

Pickering, M. J., & Garrod, S. (2021). *Understanding dialogue: Language use and social interaction*. Cambridge University Press. xviii+Pp. 283. Hardback. ISBN 978-1-108-47361-3


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Abstract. *Understanding Dialogue: Language Use and Social Interaction* is written by two prominent psychologists of language. It develops an elegant model to account for the cognitive mechanisms of dialogue. The Shared Workspace Framework for Dialogue is capable of explaining how individuals contribute and control their utterances and how they can manage each other's contributions and cooperate as one system. I believe this book is worth the attention of all linguists interested in language psychology. First, dialogue is the most fundamental form of language use; second, the theory of dialogue proposed in the book represents a major advancement in the psychology of conversation; third, the theory has a wide range of applications. I believe the current review of the book is the most comprehensive summary and assessment of the book to date.

Dialogue occupies a central place in linguistic research. It is “the basic and primordial environment for the use and development (both ontogenetic and phylogenetic) of natural language” (Schegloff, 1996, p. 54), and “provides us with the most direct and uncontaminated access to natural mental processes” (Chafe 1998, pp. 96-97). Despite a wealth of studies on dialogue, few attempts have been made towards developing a theory of cognitive underpinnings of dialogue. Coauthored by two eminent psycholinguists who have conducted decades of research on the psychology of dialogue, *Understanding Dialogue: Language Use and Social Interaction* proposes a theory of dialogue which is capable of accounting for not only dialogue, but also other forms of multi-party interactions, including interaction between humans, technological tools, and machines. It is a major contribution to understanding the psychology of communication in general.

Chapter One (‘The Challenge of Dialogue’) sets out the aim, the background, and the key approaches of the book. Contrary to the traditional approach of examining sentences in isolation of interactive context, this book adopts a systems perspective where individual roles of the participants, as well as their relationship with each other, are examined as a whole.

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East European Journal of Psycholinguistics, 11(1), 189–199. <https://doi.org/10.29038/ejpl.2024.11.1.liy>

Chapters Two to Eleven are grouped into four parts. Part I ('The Shared Workspace Framework') lays down the foundation for a theory of dialogue. It consists of four chapters. Chapter Two analyzes joint activities; Chapter Three develops a model of joint action control system; Chapter Four analyzes dialogue as a joint activity, and Chapter Five proposes a model of dialogue control system.

Chapter Two ('A Systems Analysis of Joint Activity') introduces the definition, dimensions and characteristics of cooperative joint activities, and proposes a shared workspace model to account for how individuals engage in such activities. A cooperative joint activity is defined by joint intention, joint commitment and joint goals between participants. In addition to implementing actions, participants must also exert control over the outcome. A distributed control mechanism is therefore essential because it allows participants to change a plan or modify their behaviour when necessary. Monitoring happens at all layers of individual action, and the results will inform individuals of whether she and her partner are both performing in accordance to the overall plan.

Central to a cooperative system is the shared workspace, which is a dynamic space in the real world under joint attention of the participants. It is the overlapping area between the workspaces of individual participants, and contains anything relevant to the cooperative joint activity at hand. The contents of the shared workspace are typically manifest, i.e., they are believed by each individual participant to be under the joint attention of all participants. Chapter Two concludes with four characteristics of a cooperative joint action system: alignment (i.e., similarity of representation between two or more individuals), simulation (i.e., mental performance of an action), prediction (i.e., a mechanism that enables monitoring), and synchrony (i.e., performance of an action at the same pace with one's partner).

Chapter Three ('Executing, Understanding and Controlling Joint Activity') deals with the mechanisms that enable an individual to perform, comprehend and control a joint activity. To do so, one must first perform, predict and control one's own action. When an individual plans to produce an action, an action command issues from her action planner. The command is processed on two routes: on the one hand, it is received by the action implementer which leads to the production of the intended behaviour; on the other hand, it is received by the forward action model which leads to a prediction of the upcoming behaviour. After an action is produced, the individual compares the percept of the actual behaviour with the percept of her predicted behaviour. In case of discrepancy, changes could be made in the next action. In addition to performing, predicting and controlling one's own action, an individual must predict, understand and control her partner's action. When she estimates that her partner is going to produce an action, she predicts his next action by simulation. After the partner's action is produced, she formulates its percept and compares it with her percept of the predicted action. If a discrepancy arises, she can use the next dialogue moves to address the issue.

