Dialogical Approaches to Trust in Communication

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EDI TORS’ INTRODUCTION

Dialogism and Monologism in the Study of Trust in Communication

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Trust and distrust are intimately linked up with interaction, communication and discourse, and ubiquitous in human life and existence. They are both premises and outcomes of human communication. It is in interaction between people, or between individuals or groups and their environments that trust and distrust are created, negotiated, sustained, confirmed or disconfirmed. It is in discourse that trust comes to life. (Linell & Keselman, 2012, p. 156)

Trust and distrust are central social relations that steer our interactions with one another, with groups and institutions. They regulate, unreflectively or reflectively, our social activities in daily life. We transmit our trust and distrust to others in different ways and in different forms. We instigate or avoid actions and interactions; we convey trust and distrust through art and symbols. Above all, we express these relations in and through discourse and communication.

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This book forms a continuation of a series of books, in which the editors, together with other colleagues, have explored notions of trust and distrust in interpersonal, group and institutional social relations. Previous volumes include "Trust and Democratic Transition in Post-Communist Europe" (2004) edited by Ivana Marková, "Trust and Distrust in Society: Sociocultural Perspectives" (2008) edited by Ivana Marková and Alex Gillespie, and "Trust and Conflict: Representation, Culture and Dialogue" (2012) also edited by Marková and Gillespie. During these years we have become surprised to find that although the processes of trust and distrust have been extensively explored in society at large, as well as in various scientific disciplines, such as social theory, psychology and political science, the fundamental relations between trust, distrust, language and communication, have seldom been theorised. Our previous volumes have usually adopted a "dialogist" approach emphasising the importance of otherness, interactions, contexts, tensions and conflicts, and heterogeneities in history, cultures, societies and activities. However, we have not specifically explored trust and distrust in spoken or written discourse and communication; this is the objective of the present volume and as in the previous volumes, dialogist approaches will also underlie most chapters.

**MONOLOGIST AND DIALOGIST APPROACHES**

**IN THE STUDY OF THE HUMAN MIND**

Since ancient Greek philosophy monologist or individualist approaches have had a long tradition in European thought. This tradition presupposes that in order to understand others, their thoughts, emotions, actions or otherwise, the individual starts from his or her personal perspective. Descartes, in his 'search after Truth' (Descartes, 1637/2003, p. 23), expressed this perspective in arguing that truth could be achieved through critical doubt and distrust of everything except one's own thinking and rationality. His individualist ideas have influenced European philosophy until today. The monologist account of communication starts out from the assumption that ideal and effective communication leads to complete and identically shared interpretations between parties. Such shared and mutual understandings presuppose a common language (a code) and speakers' truthful and sincere intentions, references and descriptions. The role of recipients is merely, on this view, to reconstruct the speaker's intended meaning.

Basicallly, the monologist perspective portrays cognition as information processing within the individual mind, communication as transfer of information and messages from individual to individual, and language as an abstract code with fixed pairings of expressions and meanings. No paper in this volume exhibits such a radical monologism, which would assign exclusive importance to autonomous individuals or monolithic languages or cultures. However, Allwood's (2013) conceptual analysis of trust, building basically on rationalist assumptions of "propositional knowledge" (Cornejo, 2013, p. 242ff), may seem compatible with a relatively monologist position. Yet, Allwood's paper too places trust into the context of communication, interaction and social life more generally.

Dialogist approaches in epistemology and communication (e.g., Linell, 2009; Marková, 2003; Marková et al., 2007) start out from a different philosophical tradition than individualist cognitivism. Although some dialogist ideas can be traced back to 17th century scholars like Giambattista Vico, the more recent 'dialogical turn' owes a great deal to the ideas of the Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin (e.g., 1981; 1984). Related ideas were proposed by others, such as developmental and social psychologists like Lev Vygotsky, George Herbert Mead, James Mark Baldwin, and William James, who were preoccupied with the interdependencies between the self and others in language and communication. Hermeneutical and phenomenological approaches to language and communication, like those of Paul Ricoeur and Hans-Georg Gadamer, among others, too, focus on the interdependencies between the self and others, but above all they draw attention to interpretation of discourse. Concerning Bakhtin, it has been documented (Brandist, 2004; see also chapter 11) that many of his ideas come from other scholars like Ernst Cassirer, Max Scheler, Georg Simmel, among others, and there are also parallelisms with ideas of G. H. Mead (Nielsen, 2000). Thus we could say that although dialogism is connected above all with Mikhail Bakhtin, it is in fact a collective product of scholars during the last two or three centuries.

