Semiotics**

In RETH there is not much about semiotics and semiotic mediation. One may wonder why. Here I provide a few points on semiotics.

1. Semiotics was traditionally a rather static discipline (Saussure, Ogden, even Peirce), related to the Written Language Bias in linguistics (Linell, 2005). For example, what is arguably a signing language for the deaf is conventionally called sign language, an effect of the WLB. Nowadays there is more of dynamics, for example in the domain of gesture studies. Another example is Goodwin’s theories of sense-making in *languaging.*

2. The term *semiosis* can be taken to mean the same as sense-making. In this context some of the issues are the following. Is sense-making always *mediated* through language or other tools (Vygotsky, Wertsch), or can it be *direct*, i.e. more or less unmediated (e.g. deafblindborn feeling the vibrations in the partner’s body; fully-sensed, literate persons can experience this too, in intimate situations). Is sensory perception mediated by concepts and language? Or is perception not part of sense-making proper? (*mediation*). A dialogist would want to include pre-semiotic processes in the meta-theory (*intersubjectivity*).

3. A specific type of semiotic theory is biosemiotics (e.g. Cowley et al., 2010), with roots in von Uexküll’s Umwelt theory (*Umwelt* being the animal’s environment in the sense of its lived, phenomenal world, the world as it presents itself to that animal thanks to is sensorimotor repertoire*, Thomson, 2007: 59), biogenetics (Maturana & Varela) and the enactive approach (Thompson, 2007; *enaction*). This focuses on the individual’s perception of and action in the world (the environment, Umwelt) (cf. RETH, § 6.11), and tends to home in on the biological foundation at the expense of culture. Hence there is a “dialogical deficit” in this approach, as indicated by the following points (cf. *action, perception and cognition together; *enaction*):

a. the role of the other is largely neglected; yet others are directly and/or indirectly central in self’s sense-makings;

b. related to this, there are cognitive artefacts, and culture (sets of norms, expectations, purposes and values connected to activity types);

c. while biological life is a precondition for sense-making, the two notions (life, sense-making) are not equivalent. If intra/inter-cellular processes and other biological systems are code-like (Cowley et al., 2010), language is not (Linell, 2013a). Information and meaning must not be equated.

d. there are differences between conscious and non-conscious processes in languaging*. Self-organisation fits non-conscious aspects better than conscious aspects (Linell, 2013a).

**Sharedness**

Despite the insight that there is a considerable dialectal, idiolectal and sociolectal variation among (competent) members of any language community (such as that pertaining to a “national” language), it is commonly and implicitly assumed even among professional linguists that community members somehow share the same linguistic system (a specific “language”). This is particularly true of “theoretical” linguists
who are not concerned with social or psychological realities (cf. for example, Chomsky’s (1965: 3) well-known assumption of the language system as being internalised in the “ideal speaker-listener” within “a completely homogeneous speech-community”). While the idea of the shared language may be sustained in a very loose common-sensical sense, it cannot be posited as a taken-for-granted scientific working hypothesis. In actual fact, sharedness is simply incomplete. One may even doubt the idea of the *single language.

A dialogist meta-theory would assume that languages are only partially shared by `members`. The same applies to situated understandings of linguistic utterances and messages (Rommetveit, 1974). It is a monologist assumption that a language can be described as completely shared; in monologism the `code model` of language (RETH: 36) is even taken as a necessary assumption if we believe that communication in and through language is possible at all. DTs, by contrast, assume that communication, by means of semiotic and contextual resources, is a matter of achieving sufficient understandings for current practical purposes (RETH: 39); the notion of “complete” (completely shared) understanding does not work in an empirical theory of human existence.

`Sharedness` is a term that is often used together with, and even as synonymous with, terms like `commonality` and `mutuality`. A possible distinction is that `commonality` be used as what is “objectively” common (e.g. in terms of knowledge, skills, history, bibliographies) to the individuals or groups involved, irrespective of whether this `common ground` (Clark, 1996) is used by them in communication or thinking, or whether it is conscious or unknown to the people themselves. `Sharedness` might then refer to aspects that are, consciously or unwittingly, observably exploited by parties to interaction. Note again that it makes more sense to speak about “partial sharedness”; “complete sharedness” or “complete commonality” is virtually non-existent in a more thorough analysis.

`Mutuality` refers to reciprocities that parties to an interaction entertain about each other and possibly build upon in their actual enactions. Parties have, or set up, assumptions about the other and the other’s assumptions about him-or herself and yourself. In principle, this may give rise to infinite regressions: “I know that x”, “You assume that I know x”, “I think that you assume that I know x”, “You think that I think that you assume that I know x”, and so on. Those who believe in `theory of mind (ToM)` * talk about these increasingly complex assumptions as ‘levels of mentality’. It is probably unrealistic to hypothesise that people in everyday life situations attain more than, say, three levels.

The notions/terms of commonality, sharedness and mutuality have been discussed by many, including Graumann (1995).

