Dialogical Approaches to Trust in Communication

Edited by
Per Linell
Ivana Marková
CHAPTER 11

TRUST AND DISTRUST IN INTERACTION

Some Theoretical and Methodological Points

Per Linell and Ivana Marková

In this chapter we shall link up with our introduction (Marková & Linell, 2013) and develop our arguments about trust and distrust in monologism and dialogism further. We continue to favour a dialogical conceptualisation. A dialogical or dialogist account implies, we think, that trust and distrust are to be explicates in more micro-oriented, empirically-based and less exclusively philosophical terms. It should also strive to preserve vital parts of the complexity in real data (Linell, 2009). Therefore, we included an analysis of a lengthy excerpt from one communicative activity type, an asylum interview, in which a good deal is at stake—at least for the applicant—and in which trust and distrust seem to surface extensively.

1 Acknowledgements: Our account was inspired by conversations with Michèle Grosen (Lausanne) and Anne Salarz-Orvig (Paris). Per Linell's work was supported by Grant No. 421-2004-1087 from the Swedish Research Council. We are also grateful for valuable comments made by members of the Dialectical-Sociocultural Seminar at Göteborg University, especially Åsa Måås-Fjetterström.

Dialogical Approaches to Trust in Communication, pages 213–235,
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1. THE ABSENCE OF TRUST IN THEORETICAL ACCOUNTS OF THE PRAGMATICS OF LANGUAGE

Since trust and distrust are basic to human communication, as ubiquitous and taken-for-granted aspects, premises and outcomes, one would expect that they would be Analysed and theorised by theorists of the pragmatics of language. This has hardly been the case; instead, trust has been ostensibly absent, except as a background condition mentioned in passing. Trust as a concept is not a major topic in the work of prominent pragmatists in philosophy and linguistics, such as Austin, Searle, Grice, Sperber, Wilson, and Levinson. John Searle (1969, 1998), for example, analyses felicity conditions for speech acts almost entirely in the perspective of the speaker who issues the act; the speaker’s interdependence with the listener and her/his reactions are hardly considered. In his later work, Searle discusses social realities in terms of cultural construction, but his perspective remains individualist and with assurances that the basic facts are “realized in the brain” (2009, p. 4).

It is worth pointing out, however, that Searle (1969) and Grice (1989), in their analyses based on notions like sincerity, rationality etc. maintain that these phenomena are necessary also for the capacities to lie, withhold relevant information, keep secrets etc. But in effect, Searle analyses speech acts at an abstract level of types, rather than situated tokens, working with idealised speakers who know their language perfectly, etc. While Stephen Levinson (2000) works with ‘utterance types’ instead, he too uses concocted utterances in imagined (default) contexts.

Paul Grice comes closer than Searle to analysing communication, in proposing the cooperative principle and its four constituent maxims. However, cooperation is for him a matter of rationality; it is rational and practical for communicative parties to honor cooperative principles (see section 2 below). Accordingly, there is no recognition of the basic role of trust and the suspension of doubt. Stephen Levinson (2000) develops a detailed Gricean theory of implicatures, especially ‘generalised conversational implicatures.’ Since implicatures build on the implicit reliance on unexpressed information, there ought to be a close relation to trust. But Levinson, who (in other works) has been interested in social-interactional aspects, does not mention trust either.

The same applies to the relevance theory of Sperber and Wilson (1986), which goes in a more cognitivist direction. The ultimate goal for the theory would be to calculate the relevant interpretation of any utterance from an explicit theory of its linguistic composition and its relevant contexts. This amounts to bracketing some of the dialogical properties of utterances, in particular, the multiple determinacy of utterances, i.e. that most utterances leave a space open for different interpretations, especially if we focus on the speaker’s linguistic actions only. This implies that it is partly up to the interlocutor to indicate or express (or try to) a particular interpretation, which will then be open to further negotiation and interpretation.