Importantly, in a cooperative joint activity, an individual must predict and interpret the actions of both herself and her partner. She needs a joint plan that applies to the behaviour of both actors, and she must combine the percept of her own

action with that of her partner's action, and the percept of her own predicted action with that of the partner's predicted action; then she is able to make comparisons of the percept of the joint action with the percept of the predicted joint action, and to address discrepancies by updating her own action command for the next move, or the derived action command from her partner, or perhaps both. If, on the other hand, her predictions prove to be accurate, she and her partner then achieve full alignment.

Chapter Four ('Dialogue as a Joint Activity') applies the shared workspace model of cooperative joint activities to dialogue. Dialogue is a cooperative joint activity because it requires interlocutors' commitment to a joint goal. A model of dialogue must explain not only the processes undergone by each interlocutor, but also the relationships between interlocutors' cognitive representations, as well as the effects of these relationships on interlocutors and the dialogue as a whole.

Distributed control is an essential feature of dialogue. The shared workspace model developed for cooperative joint activities can be used to analyze the system of dialogue and to account for distributed control. In this model, each interlocutor makes use of two interrelated modules: the dialogue planner for planning the content of an utterance, and the dialogue implementer for generating its linguistic representation. With the two modules, an interlocutor can predict, contribute, comprehend utterances in the shared workspace, and use her predictions to direct future contributions; she can even manipulate aspects of the external context in the shared workspace.

Chapter Five ('Producing, Controlling and Understanding Dialogue') applies the model for producing, predicting and controlling cooperative joint activities to dialogue. First of all, an interlocutor must perform, predict and control her own utterance. This process is nearly identical to how one performs, predicts and controls her action in a cooperative joint activity (see Chapter Three). The only difference is that dialogue involves verbal, rather than physical, actions. The dialogue planner issues a production command, which is processed on two separate routes: the implementation route and the prediction route. On the implementation route, the production implementer constructs a representation of an utterance based on the production command, and the articulator converts the representation into actual sound waves in the shared workspace. Then, the speaker uses the comprehension implementer to comprehend and develop a percept of her utterance. On the prediction route, the forward production model enables the speaker to formulate a prediction of the utterance representation based on the production command. Then, the forward comprehension model is used to comprehend and develop a percept of the predicted utterance. During the processes described above, the speaker makes two kinds of comparison: one between the predicted utterance representation and the actual utterance representation, and the other between the percept of the actual utterance and the percept of the predicted utterance. The former is called internal comparison and the latter is external comparison. Both are part of the monitoring process.

In addition to controlling her own utterance, an interlocutor must comprehend her partner's utterance. The process begins with one interlocutor perceiving that the other is going to talk. The hearer derives a production command from the speaker based on her knowledge about the progress of the current dialogue. Then, enabled by

an mechanism called prediction-by-simulation, she predicts the content of the utterance in terms of semantics, syntax and phonology using her forward production model. Next, she develops a percept of the predicted utterance, which she compares with the percept of the actual utterance. The outcome of the comparison is then used to interpret the utterance, and to determine her next move in dialogue.

Finally, an interlocutor must predict and interpret her own utterance and that of her interlocutor's. The key point here is that she simulates, predicts and monitors the utterance production of both herself and her interlocutor as one entity. In other words, she is engaged in joint simulation, prediction and monitoring in relation to the joint goal of dialogue. In consequence, the interlocutors are able to interweave their contributions with one another and work as a system.

Part II ('Alignment during Dialogue') focuses on alignment, a key concept in the theory of dialogue. Chapter Six deals with kinds of representations in dialogue and alignment of linguistic representations, and Chapter Seven discusses alignment of cognitive representations.