**Singular (national) languages and superdiversities**

DTs tend to point to hybridities and heterogeneities in language, and to activity languages and communicative genres at some dispense of monolithic national languages (RETH: 282ff). I have argued for *intersubjectivities and interactivities in the plural (Linell, 2014). Somewhat similarly, the analysis of trust and distrust in interaction points to the existence of many quite different form of trust (basic trust vs. reflected, strategic and limited trust; micro-social vs. macro-social trust, etc.) (Linell & Marková, 2013). The study of moral aspects in communication points to pre- and proto-morality (felt immediacy) vs. reflected morality (ethical stance-taking) (e.g. Linell & Rommetveit, 1998). Similar points could be made about authenticity in language and communication (Lacoste et al., 2013/forthc.). One can also point to pre-logical vs logical thinking or cognition. Wouldn’t it then follow that we should talk about hybrid systems (meshworks) of languaging rather than single monolithic languages (such as English and Swedish)?
It is therefore interesting that some sociolinguists have started to talk about ‘superdiversities’ instead of (single) languages, when referring to highly mixed systems of linguistic resources used primarily in big cities and other urban areas (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011; Duarte & Gogolin, 2013). This has raised problems with well-established sociolinguistic notions like the single unitary (sometimes national) language, bilingualism, multilingualism, code-switching etc. My provisional response to this trend is this. First of all, national languages are widely regarded as political and academic constructions (RETH: 286). On the other hand, the mixed varieties (“superdiversities”) are still marginal phenomena in relation to the vast majority of systems of languaging. Cases of abrupt code switches have not disappeared. I also suspect that mixed systems, despite the difficulties for outsiders of comprehending the vernacular languaging using them, could be shown (by linguistic analysis) to be built primarily on a core of one source language (such as English or Swedish) with regard to phonology, morphology, some basic aspects of syntax and vocabulary, etc.

This is not to deny that "superdiversities" are a significant phenomenon which will – in all probability – increase in importance in the future. In addition, the study of them will surely testify to the importance of another aspect, namely that verbal language is here (increasingly?) mixed into communication systems including a lot of other semiotic resources, than language proper including artefacts, writing, body language etc. (see *languaging).

**Situations**

Situations are part of sense-making (RETH). We must distinguish between singular situations (occasions when particular persons are mutually co-present in a certain place and at a certain time, doing particular things) and social situation types (kinds of situations recurring in the culture and almost always linked to communicative activity types (= CATs)). Situations and situation types promote, enhance or facilitate a particular interpretation of a message (cf. e.g. Linell, 2013d). In this context, Brinck (2008) talks about situational ‘scaffolding’.
**Speech and writing**

Language, speech and writing are three basic notions in the philosophy and theories of language(s). (See also *languaging; *language in a theory of languaging). All three can be applied either to the language-specific level or to a general level (the specific language system and the general faculty of language, cf. French: *langue vs. langage*). Language vs. speech/speaker is a time-honoured and almost ubiquitous distinction in modern linguistics (Saussure, Bloomfield etc.). For Saussure, *la langue* is associated with collectivity and systematicity (‘le système où tout se tient’), *la parole* with individuals and unpredictability. It is significant that the need for a distinction was felt for language vs. speech, rather than language vs. writing. Actually, for DT, the latter would be more obvious, since language and speech are mutually closer in a theory of *languaging. However, the fact that language vs. speech was adopted in structuralism indicates that speech was seen as the use of language (the language system), and writing usually as a trivial secondary representation of speech. By contrast, let us here dwell on speech vs. writing for a while.

Spoken languaging is multimodal behaviour. It can be characterised as a flow of actions, gestures, behaviours or movements (on a scale from meaningful events to physical movements). Rather than having the properties conventionally associated with language (cf. below under ‘writing’), it exhibits:

- no formal features, rules or derivations (at least not *prima facie*); rules, symbols etc. are not part of the essence of bodily behaviours;
- no autonomy from non-verbal dimensions;
- no spatial dimensions, but rather temporal distribution: we can talk about initial, medial, final segments (phases), rather than left vs. right peripheries;
- it consists of embodied utterances produced by somebody.

Writing and written language, by contrast, can be naturally described as:

- consisting of symbols (concretely, inscribed, usually as texts, on physical substrates, e.g. paper) with abstract interpretations; these symbols sometimes take the shape of formulas, especially in certain genres, such as mathematics, logic (and in linguistic descriptions of “natural language” in especially generative linguistics);
- segregated, autonomous language; language can be seen as different, even unique, among semiotic resources (although there are integrative aspects in the production and reception (reading) processes);
- having spatial but no temporal properties; a sentence has no time dimension (only when read aloud); it is, as it were, outside of time;
- once produced, a text is independent of its producer; it is there (permanently) on paper.

That these (and many more) writing-related features have still been ascribed (by linguists and people in general) to spoken language and, especially, to language in general (the allegedly invariant system underlying both speech and writing) represents a far-reaching ‘written language bias’ in linguistics and Western culture at large (Linell, 2005). Thus, we are faced with a kind of cultural interpretation imposed on spoken languaging which is strongly influenced with literacy. In DT, we should explicate, language, speech and writing in terms of where (when, why) they appear in (biological and cultural) evolution (in phylogensis, ontogenesis, socio-historically, in relation to situation types) and what they are actually constituted of.
Speech is semiotic, corporeal behaviours with a long biological-cultural evolution. Writing is a cultural invention. Writing has appeared under the influence of spoken languaging (and its semiotic resources), but it was originally largely independent of speaking. Written language is a collective invention with a long past of cultural evolution, which gradually brought it closer to spoken language (and to some extent, both have changed in a process of mutual influencing). Under these circumstances, when is it appropriate to speak of the same language?