The point of departure in dialogist perspectives is the presupposition that human minds do not function in isolation but are mutually connected. The interdependence among minds is deeply rooted in the human nature and permeates all fundamental faculties like thinking, knowing, believing, remembering, imagining, feeling, acting and, of course, indulging in sociodialogue. Without denying cognitive faculties of the individual, dialogist approaches assume that knowledge and language are generated from interaction between the self and others. Their multifaceted and heterogeneous nature is open without limits. Such ideas about the nature of the human mind, as being more than something in the individual brain, have been called 'the social mind' (Valsiner & van der Veer, 2000), 'mind as action' (Wertsch, 1998), 'the shared mind' (Zlatev et al., 2008), 'the distributed mind' (Cowley, 2011), 'the extended mind' (Clark & Chalmers, 1998), 'the enactive mind' (Thompson, 2007) or the 'dialogical mind' (e.g. Taylor, 1995; Salgado & Gonçalves, 2007; Linell, 2009).

However, beyond these commonalities, such approaches do not form a unified theory. That holds also for those which explicitly call themselves 'dialogical' or 'dialogist'. These theories too take on different forms, they propose different epistemologies and they range from broadly based frame-
works (Linell, 2009) through to specific theories of the dialogical self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993), and to analyses of detailed aspects of utterances. The latter comprise studies of dialogue and grammar in interactional linguistics (Günthner et al., forthc.). Another tradition is contemporary French dialogical linguistics, with more of references to Bakhtin’s work (e.g., Bres, 1998; 1999; Bres & Verine, 2002; Salazar-Orvig, 1999; 2005; Salazar-Orvig & Grossen, 2004).

While Bakhtin used the terms ‘dialogism’ and ‘dialogicality’ interchangeably, following our previous work (Linell, 1998; 2009, Marková, 2003), we shall characterise these terms as follows:

‘Dialogism’ refers to epistemologies of human and social sciences that are based on a perspective according to which knowledge, language, systems of signs and symbols, artistic products, communicative and cognitive, and even many practical, activities are jointly generated by the self and others. This contrasts with ‘monologism’, that is, with those traditional epistemologies that conceive of knowledge, action and language in terms of a single communicator or knower and an object to be known.

We use the term ‘dialogicality’ in a more narrow sense. ‘Dialogicality’ refers to the capacity of the human mind to socially engage, think and communicate with others. Thus we can say that its meaning is social-psychological and language-based, rather than philosophical. The self and others (or Ego and Alter) can stand for specific dyadic relations, e.g. the self vs. parents, the self vs. group, the group vs. another group, the group vs. local culture, and so on, and these dyadic relations can be conceived as embedded in one another. For instance, the dyad like the self vs. another person could be embedded in, or interrelated with, the self vs. family or political party, and so on. Language in itself is always ‘incomplete’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), always offering openings for new interpretations of meanings in the multifaceted world where different judgements prevail, like in politics, ideology, community and in social institutions. It is this openness and infinite possibilities of interpretation that distinguish dialogicality from other approaches: it is the uniqueness of each act of communication that makes this infinite range possible. For Simmel (1950) this openness is a feature of his theory of forms by which Bakhtin was influenced in his early work.

Such a dialogist framework, which is opposed to ‘monologism’, makes essential references to contexts, interaction, communicative construction, semiotic mediation and double dialogicality (in situated interaction and in long-term sociocultural practices). Multiplicity of meanings and ambivalence saturates language, daily life, culture, and the human body; everything that has some human relevance enables infinite possibilities for interpretation. Trust, like many other attributes of human relations, belongs to this realm of phenomena and in this book different authors topicalise a number of variants and variations of trusting and distrusting in communication and discourse and in particular in talk.