Our provisional conclusion will be that these leading representatives of linguistic pragmatics have engaged in ‘monologising practices,’ largely excluding the interpersonal dimensions, trying to reinterpret what is dialogical as something much more monological, and reducing pragmatics to issues of language conventions and speaker intentions. Some monologists do indeed mention that they need the assumption of (some kind of) mutual trust between parties. Yet with their theories, trust is a secondary concept, needed merely to account for a residue of sharedness that cannot be explained by reference to stable linguistic meanings and salient features of context.

Here we have only scratched the surface of the problem of how monologists manage to eliminate trust and its related dialogical dimensions (interdependence with the other, indeterminacy of interpretation of utterances, suspension of doubt, etc.). It would be an interesting research task to inquire more into this problem.2

2. COGNITIVE AND ETHICAL ASPECTS OF COOPERATION IN PRAGMATIC APPROACHES

In some pragmatic (and ethnomethodological, see below) approaches trust is, either implicitly or explicitly, a basic dimension in communication conceived of as cooperation and interaction (Allwood, 1976, 2013). When we talk (or write), we cannot make everything explicit, but must take for granted that the other is behaving ‘normally,’ and hence predictably, under the given circumstances, and that he/she makes the same assumption about us. What the norms and maxims of normal, cooperative communication are, has been explored by many. For example, Grice (1989) examined such norms in terms of maxims of quantity, quality, clarity and relevance, in relation to purpose and need. Clark (1985) explored them in terms of ‘common ground.’ Garfinkel (1963) too, in his breaching experiments, explored the nature of such ‘normality’ assumptions.

One might propose that there are different levels of taken-for-grantedness in discourse in general. The weak, and more wide-spread, assumption is that the other is behaving ‘normally,’ as a rational human being (given his/her own point-of-view or interest). There is, in this context, something like ‘the minimal level of cooperation.’ The stronger assumption, only sometimes made, is that the other is really caring for you, truly acting in your best interest, and/or displays his/her authentic emotions. These features could be discussed in terms of cognitive and ethical aspects of cooperation,

2 Watson (2009) (see section 4 below) has done this as regards sociological theory, but he does not go into linguistic pragmatics. See also Quéré (2001).
respectively (Allwood, 1976, 2013). Both of these categories involve normative aspects (Quéré, 2001).

The cognitive assumptions might comprise norms of communication such as the following:

a. the other, as well as I, conform to normal language use (in terms of grammar and lexicon),
b. the other means, just like myself, something rational, and his/her contributions are relevant and coherent from his/her own point-of-view,
c. we, I and the other, behave in accordance with a lot of very basic assumptions about the world ("doxa"), such as believing in the permanence and stability of the world (days are light, nights dark, the sun sets in the west, stones fall faster than feathers, and innumerable other things),
d. the other takes responsibility for the references, descriptions and explicit claims he/she makes (as I do for mine). (This is clearly different from aspects which are only indirectly alluded to, see below (f)).

Almost no party to a communicative exchange would contemplate devising some fundamentally different language, or inventing some other doxa. (If somebody appears to deviate from this, we would suspect that he/she is mentally insane.) As Quéré (2001, p. 130ff) points out, such assumptions do not pertain to trust as such. There aren’t really any alternatives but to abide by these assumptions ((a)–(c)). When it comes to (d), the simple construction of reference (Clark & Bangerter, 2004) involves some amount of trust; not only does the speaker assume that the recipient shares assumptions and knowledge with him or her, so does the recipient who must also trust that the speaker is not mistaken (or misleading) in his/her references.

There are some other cognitive assumptions which are somewhat less obligatory:

e. that we both abide by normal (often situation-dependent) interaction routines and cultural practices; we coordinate our interaction due to our familiarity with common routines (this appears to be what Gonzalez-Martinez, 2001, means by “practical trust” ["confiance pratique"]),
f. that we use normal conversational implicatures, building on indirect ways of expression.