- Most but not all features of WL have their counterparts in SL, and vice versa. In some genres of WL, we have symbols that cannot be read out directly, e.g. in mathematics algebraic symbols (x, y, a, b…), arithmetic symbols (figures: 1, 2, 3 …) and operators (+, −, x, ∑, √, ∫, dx/dy, …). Speech has many dimensions (prosodic, gestural etc) with no conventional counterparts in writing.

- Even if we compare parts of WL and SL that could be transposed to the other medium, i.e. speech being written down, and written texts being read aloud, there are strong differences in terms of linguistic structure. Although we can and do do so in certain genres, we do not talk, in impromptu speech at least, only in terms of complete clauses, let alone well-formed demarcated sentences. There are many grammatical constructions that are never used in writing (e.g. Linell, 2013b). Speech and writing are not entirely mutually convertible as systems; they are therefore at least partly different semiotic systems (cf. Benveniste, 1966).

- In genetic and evolutionary terms, speech and writing have quite different backgrounds. Speech is a more or less natural development, whereas writing is a cultural invention. Writing may have a background in decorative inscriptions (ornamentation), with no relations to speech. Later, writing began to be used for marking ownership, listing (recording) goods (in stores, households etc.), making simple calculations and measurements, etc., which are largely independent of direct pronunciations, but do not seem to have been possible without an oral culture. When writing was first invented, it was not a representation of speech. Such functions were developed only fairly recently in cultural evolution.

- Speech emerges in the infant’s and child’s natural interactions with adults (and peers). Writing is usually taught at school. However, many children in Western countries, especially children in educated and perhaps broadly middle-class environments, start to read out letters and read whole words, under the guidance of adults, and they indulge in using letters and writing words, even whole sentences and simple narratives, often combined with drawings, etc. In this kind of ‘emergent literacy’ (Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Söderbergh, 2013 [1997]), production abilities is at least on a par with reading abilities; thus, the whole development is significantly different from advanced education. Writing and reading are no longer necessarily postponed until children have a native-like speaking competence; seen from this ontogenetic perspective, writing is not simply a secondary representation of speaking (cf. previous point).

- In evolutionary terms, speech is primary. Not all communities have writing. That speech is primary holds even today in a highly technologically advanced society. Written records of possibly spoken originals now comes forth as a derivate, or abstraction from speaking.

These and other points show that speech and writing are really not the same, especially if we look upon them in an evolutionary perspective. On the other hand, in recent enturies, they have come closer together. (But what about the impact of new media?) But speech and writing are still more different than being different manifestations of the same language.

Finally, from a DT point-of-view, it would be appropriate to point out that the traditional linguistic discourse on language, speech and writing is mainly or only interested in the active party in the production of speech and writing. There is not much attention to recipients, and other participants. In a DT perspective, the *other parties are of course important. This includes third parties too, i.e. secondary,
peripheral, remote others (RETH: ch. 5), as well as generalised others (cf. anybody who has a "native-like" competence in the specific language). One particular category that should be invoked among the players in language is the linguists, whose task it is to describe, prescribe and theorise language (and languaging); they also influence it.

Texts

Texts are not treated at any length in RETH. Yet, the use of and orientation to texts of various kinds are often central also in talk-in-interaction. In a dialogical approach, texts are preferably treated in terms of texts events, i.e. situations in which human beings make sense of the texts, as parts of their activities of producing, reading and interpreting, discussing and revising texts etc.

There are several 'dialogical' aspects of texts and text events:

(i) The relation between the human sense-maker and the text as a source of resources (affordances) for sense-making (see (ii)). In different phases, this relationship can take different shapes; Engeström (2008) talks about 'double stimulation' if the human user first creates or constructs the sign/tool/text and then uses it to control him/herself and the environment.

(ii) The text is a cognitive artefact, which owes its sense-inducing affordances to the fact that it contains inscriptions made in a language which has to be known (in principle) to its author/reader. However, the text itself has no agency as such, and cannot therefore be said to have 'dialogicality' in a strict sense. Yet, many talk about "dialogical texts". This should be seen as a metaphorical usage; strictly speaking, only human beings have dialogicality (but see *agency, on computers etc.).

(iii) Yet, in and through its inscriptions a text can mediate and convey meaning from other human sense-makers, in particular its author. But it is the reader who makes meaning or sense, especially if there is no direct or indirect interaction with the author. Also, texts can work as boundary objects across situations (RETH: 347).

(iv) Texts can be said to be “internally” dialogical, if the text contains different, mutually discernable voices. This is Bakhtin's notion of the 'multi-voiced text' (cf. RETH: 169, 172). It is as if the text contains the traces of different speakers, with different perspectives (voices). The text can also contain more or less explicit references to other texts. Accordingly, this constitutes a more or less manifest 'intertextuality', relating the text under study, via the presence of traces of other texts, to the different voices in the ecology of the text.