**THIS BOOK**

Humans express trust and distrust in language and communication in heterogeneous ways, in different forms, and very often unreflectively. We have argued elsewhere that it ranges from the pre-reflexive, pre-conceptual or a priori trust to reflected and strategic trust, e.g. deliberated decisions to co-operate (and thus trust), context-specific trust for limited purposes, etc. (Marková, Linell, & Gillespie, 2008). Trust/distrust at primordial, pre-reflexive levels is not based on a conscious, strategic or normative decision to co-operate. It is spontaneous and a priori both at individual and social levels: the nature of the interdependence between the self and others in communication is primary to any reflected decisions as to whether one should or should not co-operate. Thus both unreflected and reflected forms of trust are essential in the study of language and communication, but they express themselves differently. At the same time, it would be wrong to view these different kinds of trust and contracts as completely separate from one another. Rather, we must conceive of them as mutually interdependent and co-existing forms of trust—more like networks of relations affecting each other. Rommetveit and Linell (1998: 472) expressed these relations as follows: Morality "ranges from premoral and proto-moral forms to explicit moralization, from authentic expression to tactful respect for integrity, from embodied feelings of a social-interactional origin to sociocultural sedimented norms and values oriented to in human dialogue and interaction." The relation between proto-morality as attention and reciprocated attention in interaction, including elementary forms of interaction, to more full-blown morality in dialogue parallels such polysemies as in words like regard (compare 'with regard to' (paying attention to) and 'hold in high regard') and respect (compare 'with respect to' and 'in respect of').

These relations take place both in dialogues between individuals as well as between individuals and institutions. Such different contexts bring into focus a number of issues with which contributors of this volume were concerned. More specifically, the chapters in this book address the following issues:

- How do people presuppose and/or talk about trust and distrust in different organisational contexts and in different communicative activity types (such as political confessions, educational activities, focus group discussions, social-care case conferences, economic activities during bank runs)?
- How are trust and distrust indicated, displayed or expressed in situated discourse, and are these discursive phenomena to be distin-
guished from trust and distrust in social realities beyond and behind language? Are trust and distrust as explicitly talked about the same as "genuine" trust/distrust (whether in short-term or long-term perspectives)?

- How can one identify, if at all, the presence of trust and distrust in actual discourse?
- What is the structure of the semantic and conceptual field involving concepts like trust, distrust, trustworthiness, confidence, risk, uncertainty, faith, confidentialitiy, willingness to disclose information, etc.?

These issues involve overlapping concerns and any strict subdivision of these concerns would be artificial. Rather, we are dealing with networks of concepts and concerns, with their transitions and transformations. Language is never neutral but when our concern is with trust and distrust, ethical, moral and judgemental issues become paramount. With these issues in mind, and with some reservation, we have subdivided the chapters in this volume into three parts.

Part I, Moralties in Discourse On Trust and Distrust, is concerned with moral judgement, construction of blame, and with management and display of moral identity in various kinds of the self/other relations as expressed in and through dialogue.

Chapter 1 by Michèle Grossen and Ann Salazar Orvig introduces trust as a dynamic and multifaceted notion. The authors assume that in doctor-patient communication, trust is more than a value or a shared assumption. Rather, it is a regulation referring to "medical confidentiality" but in order to be achieved, trust has then to be enacted through actual practices in concrete situations. The authors analyse how trust is brought into discourse in focus-group discussions dealing with medical confidentiality. Drawing on a dialogical framework, they analyse the various ways in which trust is invoked in the participants' discourse and show how various aspects of trust can be used as argumentative resources. In their specific case they deal with a situation in which keeping medical confidentiality when a patient is HIV-positive could become a threat for a third party. In terms of trust, a conflict arises between either keeping trust between the doctor and the patient and so endangering another person's life, or breaking trust for the sake of another person's life. Their results stress that trust in practice is a collective achievement that covers different and even conflicting aspects.

Karin Aronsson and Karin Osvaldsson (Chapter 2) analyse trust and distrust in relation to the construction of blame in multiparty talks in conferences involving an adolescent girl in a Special Approved Home. The authors examine how lexicon, tense, and grammatical voice are deployed in legitimizing as well as in undermining complaints in conferences involving institutional representatives, family members and the adolescent girl. They raise questions about institutional interests, for instance between in-house staff and referring staff, and constraints in multiparty settings where trust and distrust occur as situated phenomena. What types of moral work are accomplished through contrasting narratives (blaming and blame contestations) in such multiparty contexts? Distrust emerges as a phenomenon in which the co-participants produce blame narratives that are built through various forms of "veiled stances", i.e. they are blame-implicating rather than explicitly blaming or distrusting. Language use in its interactionally situated context reveals a specific moral order in the form of blame and distrust that originates in the surrounding socio-culture. Some staff members, however, contest or challenge complaints and try to build—instead of distrust—trust and a future-oriented working alliance with the adolescent.