These norms (e–f) can be violated. (It is possible that (e) should go together with (a–d) rather than with (f).) Yet, radical breaches of routines in genres and activity types lead to far-reaching communicative effects and strong social sanctions, as Garfinkel (1963) demonstrated in his experiments. Apart from this, varied interpretations of utterances can sometimes be negotiated. At least, speakers can sometimes refuse being held responsible for implicatures, arguing that they would only be creations of the recipient’s mind. For example, a speaker can often deny that a certain interpretation, e.g. a risqué one, was intended by his/her utterance, and sometimes get away with this denial. Nevertheless, if a person regularly denies responsibility for implicatures, we would probably regard him/her as not trustworthy.

The "ethical" responsibilities would, in addition, involve assumptions like:

g. the other tries actively to take your perspective, to help you to understand or carry out your projects; he/she tries to work in your best interest.

There are several additional multi-dimensionalities of trust, a considerable number of cross-cutting layers, dimensions and levels, ranging from basic linguistic and inferential levels to actions where much more is at stake (like risks of losing social capital—face, reputation—, economic loss, physical damage). Nevertheless, even if there are countless things we need to rely on in communication but cannot know for certain and therefore have to take-for-granted, many of these seldom become problematic. In this category one might put the basic linguistic phenomena (cf. (a–f) above, including then also usual implicatures). As Cornejo (2013) argues, it is not language as such, i.e. language as a system, which is crucial for trust, but assumptions made in language (language use and communication).

Many of the explications of trust involve references to co-operation. This would hold for monologist as well as dialogist approaches, although trust in the latter approaches is more than a normative co-operation. At the same time, as is well-known from daily practices, people often co-operate with others whether or not they trust them. One might, in some cases, speak of "faked trust"; people behave as if they trust each other. As we will elaborate further below, terms like trust and distrust do not have unambiguous meanings.

3. ETHICS OF TRUST: MONOLOGIST AND DIALOGIST ACCOUNTS

While it is not surprising that trust is usually represented as part of a broader semantic network associating it with obligations, morality and ethics, non-dialogist and dialogist approaches conceptualise this differently. If we consider pragmatic-monologist approaches and specifically, the speech act theory, we may refer, once more, to John Searle, for whom 'obligations,' like 'promises,' are the speaker's acts, rather than speaker-listener 'inter-acts' (Linell & Marková, 1993). In his attempt to resolve the Humean problem
of deriving 'ought' from 'is' (Hume, 1739/1896), Searle (1964) constructs a logical sequence showing that by saying 'I promise' the speaker already places him-/herself under obligation and that there is no need to refer to anything else, e.g. to morality or evaluations.

In dialogist approaches, the ethics of communication, as we have seen, constitutes a foundational prerequisite of dialogue from the very start. In Rommetveit’s, Bakhtin’s and Gadamer’s approaches, the listener and the speaker generate messages jointly and respond to one another on each other’s premises. As Rommetveit (1974, p. 74) put it, their mutual obligations and contracts stem from ‘shared ontological pre-conditions.’

Some dialogical neocantian philosophers, like Cohen (1907/1977) and Rosenzweig (1921/1971), go even further in their ethics of communication, based on an infinite freedom of the other. In his book on ethics, Cohen (1907/1977) presupposes the existential freedom of the other and responsibilities of the self towards the other (Gibbs, 1992, pp. 178, 185). Continuing with this perspective, Rosenzweig (1921/1977) maintains that the self is bound in responsibility not only with respect to the other but also to the third, which includes all others.

Developing these ideas of the neo-Kantians, for another dialogist scholar, Emmanuel Lévinas, the philosophy of dialogue is the ‘first’ philosophy: a dialogue cannot be anything but an ethical dialogue (Lévinas, 1995, p. 108). All human thinking, according to Lévinas, should be subordinated to ethics. Just like for Cohen, ethics starts with the other and with the responsibility of the self towards the other; this is what locates the self in the world.

Engagement with others is moral, obligatroy and asymmetrical. The primacy of ethics demands the precedence of my responsibility for the other even over my own existence (Lévinas, 1978, pp. 75–76). This also implies that the ethics of dialogue precedes and pre-conditions dialogue in the everyday sense of the word, that is, the exchange of mutual dialogical contributions. The self has no right to question what the other requires from him: his obligations and generosity to others is unlimited (Marková, 2011).