Perhaps, the fourth point is the one which has most frequently given rise to the notion of “dialogical text”. In a sense, this implies the assumption of a notion of "text as such", in addition to the “physical texts” (marks on paper or computer screen) and “texts as interpreted by human sense-makers in particular text events”.

Themata

Marková (2003), following Moscovici & Vignaux (1994), draws attention to cultural themata that are taken for granted in common-sense thinking in specific cultural contexts (RETH: 133). They are close to the cores of social representations (e.g. Moscovici, 2000), and dominant discourses in Foucault’s theorising. Another related notion is doxa (RETH: 59). Themata tend to dominate common sense but can

These points have been pointed out by Antti Rajala.
change over time. Examples are common conceptions of madness (from earlier ideas of holiness and higher wisdom to psychiatric illnesses), sexuality (from something harmful for human character to something indicating or even causing normality, utility and well-being) and nature (from something evil to be domesticated to something good that must not be subject to incisive manipulation by human beings).

**Theoretical physics**

Theories of classical physics are quite different from dialogical theories of human sense-making. But it is sometimes suggested that DT is more akin to some theories of modern theoretical physics. The similarities between Einstein’s relativity theory and relationism in human sciences have been noted by linguists, such as Roman Jakobson. See RETH: 403, 418 on Bohr and Barad.

Other ideas and aspects of DTs that may be brought up in this connection are external reality as affordances (cf. ‘postphenomenology’ according to Ihde, 1993; Hasse, 2008). Compare also indeterminacy of meaning (*semantics vs pragmatics) to “unstable materiality” and Heisenberg’s theories of indeterminacy in physics.

**Theory of Mind (ToM)**

Theory of Mind (ToM) is an exceptionally clear example of an individualist-monologist theory of a phenomenon (mutual social perception and understanding, primarily through interaction) that is in actual fact eminently “dialogical” in nature. The alternative dialogist theory, or an “embodied “Interaction Theory” of social cognition” (Gallagher & Hutto, 2008: 17), would see the understanding of others’ minds as more or less “direct” and an outgrowth of interactional, embodied practices – practices that are from the innate start “emotional, sensory-motor, perceptual and non-conceptual” (p. 20).

ToM has been criticised in fundamental ways by many dialogically-minded scholars; see in particular Gallagher & Hutto (2008) and other articles in Zlatev et al. (2008a), and Leudar & Costal (2009), and references there. Some points in summary are the following:

A. ToM constitutes an attempt on the part of cognitivists to tackle social interaction and others’ cognitions. It does *not* start out from assumptions of intersubjectivity in the human mind (Zlatev et al., 2008a); instead, for ToM theorists it is a (great) problem how individual minds can understand other minds.

Cognitivism is a theoretical approach within cognitive science which, briefly put, assumes the following (cf. also Zlatev et al., 2008b):

a) cognition consists in information processing; representation and modelling are therefore central concepts;

b) cognition takes place in the brain (it is “intracranial”) (the mind is assumed to be entirely reducible to brain functioning);

c) cognition is an individual (rather than social) activity; there are no collective minds that could process information.

B. ToM appears in two primary forms (Gallagher & Hutto, 2008:18). The main variant assumes that understanding the other presupposes a *theory* of the other: “theory theory of mind (=TToM)”. Since we cannot directly perceive or understand what the other is up to, one’s self (or rather: mind/brain) has to make indirectly based inferences about what the other may have in mind. If, according to TToM, a person
has a ToM, this is localised in a particular module of the brain. TToM has therefore strong similarities with Chomskyian modular theories of language (LAD, UG).

The other interpretation of ToM is the "simulation theory" (embraced even by dialogists like Bråten, 2002: discussion on mirror neurons). This does not involve a theory of the other; rather, one somehow simulates, or empathises with, the other’s situation, doings and thoughts.

Here I shall deal primarily with TToM.

C. ToM has primarily been concerned with the issue why small children have difficulties in distinguishing what they themselves know and what they know or assume that other people know. The main research method has been the ‘false belief’ experiments on young children. The standard experiment is something like this: The subject person, a young child, watches a puppet show, in which one girl Sally, actually a doll, places a ball under a pillow in the sofa. After this, Sally leaves the room and another girl (doll) Anne enters, walks up to the sofa, takes out the ball from under the pillow, and then hides the ball behind the curtain. Anne leaves and Sally enters the room again. Sally has been told to pick up the ball. The subject is asked: Where will Sally look for the ball? Reportedly, small children (roughly up to 4 years of age) will respond "behind the curtain", evidently because they know that this is where the ball is), while 4,5-year-olds mostly give the ("correct") answer "under the pillow".

D. Dialogists, and like-minded people, have accused ToM for being conceptually confused (see Leudar & Costall, 2009a, with various contributions). According to some critics, this applies in particular to TToM, according to others more or less to all variants of ToM (Sharrock & Coulter, 2009). The papers in Leudar & Costall, 2009a: (Against Theory of Mind) are all strongly critical, some, however, in my opinion too negative, verbose and repetitive (e.g. Sharrock & Coulter, 2009).