In Chapter 3 Cristian Tileagă takes us to post-communist Romania where distrust was a fundamental quality of daily life and social order. He explores how moral identity and concerns with trust and distrust are managed and displayed in public confessions of those who, during the previous Communist totalitarianism, had been informers for the Romanian Communist Secret Police. Using the approach of ethnomethodology and discursive psychology the author seeks to describe and analyse participants' own treatment of how trust and distrust operate in their mutual relations; it is about lay members' own vocabulary and practical reasoning. His analytic standpoint explores relationships between constructions of morality, identity and orientations to trust/distrust as a feature of social order in the public sphere. He identifies the socio-cultural/discursive organisation of trust and morality and moral perspectives and values as publicly available cultural resources engendering a legitimating order of expectations around social relationships and accountability for past, present and future actions.

In her commentary on these three chapters Livia Simão (Chapter 4) focuses on the polysemy of trust and in particular on the intersubjectivity created in and through an Ego-Alter relationship in its socio-cultural context. Dialogues not only aim at creating intersubjectivity, but they also generate risks of misunderstanding by co-participants and so endanger the social recognition of the self by dialogical others. Simão argues that dialogues require flexibility, plasticity and malleability and she shows how these features are achieved in the chapters on which she comments. She notes that trust and distrust in communication are associated with uncertainties and expectations regarding the conduct of the other in future social encounters. Therefore, in order to cope with these, the self constantly evaluates the present relations with the other and reconstructs memories of past conduct and relations.

Part II, Trust and Distrust in Institutional Communication, too, deals with moral and ethical issues, but more explicitly in specific institutional contexts like a bank, psychotherapeutic sessions and educational contexts.
Each of these institutional contexts presents its own particular dialogical strategies with respect to trust and distrust.

Alex Gillespie and Flora Cornish (Chapter 5) present the reader with a situation of a financial crisis starting in 2007 during which the taken-for-granted trust in banks broke down and turned into distrust. More specifically, their chapter analyses the Northern Rock Bank run during which depositors massively withdrew their cash. Drawing on George Herbert Mead’s linguistic conceptualisation of communication, the authors analyse the bank run as a communication sequence. They identify the main action (gesture)—response relations which determine the course of the trust/distrust sequence in the Northern Rock Bank episode. Trust/distrust is conceptualised here as dynamic showing how actions created unintended impacts, catalyzing the bank run. The authors make an important distinction between two kinds of actions: "actions which are unintentionally communicative (symbols) and actions which are intentionally communicative (significant symbols)."

João Salgado (Chapter 6) views trust as a crucial feature of psychotherapy. Taking a dialogical point of view, he argues for several layers of trust in therapeutic situations which are in dialogical tensions and debates. These involve disparate social groups and organizations as mutually competing for diverse therapeutic interventions. Psychotherapeutic sessions assign roles to persons, who organize activities and rules and transform human suffering into manageable problems. For these activities to be effective, it is required that the person trusts not only the therapist but also the institution of psychotherapy within which social roles and rules are established, governing the activities in question. Whenever someone seeks psychotherapy, he/she faces the complex set of social relations and institutional arrangements. In such encounters, trust and distrust are both at play.

Chapters 7 and 8 turn attention to trust and distrust in communicative encounters in education. Adopting a sociocultural and dialogical approach, Tania Zittoun (Chapter 8) maintains that "learning is risk taking or demands a leap of faith" on the part of teachers and learners. Teachers need to trust that students have intentions and commitments towards them and that they acknowledge them as teachers; and students, on their part, need to trust the teacher who is supposed to be more knowledgeable, should have intentions to engage in the search of the unknown and discover new things for themselves. All this is about epistemic trust involving the teacher—learner—object-of-knowledge situation. Zittoun notes that for epistemic trust to take place, teachers and students need to implicitly engage in a didactic contract "on the basis of which they might take part in the construction of a shared understanding of a given object of knowledge" (p. 131) that is validated and part of a certain cultural environment. All this shows how trust in the teacher, trust in the institution and trust in the object of knowledge are interdependent. Zittoun illustrates her theoretical ideas using a case study engaging teaching-learning activities and their dynamics.