Cohen, Rosenzweig and Lévinas thus present an extreme form of dialogistic ethical requirements and place an extreme responsibility on the self. This leaves one wondering how realistic their religious ideals appear to be in a world represented as uncertain and unjust. However, these scholars and their ideas bring to attention that ethics is not a ‘natural thing’ as empirical social sciences like sociology and psychology usually assume. Referring to Cohen, Gibbs (1992, p. 185) points out that these social sciences derive ethics from causal laws of natural objects: ‘The point is all too Kantian: If ethics is merely a branch of natural science, then it is not ethics at all.’ (Gibbs, p. 185). Ethics must arise from unconditional freedom of the other. This point brings us back to questioning what contribution social sciences can make in studying trust/distrust empirically.

4. COMMUNICATION AS A CONTRACT

Trust (and distrust) are part and parcel of human meaning-making, and this implies that psychology should be seen as a ‘moral science’, says Ragnar Rommetveit (e.g., 1998, p. 290) (following Putnam, 1978). Rommetveit’s perspective of communication as a dialogically based co-authorship is founded on several multifaceted and interdependent forms of trust and ethical requirements. These are perhaps most clearly expressed in his saying that ‘[i]ntersubjectivity must be taken for granted in order to be achieved’ (Rommetveit, 1974, p. 56). The same might be said about trust. A mutuality of a shared social world may not “objectively” exist when interactants enter into communication, and yet this mutuality will normally be taken as shared, or at least as essentially shared. In and through dialogue, interactants endorse and confirm the mutually shared social world, thereby demonstrating trust in it, at least at some level. There is also trust in the shared understanding of messages, up to a point where one (or both) of them feel(s) that commonality may be lacking (which may result in an effort for repair). This implies that the listener responds to the speaker on the speaker’s premises which is possible only if they both share communicative (symbolic, linguistic, emotional, intentional) presuppositions on which the speaker’s message is based. As Rommetveit (1974, p. 17) explains: ‘What is made known by what [the speaker] says must hence be assessed against the background of other potential and plausible answers...’ within an intersubjectively established social reality. In other words, choosing the relevant response confirms mutual understanding. Other kinds of trust were already mentioned in section 2. The speaker assumes that the other makes relevant and coherent contributions and that they both share the view that they act rationally. For Rommetveit, these different kinds of expectations or trusts are realised in and through drafts of contracts, contracts and meta-contracts. They are so basic, that they have ontological significance. The very term ‘contract’ in communication means that the participants are morally obliged to honour these communicative requirements. These obligations, although “based upon shared ontological pre-conditions” (1974, p. 74), nevertheless allow for a rich spectrum of intersubjective relations. Drafts of contracts refer to semantic and pragmatic potentialities of words and constructions, from which speakers select the relevant option in a concrete realisation of a particular meaning. Once selected, drafts of contracts become relatively stable and fixed contracts binding speakers to fulfil norms of intersubjectively established forms of trust (presuppositions concerning the shared social worlds, rationality, permanence and stability of the world, etc.). Finally, contracts are nested in meta-contracts, that is, in socially and institutionally established presuppositions for communication which are specific to particular cultures and languages.
5. THE HERMENEUTICS OF TRUST AND THE HERMENEUTICS OF SUSPICION

Trust has sometimes been understood in terms of 'suspension of doubt' (Möllering, 2001; see also Salgado, 2013). This is of course close to 'suspension of suspicion.' Two of the most interesting scholars in the 20th century who contributed to related issues have been Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur. In discussing the hermeneutics of trust, Gadamer (1984) explicitly points out that his concern with this issue must be understood as a direct and critical reference to the hermeneutics of suspicion of Ricoeur. Since the controversy between these two foremost philosophers of hermeneutics is relevant to the subject of trust and distrust in language and communication, we shall briefly comment on their views and differences between their perspectives.