E. Even though ToM is a misconceived theoretical framework, in need of a better alternative (dialogical theory, see also Gallagher & Hutto, op.cit.), of course we cannot contest some of the facts:

   a) Children do develop their "mentalising ability" (the favourite term in ToM) over time; we learn to see through others’ ambiguous or deceitful behaviours. However, the ability to discover hidden intentions presupposes an earlier ability to read off feelings and intentions from others’ embodied comportment (Gallagher & Hutto, op.cit.: 23); advanced mentalisation in detecting deceitful behaviours is the exceptional case;

   b) Thus, we do not contest robust results on age differences in this ability. But ToM does not have a proper theory of these facts;

   c) There are “inner mental events”, e.g. thoughts, dreams, hallucinations etc. But these deploy material that has its origin in the “outer” public world (*cognition). Furthermore, thoughts are not always kept secret; in fact, they often co-occur with overt actions, and that is the normal cas.

Let us now take a look at some fundamental problems with ToM:

1. ToM treats the mind of the other as something completely concealed, inside the skull, something about which one must develop "theories". BUT normal social interaction supplies rich information about the other’s thoughts, reactions, intentions, emotions, doings, and this applies a fortiori to interaction directed to and co-constituted with infants and children. In most social interactions, the mind is thus partly on display; in other words, we live in a common life-world (e.g. Zlatev et al., 2008b: 3) and can “directly” observe a lot of "mental states" (Sharrock & Coulter, 2009: 66). Meanings, trust/distrust and moral stances are “displayed, and made visible and ascribable on the basis of actors’ actions and discourse” (Jayyusi, 1991: 243). (Thus, participation is more basic than *intention.) Others’ intentions leak out; intentional behaviour can be observed by second or third persons. Of course, people (except very young
children) can lie, betray others, have secrets and fake trust and intentions, but this is not the default case, especially not with children.

In addition, as already indicated, we talk about thoughts, feelings, intentions etc., often in the presence of observable evidence. Schegloff (1991) comments on “the socially shared world” and the role of interaction: “[O]ur understanding of the world and of one another is posed as a problem and resolved as an achievement, in an inescapably social and interactional context [...]” (1991: 168; cf. Trognon & Batt, 2010: 18).

Indeed, that the mind is concealed, and especially intentionally concealed, mainly applies to specific situations, usually involving adults rather than small children:

a) somebody is engrossed in solo thinking or silent reading or listening, situations in which little of the content of one’s thoughts is disclosed (or can be disclosed, for practical or cultural reasons);

b) somebody is involved in wilfully trying to conceal something from the other, cheating or lying. Hence, wilful or intended deception is the problem, not normal social interaction. (Case (b) arguably applies to ToM ‘false belief’ experiments)

It seems that ToM takes, in effect, cases like (a-b) to be basic in human existence, rather than (as we would argue) exceptional. Thus, contrary to ToM suppositions, the issue is more about concealing (and gradually becoming accustomed to concealing) what we know, believe, feel etc.; it is not primarily, as ToM argues, about unobservable mental states. (This is of course not to deny that there are aspects of thinking and feeling that are largely inaccessible to others. Some are in fact inaccessible to ourselves as well!) (pace Freud and others). Intentions are derived and ascribed on the basis of direct observation of others, and on talk about actions. (Monologism, e.g. ToM, puts things upside down; deriving meaning from intentions.)

Gallagher & Hutto (2008: 26) point out that false-belief experiments have mainly been conducted with European and American subjects, “whose early lives are awash with folk psychological narratives encountered in fairy tales, children books, comic books, television and films”, in which characters talk a lot about deception. This should serve to demystify the phenomenon somewhat.

Instead of assuming the existence of theories and inferencing, we should stress the importance of practical reason (Gallagher & Hutto, op.cit.: 23ff: “pragmatic intersubjectivity”). (As regards Swedish literature, Gärdenfors, who bases his account on mentalisation theory (ToM) does talk about some nuances, e.g. Gomez on “uppmärksamhetskontakt”. According to Gärdenfors (?), a more dialogistic variant of ToM is Busch (2008).

2. Faithful to its monologism, ToM takes its point of departure entirely in the individual’s (self’s) own mind (cf. Descartes), as if understanding of self entirely precedes the understanding of the other (“methodological solipsism”; Schegloff, 1991). According to dialogism, self and other co-develop (RETH: chs 5-6).

ToM presupposes that I myself have a mind, and that I use it to ascribe to the other a similar one. But my (fully developed) mind is not there from the beginning. Instead I begin to understand that I myself have a mind partly by observing the others’ doings, signs and utterances. The others show me who I am and what kind of mind I have (cf. Mead’s ‘me’: *I and me). Self’s mind and (my conception of) other’s mind develop in tandem. Moreover, as was pointed out above, the other’s mind is not completely concealed. On the contrary, you can see the other’s mind in his doings, signs and utterances.

3. ToM is very dependent on the notion of ‘inner world’. There seem to be two rather trivial backgrounds for assuming an ‘inner world’:

a) every consciousness (mind) need an individual brain (inside the head);
b) thoughts, intentions are not always overly (publicly) communicated (they remain “inner”).