Lars Sigfurd Evensen (Chapter 8) explores teenagers’ trust in an educational setting. He points out that classrooms are institutions which are built on an “as if” principle, regarding any topic or activity as given tasks to be carried out and evaluated. As a result, the role of the teacher becomes blurred and it ranges from “teacher as trusted adult” through that of a specific or general “dialogue partner” in school to “teacher as examiner.” Using his own action research study, Evensen therefore shows that trusting discourse could be highly challenging and provoking. His empirical project has several goals. First, as an application of action research, it attempts to contribute to building a communicative classroom environment in which students could argue their positions of concern. Second, it explores the effects of such a classroom environment on students’ writing. Evensen shows that when students in fact assumed trust, they commenced heated communicative processes which might transgress classroom borders and teacher’s control.

Chapter 9 entitled “Trust, distrust and language” includes the comments by Nandita Chaudhary on chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8. She reminds us that to trust means to have “the courage to take the risk of being disappointed or worse still let down by another” (p. 176). Biological and psychological processes are significantly present in the emergence of trust in humans. In these processes, interaction, language and communication have become essential resources of trust as well as of the fear of deception. The author draws attention to the fact that, although often unintentionally, adults teach children the art of lying and that it is our use of language that sharpens the art of deception and that the capacity to lie is at heart of speech. Yet she argues that despite the pervasiveness of deceit, life is sustained in and through trust. Referring to the chapters in this part of the volume Chaudhary reminds us that the construction and transformation of trust and distrust in educational institutions, therapy and banks show that trust is a vital condition of human existence.

Finally, Part III, Theoretical Perspectives On Trust and Distrust in Dialogue, raises some unresolved theoretical and empirical questions of trust and distrust in speech and dialogue referring to various disciplines concerned with language and communication like speech act theory and pragmatics, among others. Like the previous chapters, the authors emphasise the moral and ethical nature of trust and its implications for theory and practice in language and communication.

Jens Allwood’s contribution to this volume (Chapter 10) draws up conceptual distinctions between several aspects of trust and non-trust, suggesting how these phenomena are related to each other. Discussing the concept of trust within its semantic field, he analyses different levels of in-
 interpersonal trust, turning to the relation between trust in communication and dialogue. By ‘dialogue’ he means overt “communication between two or more participants” (p. 189, other contributors sometimes use the term in more abstract senses).

Allwood investigates several conceptual properties of trust, characterising them as gradable senses. Allwood presents an analysis of trust as a communicative and epistemic tool or aid. One of his main points is his emphasis on the fact that the assumption of trust strongly facilitates and simplifies communication as well as our attempts at getting to know the world. He also refers to several different cases in which people negate trust and he shows that, nevertheless, the loss of trust in ethical consideration and ethical treatment does not make communication impossible, although highly improbable in the long-term.

Thereafter, Per Linell and Ivana Marková continue their own discussion from this Introduction. In Chapter 11, we deal primarily with trust and distrust in relation to language and communication. We begin by noting that trust has been pushed aside and largely ignored in the most influential contributions to the philosophy and pragmatics of language. After that, we take up the connection between trust and ethics (or morality). We present an empirical example from a complex activity type, asylum interviews with unaccompanied adolescents (Linell & Keselman, 2012), and try to demonstrate how trust and distrust are deeply intertwined at different levels of interaction. In the concluding section we summarise some features of trust and distrust, from a dialogist point-of-view, and briefly discuss the analytic difficulties in identifying cases of genuine trust in real interaction (among adults).

Carlos Cornejo (Chapter 12) advances his reflections concerning trust, considering the contributions of Allwood and Linell & Marková. He makes a distinction between ‘confidence’ (in the natural world) and ‘trust’ (in other autonomous persons). (The child’s basic trust in his or her parents, in, in terms, a case of confidence.) In addition, Cornejo argues that trust is present in more than communicative situations. He then explains why ‘genuine’ trust is not a form of propositional knowledge, highlighting how strongly it is rooted in our bodily feelings of certainty. This leads to the idea that the feelings accompanying trust, openness and ease entail a disposition to trust, in evident opposition to the disposition to mistrust. The disposition to trust seems to be deeply grounded in our anthropological condition, which is confirmed through the observation of how language learning develops in young infants. Using concepts of D. Davidson, E. Husserl, and A. Schütz, he endorses the existence of a basic anthropological tendency to pre-reflexively trust in the reason and rationality of the actions of others.

The book ends with an epilogue, in which the editors summarise and synthesise some of the most important findings and claims that have treated by different authors.

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