Gadamer draws attention to the primacy of dialogue over written text in a variety of his writings and above all in Truth and Method (1975/2004). He views text as a fixed speech, and the objective of interpretation is to bring back to speech what is frozen in the text (Dostal, 1987). In Gadamer's words, we need 'to approach the mystery of language from the conversation that we ourselves are' (1975/2004, p. 370). By language he means above all a living dialogue or conversation, that is, language-in-use ('language'), and only secondarily a system of grammatical rules, syntax and vocabulary. He emphasises the dialogicality of language: we live language rather than use it as an instrument. And it is the living dialogue that always stands behind our understanding of texts, works of art, and traditions—in other words, it is the living language that underlies hermeneutics, that is, the theory and practice of interpretation. So what is for Gadamer the hermeneutics of trust?

When Gadamer refers to the dialogicality of speech, he means by it a continuous effort 'to engage oneself in something or to become involved with someone' (2007a, p. 163) rather than assigning specific meanings to words or assertions by themselves. Instead, to speak means to take risks by exposing one's own discourse to doubt. In speaking, one may let oneself be exposed to one's own doubt in one's words; in addition, one lays bare in front of others one's own presuppositions and beliefs, and thus risks the others' evaluation and a possible denigration of the self. This double risk leads Gadamer to asking the following questions: 'First, how do the commonality of shared meaning ... which is built up in conversation, and the impenetrable otherness of the other mediate each other? Second, what, in the final analysis, is the nature of language? Is it bridge or barrier? Is it a bridge built of things that are the same for each self over which one communicates with the other over the flowing stream of otherness? Or is it a barrier that limits our giving up of our selves? [...] (2007a, p. 164). Gadamer concludes, just like Voloshinov (1929/1973) that it is in the nature of language to bridge the perspectives of the self and of the other in an effort to understand one another. But although bridging one's own and the other's perspectives must involve trust, it does not mean that one can trust all speech and all texts. Gadamer makes a distinction between genuine and non-genuine texts like jokes, irony, rhetorical fillers, pretences, texts empty of content, and so on (Gadamer, 2007a, pp. 176ff). However, it is the primacy of the hermeneutics of trust in language not as an instrument but as a form of being which enables the world to be understood (2007b, p. 272) and to be the lived experience. Just like Bakhtin, Gadamer expresses his dialogical position in the claim that 'every statement has to be seen as a response to a question, and that the only way to understand a statement is to get hold of the question to which its statement is an answer' (2007c, p. 241).

While Gadamer's point of departure of hermeneutics is a dialogue, Paul Ricoeur (1981, p. 43) defines hermeneutics as 'the theory of operations of understanding in relation to the interpretation of texts.' And he clarifies that the key idea is to understand discourse as a text. Thus it is here that we come to see the fundamental difference between Gadamer and Ricoeur, and we could say that it is from this difference that their views of trust and suspicion in language arise. The starting-point for Ricoeur is not the mutuality of the self and other as it is for Gadamer, but the self-reflexive individual who interprets the text. Consequently, for Ricoeur, the relation between the author and reader is far from dialogical. As he states: 'Nothing is less intersubjective or dialogical than the encounter with a text' (1976, p. 191). Instead, Ricoeur argued in Freud and Philosophy (Ricoeur, 1965/1970, p. 46) that it is reflexion that must become interpretation, thus recalling the spirit of Descartes. It was here, in his earlier work that Ricoeur postulated his hermeneutics of suspicion. He argued that language, from the very beginning, is mostly distorted: 'it means something other than what it says, it has a double meaning, it is equivocal' (Ricoeur, 1965/1970, p. 7). Not only language but also consciousness, and above all self-consciousness, presents an illusory idea of knowledge and self-knowledge. As we have already pointed out above, since Descartes, the primacy of self-consciousness and radical doubt in everything except for one's thought acquired a methodological superiority in the search for true knowledge. Ricoeur points out in Freud and Philosophy that the idea of 'hermeneutics of suspicion' dominated the work of three masters like Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx. These three masters posited 'false consciousness' in their specific ways, whether through the unconscious, or through economic exploitation or through untrue knowledge.