The “inner world” is a convenient metaphor from everyday language, but ToM adherents do not appear to have added any kind of depth of understanding and intention (theorisation) to it.

4. ToM is an overintellectualising theory (Leudar & Costall, 2009b: “profoundly intellectualizing social interactions”): meanings are portrayed as being always derived from logical assumptions (“theory”), from which claims are inferred by logic (esp. TToM), rather than being more or less directly read off from behaviours and interactions. This is as if languaging was all about retrieving and transfer of information; the role of (need for) social recognition and credibility is ignored. This also ignores the interdependence between knowledge, belief etc (cognition) and emotions, interests etc. Another point is the role of trust, which seems to be completely absent from ToM (on the ubiquitous presence of trust assumptions in human life, see Linell & Marková, 2013.)

5. The task in the false-belief experiments, and the whole ToM theory, are set up (though of course not explicitly or consciously), as if everything is seen from the perspective of the adult intellectual human being, who does not communicate his thoughts (der Denker). This amounts to starting out from the full-blown system or the maximally competent adult with a high degree of “mentalisation” (cf. Chomsky etc.). Again, seen from a dialogist point-of-view, this is a highly questionable point of departure; one could instead adopt a dynamic, genetic (developmental) perspective (RETH: § 12.2).

ToM theorists take a third-person, observer’s stance. As Gallagher & Hutto (2008: 19) put it, “rather, our everyday encounters with others tend to be second-person and interactive.”

It seems as if some of the most ardent proponents of ToM themselves lack a “ToM module/capacity”? Such a view-point would even imply that ToM is a male kind of theorising, over-intellectualising, with no empathetic feeling for interactional realities.

6. The idea of different levels of ‘mentalisation’, i.e. recursive levels of assumptions about what is in others’ minds, is a logical construct, but “it rarely exists as a concept in the minds of participants” (Gillespie & Cornish, 2012: 26). (For example, “Harry told us that Sally believes that Tom thinks that Sue suspects that Bill is cheating” would involve mentalisation of the fifth degree.) Gillespie & Cornish argue that already (what would be) mentalisation of the third degree (what they call “meta-meta-perspectives”) is empirically suspect.

7. The previous point (#6) implies that ToM is a case of making methodology into ontology (*ontologisation of method). ToM is explored in and through experiments (the false-belief experiments) in which one tries to isolate the putative ToM capacity from other potentially confounding variables. This methodology does of course not warrant any conclusion to the effect that ToM is independent of, or not intertwined with, other abilities and various contextual conditions. Nonetheless, TToM assumes that people have a specific, circumscribed ToM module in the brain. This is a case of reinterpreting artefacts of researchers’ methodology into properties of real people’s brains/bodies/minds (just like Chomsky does with a generative grammar, as argued by Rommetveit, 1974; also Ingold).

8. The ToM false-belief experiment is just as much about cheating children as about exploring abilities of mentalisation. In fact, ToM experiments seem to involve cheating at two levels; one character (Sally) in the discourse world is being cheated, and the child subject (in the interaction situation) is being cheated, by being put in a special language game in which one is not supposed to report what one knows to be the truth. Here the child subject knows that the ball is behind the curtain. Children are accustomed to telling (serious) strangers the truth. Here, one would expect child subjects to try to satisfy the experimenter; if (s)he wants to know where the ball is, the child will provide the best answer it can.

BUT children are accustomed to being shown how things are and to be supplied with talk truthfully supporting reality. Situations in which trying to cheat another is involved are usually carried out with a
special keying in interaction; the adult’s behaviours would be cued as joking or non-serious, or a special interactional mode in which one is joking and talking about cheating. One does not normally seriously and genuinely cheat a child, like in a ToM experiment, which amounts to a kind of cheating combined with a serious information-giving mode of talking on the part of the adult experimenter.

This should remind us of the importance of analysing activity types, esp. CATs involving "languageing. Do child subjects understand the test situation (experiment, communicative activity type, language game)? Or do they just want to be helpful by providing information about what they think is the truth, especially when they meet with unknown adult persons? Do child subjects understand enough of language, and differences between similar utterances (ability to make fine linguistic discriminations; Sharrock & Coulter, 76). Do they attend to the difference "where will Sally look for the ball" – "where should Sally..." (where we know it is) – "where does Sally believe the ball is?" Can children keep in mind that Sally has not seen Anne moving the ball, or that she has not been told about the move? That is, has the child subject been told that Sally does not know where the ball is (that Sally has not been told that Anne has moved the ball)? (Nothing is said about what Sally has been up to in the meantime, when she was out of the room). If not, is not that unfair to the child (who does not know about all relevant premises)? The child subject knows where the ball is, why shouldn’t Sally have got to know?

One could have used an alternative instruction, something like the following: “Anne has put the ball behind the curtain. But we are not interested in Anne but in Sally. Sally put the ball under the pillow and she has not been told that Anne moved it afterwards. Where will Sally look for the ball?” However, if we use this instruction, the experimenter might object that it amounts to giving the child too much help! But this is, (fortunately,) the way we treat children in normal everyday situations.