Since alignment concerns the relationship between interlocutors' representations, the authors begin Chapter Six ('Interactive Alignment and Linguistic Representation') with a typology of various representations involved in dialogue. First, a distinction is drawn between cognitive representations and linguistic representations. The former, also called dialogue models, are constructed by the dialogue planner at the planning stage, whereas the latter are constructed by the dialogue implementer at the implementation stage. Second, focal representations are distinguished from global representations. The former concerns a particular move in dialogue whereas the latter concerns a dialogue as a whole. The two parameters - stage of generation and timescale - yield altogether four sub-types of representations: focal linguistic representation, global linguistic representation, focal dialogue model and global dialogue model, and interlocutors can align over each of them.

Next, dialogue models are further divided into two sub-types: the situation model and the game model. The situation model is an individual's representation of the key elements of the situation under discussion. It resides in one's long-term working memory and can persist in a dialogue. The game model, on the other hand, is concerned with the relationship between the interlocutors with respect to the dialogue goal, and the acts performed by each interlocutor with respect to the goal. Seeking action, information or giving instructions are all types of game models.

While dialogue models are generated by the dialogue planner at the production stage, linguistic representations are generated by the dialogue implementer at the implementation stage. The implementer is responsible for linguistic processing, which transforms dialogue models into behavioural manifestation of utterances such as speech sounds, turn-taking, and timing. Whenever possible, the implementer retrieves and activates lexicon from the working memory. Activation levels are affected by frequency and recency of use, and can be raised by priming, i.e., persistent activation of an expression. If, however, at the time of speaking, the implementer cannot find ready-made lexicon for the current communicative purpose, it assembles a new expression by producing separate representations of meaning,

grammar and sound in accordance to phonological, syntactic and semantic rules, before binding them together into one unit.

The remainder of Chapter Six focuses on the alignment of linguistic expressions. Linguistic representations may be aligned globally or focally. Focal linguistic alignment refers to the similarity of linguistic representation at a particular move in dialogue. It is a result of co-activation of representation between interlocutors at a particular point in dialogue, and can happen at the phonological, semantic or syntactic level. Global linguistic alignment, by contrast, refers to the similarity of linguistic representation of a dialogue as a whole. If interlocutors are fully aligned at the global level, they tend to activate the same representations under the same circumstances, at least for the span of the dialogue. This is a result of overall activation of representation throughout dialogue. The two kinds of linguistic alignment are intertwined. Global linguistic alignment can be enhanced by focal alignment, because once a linguistic item is activated, its activation level will remain for a period of time above the resting level, thus contributing to global alignment. Focal linguistic alignment can also be affected by global alignment, because interlocutors who already align globally tend to align focally as well. Since the activation of linguistic representations is largely subconscious, linguistic alignment is achieved through a largely automatic process, called priming. Two kinds of priming are involved: repetition priming and associative priming. Repetition priming is the straightforward repetition of linguistic units between interlocutors, whereas associative priming is a process where the priming of a word leads to the priming of a network of linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge associated with that word. Since a word is associated with a more or less stable of structure of knowledge across interlocutors in the same culture at a given period of time, associative priming results in ‘broad’ alignment, as it concerns not only the word in question, but also background knowledge. Ultimately, linguistic alignment contributes to communicative success.

Chapter Seven ('Alignment of Dialogue models') deals with alignment of dialogue models. As mentioned previously, dialogue models can be divided into situation models and game models, and each can be further divided into focal models and global models. The relationship between focal and global situation models is one of integration, i.e., global situation model emerges from integrating successive focal situation models. Therefore, the alignment of focal situation models occurs when the interlocutors share the same representation of the situation at hand at a particular moment in dialogue, and the alignment of global situation models “occurs when they have the same understanding of a situation as a whole” (pp. 134-135). Alignment of situation models can be enhanced by sharing background knowledge. This is because situation models may contain aspects that are derived by inference from background knowledge, so that similarity in background knowledge may lead speakers to make similar inferences, and this may in turn contribute to the alignment of situation models.

Furthermore, the alignment of situation models goes hand in hand with the alignment of linguistic representations in the establishment of a dialogue routine for a

reference. When interlocutors use the same expression for the same referent, the linguistic expression with its corresponding token in the situation model gets stored in the short-term memory for the particular dialogue. At this point, a dialogue routine starts to emerge, and with repetitions of use, it may be transferred to the long-term working memory, and undergo reduction.