Since for Ricoeur the text is not dialogical, it does not belong to anybody, neither to the author nor to the reader. As he says, 'the writing-reading relation is ... not a particular case of speaking-answering relation' (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 146). There is no exchange of questions and answers in the text,
and therefore, we cannot talk about a dialogue. Instead, we have two independent parties between which there is no communication. There is a distance between author and reader, and the dialectics of understanding and explanation takes the form of ‘distantiation’ and ‘appropriation.’ Ricoeur defines distantiation as the dialectic between the event and meaning (1981, p. 139). It is a reflexive process that forms a fundamental moment in understanding which ‘implements all strategies of suspicion’ (1981, p. 119). Appropriation is a counterpart of distantiation. It is a process by which the reader achieves an interpretation of the text.

In conclusion, Gadamer’s emphasis is on tradition and history in dialogue, and the mutuality between the self and other. Ricoeur starts with an already mature and reflective interpreter, and with his unconscious. While recognizing that Ricoeur is focusing on the interpreting individual, and we would not denigrate the differences between speech and (printed) texts, it is important to emphasize that there is a dialogical perspective on reading and, more generally, on the use of texts too (Bakhtin, 1986; Nystrand, 1992).

6. ETHNOMETHODOLOGICAL THEORISATIONS OF TRUST

Etnomethodology comes rather close to what we call a dialogical approach. Let us therefore turn to Rod Watson’s (2009) recent reappraisal of Harold Garfinkel’s (1963) ethnomethodology and his notion of trust. Watson begins by summarizing: “One of the basic conditions of any constitutive practice is a mutual commitment to rules of engagement in that practice [of communication/PL&IM]—that is, all parties to the interaction must understand that they are engaged in the same practice, must be competent to perform the practice, must actually perform competently and assume this also of the others. It is as such a constitutive condition that Garfinkel (1963, 1984) elaborated trust as a necessary background condition of any mutually intelligible interaction.” (Watson, 2009, pp. 475–6).

So, trust is a constitutive condition for communication; without sufficient trust there is no communication! Indeed, it is basic to many “participant-produced orders” (p. 493), many more than talk-in-interaction; Watson mentions the traffic flow, particularly high-speed traffic on motorways, pedestrian flow-files in urban public places, and queues or waiting lines. Trust is closely related to assumptions about self’s and others’ moral identity and moral character, their willingness to think of others’ interests (Tileagă, 2013).

Trust is both “prior to and constitutive of actions,” but also an outcome of interaction (although Watson emphasises the former). Yet, he observes that most mainstream sociologists treated trust more as a supportive additional premise, rather than as a necessary precondition. Often, trust is presented “in terms of something else—trust as choice, as attitude, as risk, as a game, and so on.” (p. 477). This is related to the fact that “trust as a first-order phenomenon has proved remarkably elusive” (p. 477), a tacit and fugitive contextual phenomenon. Accordingly, “formal analysis” treated trust only “allusively” (pp. 475, 477), just like linguistic pragmatists have done (see section 1 above).

Rod Watson looks at trust from an ethnomethodological and phenomenological point-of-view, which has a lot in common with a dialogical (“dialogist”) conception (see also Tileagă, 2013). Within dialogism, the starting-point is that trust is based on the self-other interdependency. It is related to basic dialogical aspects of any interaction, like response, initiative and reciprocity:

- Response: I observe the regularities in your responses to things in the world, including my actions, which gives me some confidence that I can predict your future responsive actions.
- Initiative: I dare to take initiatives in the world, because I can predict your response or uptake.
- Reciprocity: Initiatives and responses are inscribed within a web of reciprocal actions and mutual assumptions.