All in all, the experiment design requires from the child that he or she should ignore what is currently the case (that Anne has put the ball behind the curtain, which the child knows) and instead return to something that happened earlier (that Sally put the ball behind the pillow) which is no longer relevant or true.

9. Another critique of ToM is that there is evidence that children younger than 4 years of age are sometimes capable of telling lies, pointing selectively to objects in the environment that are new to others (thus presupposing some idea of what these others "know" already), behaving differently in front of other human beings than in front of toy animals (presupposing, perhaps, that others have minds), etc., things that should be impossible according to ToM, since according to the theory, infants and toddlers cannot "mentalise". Reddy & Morris (2009) adduces this evidence against ToM, which is obsessed with representations and "psychology’s commitment to epistemic detachment" (p. 92) (cf. above #3). They instead make recourse to a theory of "social engagement": "In engagement, […], the infant is not observing others as objects, from a third-person perspective, but rather is experiencing them as intentional beings in relation with their own intentionality, as second persons." (p. 105). In interaction, we express our thoughts, intentions and feelings, for the other to experience (more or less) directly (Sharrock & Coulter, 66; Reddy & Morris, 104, etc.), but ToM theorists seem to presume a world without people’s (and children’s) own ideas, feelings, plans, emotions, consciousness ("knowing with others"), psychodynamics and self-other relations.

10. Sharrock & Coulter (2009) argue that there are only two psychological meta-theories around, cognitivism and behaviourism, that both are misconceived, and that both are mixed and confused in ToM theorising. They also claim (rightfully) that ToM theorists have not understood the role of language/languageing in relation to cognition, communication, social intercourse, etc. (they themselves lean against theories by Wittgenstein and Ryle). But Sharrock & Coulter’s own position is characterised by the lack of a positive alternative (p. 58: "our position implies no psychological theory whatever"). But there is an alternative: dialogical theory in which embodied actions are assumed to be meaningful (or "embodied Interaction Theory", as described by Gallagher & Hutto, op.cit.). This goes against both mentalism (Sharrock & Coulter’s term: meaning is mental, unobservable but inferrable, by recourse to a
theory of (inner) mental states) and behaviourism (no meanings, only publicly or objectively observable movements (and physiological states and processes).

**Thinking: Processes and content, and as simulated action**

It is important to distinguish between mental/neurological processes and their intentions/content (knowledge and beliefs about the world, our selves and bodies included). The former are "inner", not the other (which belongs to an "interworld", RETH, ch. 7). DT must surely be acquainted with modern neurobiological research, and be compatible with its robust findings. But we must remain, still probably for a long time into the future, agnostic about the brain’s "representations" of content and linguistic structures.

Vygotsky claims that "inner" thinking and dialogue is genetically (ontogenetically in the first place, but surely also phylogenetically and socio-historically) derived from external (social) interaction and the thinking carried out there (*thinking and rhetoric, below). From a different point of departure, MacNeilage (2008. 179) speaks about “thought, animation, reasoning” as “internal action”. We could perhaps say "simulated” action (*as-if concepts).

**Thinking: Rhetoric, Arguing and Persuasion (in Science too)**

Thinking, and especially if seen as cognition, is often treated by monologists as purely about the intellectual and "objective", and therefore disinterested, culture-free etc. (Freeman & Nunez), world. Dialogical (contextual, interactional) theories of the mind suggest that thinking is connected to perspectives as well as emotions, volitions and interests.

Thinking seen as as rhetoric and arguing (between several voices internalised from the sociocultural world) fits Vygotsky’s theories too. M. Billig (1987) also sees thinking as arguing. Even monologist scholars pursue their arguing and thinking in texts (and of course in social interaction) as responding to others, possibly refuting their ideas, propounding perspectives of their own as better alternatives, as is argued by Gillespie (2006) regarding Descartes’ Meditations: Descartes is therefore dialogical in method, but monologist in conclusion.

There is a rhetorical dimension to science, including natural sciences. D. McCloskey (1994) demonstrates this for the discipline of economics; the science of economics is seen as a conversation, with rhetoric and persuasion as constant features. McCloskey emphasises the role of language, how scholars formulate their theories; language has an impact. "Words matter" (metaphors, stories. etc.; e.g. 380). Rhetoric is everywhere in sciences (op.cit.: 395-6 ). Scientists are people arguing in the marketplace of ideas (367).

**Time scales: Situations and traditions**

Sense-making and communication must be seen as occurring at several ‘time scales´ (Lemke, 2000) simultaneously. However, the basic distinction is that between situated interaction and situation-transcending interdependencies and practices (“traditions”) (RETH: ch. 4; *situations above). However, interactions and genres differ with respect to whether situation-transcending connections are tacit (simply conforming to norms and practices of the activity types and genres involved) or whether they are made more or less explicit.