Having discussed the alignment of the situation model, the authors turn their attention briefly to the alignment of the game model. A game model, also called dialogue game, may be complex in structure, because a global game may contain one or more focal games, and interlocutors need not align over every focal game in a dialogue. Alignment over the game model does not entail cooperation in dialogue, because interlocutors may take part in the same game without converging on their dialogue plans. Game models are used by interlocutors to manage their partner's contributions, such as providing extra information, or preventing their partners from going off track.

Next, the authors propose an important conceptual distinction between alignment of dialogue models and meta-representation of alignment. The former concerns the relationship of cognitive representations used by interlocutors in dialogue, whereas the latter concerns the representation of alignment as perceived by interlocutors. While alignment is the hallmark of a successful dialogue, meta-representation of alignment is a driving force for communication. In a cooperative joint activity, speakers generally want their hearers to achieve the same representations as themselves, that is, to meta-represent alignment. If interlocutors meta-represent misalignment over their dialogue models, they generally work to address the misalignment. It should be noted that meta-representation of alignment is a perception of the interlocutor, which may not necessarily reflect the actual alignment relationship; in other words, interlocutors' perception of their interactive relationship may not be the same as their actual relationship in dialogue.

How do alignment and meta-representation of alignment relate to the shared workspace framework? First, the shared workspace contains signs and non-signs that are aligned between interlocutors in their situation models. If interlocutors do not align on certain entities, they have them in their individual workspaces. Furthermore, interlocutors meta-represent alignment over the entities in the shared workspace. If something is in the shared workspace, then it is in the interlocutors' joint attention, that is, each interlocutor assumes that the other person can perceive it like herself. In such cases, both interlocutors meta-represent alignment over the item, and tag it as such in the shared workspace. If, however, one of them notices that they do not align over the item, she meta-represents mis-alignment and tags it in her individual workspace. This process is called m-tagging, where 'm' is an abbreviation of meta-representation of alignment. M-tagging reflects interlocutors' degree of confidence in alignment. The item m-tagged by both interlocutors with high confidence is manifest in the shared workspace. Dialogue games are often used to make an item manifest, and therefore manipulatable by both interlocutors.

Part III ('Using the shared workspace efficiently') contains two chapters. Together, they explain how interlocutors make efficient use of the shared workspace.

Chapters Eight deals with interlocutors' management of the content of contribution, and Chapter Nine focuses on the management of timing.

Chapter Eight ('Saying Just Enough') discusses commentaries, which are essential strategies for managing interlocutors' contributions. In dialogue, if an individual meta-represents misalignment with her interlocutor, she generally manages her interlocutor's contributions in order to re-establish alignment. Commentaries are essential strategies for re-establishing alignment. They can be positive or negative. Positive commentaries are acknowledgments such as confirmative interjections, nodding, and verbal repetitions. They indicate addressee's high confidence in alignment, and signal her meta-representation of alignment with the speaker. In addition, they can express positive evaluation, or serve the function of continuers. Negative commentaries, by contrast, are interjections or gestures that indicate interlocutors' low confidence in alignment. They prompt the previous speaker to review her immediately previous utterance in an attempt to identify the source of misalignment, and they often result in clarifications. In addition, they can be used to indicate specific aspect of misalignment. This is particularly helpful in identifying the cause of initial misalignment and eventually resolving it.

Both positive and negative commentaries promote succinctness, but they do so in different ways. In a dialogue that contains constant positive commentaries, an expression may become more concise and routinized each time it is repeated, until it retains only the most discriminatory aspects of the original referent. Negative commentaries, on the other hand, lead to verbal expansion, which enables interlocutors to solve the problem that causes misalignment. Once alignment is re-established, negative commentaries are replaced by positive ones and interlocutors' contributions become more succinct afterwards. Commentaries may not be limited to dedicated expressions; utterances that contribute new information may also serve as commentaries. For example, utterances that complete the second part of an adjacency pair or the previous speaker's unfinished contribution may serve as positive commentaries, and correction may serve as negative commentaries. To summarize, commentaries help to strengthen alignment, support optimal use of the shared workspace, and promote interlocutors to 'say just enough'.

Chapter Nine ('Speaking in Good Time') discusses how interlocutors interweave their contributions into a single dialogue. To do this, they must attend to two crucial aspects of contribution: sequentiality and timing. Sequentiality refers to the order of contributions. In the shared workspace model, the order is constructed by the dialogue planner, and mapped onto interlocutors' representation of utterances by the dialogue implementer. Interlocutors can monitor their sequentiality of contribution: first, they predict the turn taking of both interlocutors' utterances, and then, they compare the predicted percept with the actual percept. Results are then sent back to the dialogue planner. In the case of mismatch, revisions will be made in planning, and will appear at the production stage. The above process crucially facilitates flow of dialogue. Timing concerns the speech rate at which each contribution is added to the shared workspace. Like sequentiality, timing is predicted and monitored during dialogue. Good timing is reflected in synchrony of speech rate,

which requires synchronizing the whole process of dialogue, including generating production command and derived production command, predicting one's own contribution and that of their partners, making contributions, and monitoring contributions. Synchrony of speech rate reduces the time needed for producing an utterance, as well as the temporal gap between utterances; thus, it contributes to the efficient use of the workspace. However, to achieve such efficiency, an interlocutor has to manage several kinds of pressure: to produce and comprehend utterances, to prepare feedback, and to match her speech rate with her partner's. At the neurological level, interlocutors synchronize speech rates through three stages: "speech to auditory cortex, auditory to pre-motor cortex, pre-motor cortex to speech" (p. 206). To be more specific, when interlocutors A and B are engaged in a dialogue, A's speech rate drives her speech oscillations, which in turn drives the neural oscillations in auditory cortex and pre-motor cortex of B; then, the neural oscillations in the pre-motor cortex of B drives the speech rate of B. Finally, B's speech rate affects A's speech rate in the same way as described above.

Eventually, speakers must combine content with timing to predict the beginning and end of turns. This is because speech rate affects the rate that interlocutors obtain information from the shared workspace, contribute utterances, perform predictions, and monitor timing and content. Predictions may not be well matched with reality initially, and as a result, the predictions of timing and content take place as two separate processes. However, as prediction gets better, the two processes merge into one. When both interlocutors are perfect at combining the predictions of content and timing, conversation flows.

Part IV ('Extending the Shared Workspace Framework') applies the shared workspace framework to the analysis of non-dyadic communication; it also considers the role of culture in the theory of dialogue. The previous chapters have developed a theory of dialogue to account for 'the minimal dyadic conversation' (p. 211), which is informal, cooperative, conducted face to face and with relatively equal contributions. In real life, however, dialogue may deviate from the idealized model in many ways. Chapter Ten ('Communication beyond the minimal dyad') discusses three types of deviations: straightforward three-way conversations, multi-party dialogue, and monologue. The straightforward three-way conversation, or the triadic dialogue, is a simple extension of the minimal dyadic conversation in the sense that each of the three participants conducts a minimal dyadic conversation with the other two. All interlocutors can contribute to the shared workspace; they can also comprehend, predict and monitor its contents equally. Compared with the straightforward three-way conversation, the multi-party conversation is more complex because its participants take up different roles. These include players, active audience members, passive audience members, and overhearers. Participants with different roles do not engage in a dialogue equally. For example, players and active audience can contribute to the dialogue, whereas passive audience and overhearers can neither contribute nor comment on contributions; players and audience members are relevant to the design of the shared workspace, whereas overhearers are not. All participants can meta-represent alignment over the content of dialogue and their conversational

roles to some extent, but, they cannot do so equally; nor can they act on their representations equally. For example, contributors typically do not meta-represent alignment with overhearers, since the shared workspace is not designed for the latter; active audience, passive audience and overhearers can meta-represent alignment with contributors but only active audience can act on their representation.