At the most local level, participants may (re)use each other’s words and constructions often without highlighting this fact (Du Bois, 2010: ‘resonance’, ‘affinity’ between utterances), and they may (re)use
words typical of the activity type or genre involved, which is often left without comment (and outside of awareness) (concealed or tacit intertextuality and interdiscursivity). However, sometimes the use of specific items from the cultural history may be used consciously and be paid due attention. For example, Breyer et al. (2011) demonstrates how a historical utterance by Hitler is used in an improvised conversation about rather mundane topics.

At the societal level, Tileagă (2012) discusses the public debate in the 2000’es about informers to the Romanian secret service during the communist regime. But the contributions to the media debate appearing some 15 years after the fall of communism and dealing with what the informers (and others) did or did not do then and now, have a potentially profound impact on the interpretation of the past and present times and on the moral character of influential figures. Here, the moves in the situated debate, itself a kind of drawn-out conversation across months and even years, are really contributions to a much longer, and thus “situation-transcending”, interpretive exercise in the activity of Romania to understand its modern history.

Trust and distrust

Trust and distrust are eminently dialogical notions. Yet, to the extent that these phenomena have been treated at all in relation to language and communication, it has primarily been done in monologist approaches. See Linell & Marková (2013) for more discussion.

Units of analysis

The term `unit of analysis´ is not uncommon in scientific meta-discourse. It seems to me that there are two interpretations that should be kept apart. One concerns the entities that are essential units constituting reality according to (the mainstream conceptions in) a scientific discipline. In psychology, these are individuals (even in research in social psychology, on intersubjectivity; Gillespie & Cornish, 2009: 21). Individuals are then usually assumed to stay (more or less) the same across situations, and can be “observed, interviewed, questioned, surveyed, scanned, and tested” (op.cit.: 21). They are in practice regarded as stable entities (not so in DT, cf. RETH: ch. 6). In the social sciences, the basic “units” would rather be societies, groups, organisations. These two conceptions have counterparts in the outlook on language, as being an individual competence or a collective supraindividual system of norms (cf. Linell, 2014).

However, the above-mentioned “units” do not work in a meta-theory of human sense-making. (They could work elsewhere: for example, individuals as units for bodily processes, and organisations in certain theories of societal decision-making.) In DT, and theories of human sense-making, the relevant ‘unit of analysis´ would rather be activities, especially joint activities (RETH; Gillespie & Cornish, 2013), e.g. communicative activities (Linell, 2011). In other words, temporally organised, interactional and interrelational processes and practices, and categories of such phenomena.

Solo activities too are indirectly social and “dialogical”. How could, for example, interactivity be involved in the solitary individual’s reading of a book? Well, a literate person is able to use the book as a cognitive or semiotic artefact. She can interpret the text, reconstructing and developing – and thereby adopting, modifying or perhaps rejecting – the potential meanings afforded by its author. A book can elicit an internal dialogue that amounts to creative meaning-making between the reader’s self, the affordances of the text and the voices of imagined (‘internalised’) others. The internal, intraindividual dialogue (RETH: 119) is developmentally secondary to social interaction (cf. Vygotsky’s notion of the internalisation of external interaction), but it is more than a mere metaphor. It is a mental ability made possible by the
interaction with extracorporeal artefacts, like books, papers, images and computer-borne discourse, and
the individual’s communicative biography and experiences of the world.

A `unit of analysis´ could, however, also be located at an elementary level, a micro-level of basic units, e.g.
in activities, where these basic units would build up larger units of different sizes. For example, in spoken
interaction, such basic units may be lexical items and grammatical constructions (RETH: chs. 14, 15)
(rather than sentences, turns etc.). In the context of coding phenomena, such “atomic” units (other
alternatives as elementary units could perhaps be “utterances” or “contributions”, cf. Linell, 1998: ch. 9)
would receive codes, and data could then be assembled in terms “summarising units”, sequences whose
basic units are summed up, such as episodes or whole activities.

Utterances

A theory of languaging is about utterances (patterns, utterance constructions, utterance-building etc.), not
about an underlying language behind or beyond public language in languaging. Indeed, we don’t need to
assume another kind of language (“mentalese”) behind and beyond public language. See *Language within
a theory of languaging.

References

Most of these are not in RETH; by contrast, most of the references made in the above text but *not* listed
below have already been given in RETH.

Allen, Christina. 1996. What’s wrong with the ‘golden rule’? Conundrums of conducting ethical research in

Allwood, Jens. 1976. *Linguistic Communication as Action and Cooperation*. (Gothenburg Monographs in
Linguistics, 2). Göteborg: Department of Linguistics.

(eds.), *Crossing the Boundaries in Linguistics*. Dordrecht: Reidel. 177-189.

Andrén, Mats. 2010. *Children’s Gestures from 18 to 30 months*. (Travaux de l’ institute de linguistique de
Lund, 50). Lund: Centre for Languages and Literature.

Arminen, Ilkka. 2008. Scientific and “Radical” Ethnomethodology: from incompatible paradigms to


1-13.

2014-02-17).


Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor.


Du Bois, Jack. 2009/ms. Towards a Dialogic Syntax. Draft. dubois@linguistics.ucsb.edu


Goodwin, Charles. 2011 (?)


House, 1936


Zemel, Alan & Koschmann, Timothy. 2013. "Put your fingers in there": Learnability and Instructed Experience. REF