The third kind of deviation from the ideal dyadic dialogue is monologue, which can be regarded as a non-alternating one-way dialogue. It consists of two fixed roles: the designer and the audience. The designer is solely responsible for managing the shared workspace. She can produce, comprehend, predict and monitor the contents in the workspace. The audience, by contrast, has no control over the shared workspace at all. Given the one-way non-alternating nature of monologue, control is not distributed, unlike that of dialogue. To optimize communicative efficiency, the designer in particular has to cope with the limitation of monologue. Since the designer cannot use audience commentaries to track their meta-representation of alignment, she has to have a good knowledge of the audience and the social conventions concerning the content and format of the presentation before hand, and she has to prepare, revise and rehearse her contributions in order to improve the chance of alignment with her audience. As for the audience, they can only engage in external monitoring, i.e., comparing the predicted utterance of the designer and her actual utterance; in case of misalignment, they cannot modify their planners to make new contributions to the shared workspace. To summarize, Chapter Ten has shown that monologue and various forms of dialogue exists in a continuum, all of which can be explained by the theory of dialogue.

Chapter Eleven ('Culture and Language Use') discusses the relationship between dialogue and culture, with special focus on the role of communicative activity types and the use of cultural artefacts. A cooperative joint activity normally contains both linguistic and non-linguistic components, including actions, utterances and props, all of which, go into the shared workspace and are interpreted, predicted, monitored and updated in relation to the joint goal. Communicative activity types, and more broadly social norms, serve to constrain the form and content of individual communicative events, by forming part of the dialogue plan, constraining production and facilitating predictions. Because they facilitate predications, they can help to enhance the efficiency of communication. Interlocutors' alignment on the dialogue game of a particular cooperative joint activity suggests their broader alignment on communicative activity type, as well as social norms.

Among the non-linguistic components of dialogue, props are cultural artefacts that play a part in the joint plan. They fall into three kinds. The first are illustrations such as paintings, drawings, photos or maps. They enrich the workspace by adding information that may not be easily added by language; they also help to organize the linguistic aspects of the dialogue, so that interlocutors can align and m-tag their representations more easily. Joint attention on aspects of illustrations is often achieved by pointing. The second kind of props are recordings, which may be auditory, visual or textual. They are temporarily or spatially portable, making the workspace represented by them also portable. They are often monological (such as a

podcast or a novel), but can also be used in alternating one-way dialogue (such as letter correspondence). The third kind of props are communication technologies, which are designed to suit the communicative goals of the users. They have a variety of functions, such as making certain aspects of communication salient, creating limits to the amount of information that enters the shared workspace, enabling speakers to add audio-visual aids, managing conversational roles, and selecting audience members.

Chapter Twelve ('Conclusion') concludes the whole book by reiterating its key points, including the shared workspace framework, alignment and meta-representation of alignment, management of the content and timing of contributions, the extension of the theory of dialogue to other types of communication and finally, the role of culture in dialogue.

Understanding Dialogue: Language Use and Social Interaction deals with a topic that is fundamental to linguistics in general. Notably, it can explain the cognitive mechanism responsible for the emergence of linguistic structures from usage. Within the theory of dialogue is fundamental concept called dialogue routine, which is a fixed and stable mapping between entities in the situation model and linguistic expressions. It is established when interlocutors come to use the same linguistic expression to refer to the same concept, and the process of establishing routines is called routinization. Routinization begins with interlocutors focusing on and focally aligning over the linguistic expression for a particular entity at a particular point in dialogue. At this point, the expression is stored in the short-term working memory. With repetitions of use, the expression becomes fixed throughout a particular dialogue, and comes to reside in the long-term working memory. This results in global alignment between interlocutors over the item. Before an expression is routinized, the phonology, syntax and semantics of its components are first activated separately before being combined for comprehension or production. Once it is established as a routine, its components are activated and stored as a whole in the mental lexicon (see also Pickering & Garrod, 2005). Furthermore, when a number of people globally align over the routine, it becomes conventionalized in the community. Once conventionalized, community members will be able to activate it from the long term-working memory on receiving a retrieval cue. In this way, a new linguistic unit emerges in the language of the community. Thus, the notions of routines and routinization lend valuable insights into the cognitive processes involved in the emergence of conventionalized linguistic units from a single dialogue.

To conclude, *Understanding Dialogue: Language Use and Social Interaction* introduces a psycholinguistic theory of dialogue which is more comprehensive and systematic than any existing models. Hence, it is worth careful reading by all who are interested in the psychology of language.

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