7. TRUST IN COMMUNICATIVE CONTRACTS OF SECRETS AND NON-DISCLOSURE

We have already pointed out that what distinguishes dialogist approaches from monologist ones is the openness to different forms of communication and infinite possibilities of interpretation, and the awareness of the interdependence between self and others in terms of knowing and feeling. Although the study of trust and distrust was not the major theme in the work of Georg Simmel, he provided some significant insights into these issues. Simmel (1950, 2004) assumed that in order to communicate, speakers must have at least some knowledge about each other: mutual knowledge is a pre-condition for communication. However, the speakers’ knowledge about one another is never complete; it is always partial consisting of fragments that they piece together. The other allows the speaker to 'see' only some features of his/her feelings and thoughts. Therefore, in order to construct their knowledge about one another participants complement their partial knowledge by imagining what the other could be like and what to expect from him/her. Knowledge is a reciprocal process but the degree of reciprocity differs from one type of relationship to another and it depends on the degree of speakers’ trust of one another.

Simmel discussed trust at several places of his work, although in each case only transiently. His discussion of trust in the context of secret societ-

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3 Cf. Gambetta’s (1988) rational choice theory, Coleman’s (1990) game theory, etc.
ies is probably the most relevant to dialogist perspectives because it is here that it is viewed as a reciprocal relation among participants and as a moral stance. In secret societies reciprocal trust among members is the most important internal relation. They exert a very efficient discipline upon moral accountability with respect to one another: 'For there resides in confidence of men toward each other as high moral value as in the companion fact that this confidence is justified' (Simmel, 1950, p. 473).

In his book on *Secret et formes sociales*, Petitat (1998) shows that secrets are a fundamental characteristic of life that exists already in animal species, play an important role in child development and appear in various forms in society. It is an inseparable feature of knowledge, imagination and symbolism, as well as of rules that govern everyday interactions, traditions and functions of institutions. It also enables the possibilities of showing and hiding as well as lying.

Simmel (1950) reminds us that the permissibility of lying has had different expressions throughout history and cultures. For example, while it was acceptable among the Greek divinities, modern life does not permit it, except perhaps in more “innocent” cases (“white lies”; Bok, 1989). Indeed, lying is often severely punished both in institutions and in interpersonal relations and communication. In interpersonal communication, the closer and intimate the relations between speakers, the less tolerable is lying.

While there are few words for ‘authenticity’ (at least in European languages), Petitat (1998) shows that, by contrast, the semantics of secrets (masking, lying, hiding and disguising meanings) is enormous. If one includes professional terms affecting mental health of individuals, like psychoanalysis, troubles relating to the self and others, e.g. illusions, delusions, fabulations, etc. one arrives at a number of 1100 in the French language. Petitat proposes that forms of secret can be arranged within a virtual symbolic space of reversibility along three axes: expression or non-expression of representations, authentic or deformed expression of representations, and respect or disregard of conventions. Language occupies all three axes in this symbolic space of reversibilities showing high asymmetries within these axes as well as a high variability of semantic meanings.

Social representations of trust, distrust and lying have become transformed throughout history in the process of the objectification of culture (Simmel, 1950). It has sharply differentiated the amounts of knowing and not knowing that was essential to the meaning of trust and distrust. The objectification of culture and of communication has led to impersonal relations and it has created a special category of ‘the stranger.’ Although ‘strangers’ have always been part of societies as individuals who came to the local community as traders, artists, or individuals offering other kinds of services, modern society largely consists of ‘strangers’; most services and transactions today are carried out by individuals with whom we interact impersonally, simply for the purpose of the specific task they carry out, whether in shops, banks, health care, and so on. Very often our interaction is limited to the internet or telephone, and sometimes it is not even clear whether one deals with a human or with a machine. Simmel characterises a stranger as someone who is close to us in terms of nationality or occupation, yet distant from us in terms of interpersonal matters and feelings. The stranger is not allowed to cross the physical or symbolic distance that separates him/her from our selves and ‘[l]anguage indicates very nicely an invasion of this sort by such phrases as «coming too near» (zu nahe treten)’ (Simmel, 1950, p. 453). Trust in strangers is limited to instrumental tasks; we trust them only for limited purposes (Allwood, 2013).

While Simmel’s objectification of relations leads him to conceive the trust of modern strangers in an instrumental manner, Bakhtin takes a different perspective. Just like Simmel was disappointed with the scientific world and felt like an excluded stranger in his professional life, so Bakhtin lived in a world that offered him little security, coherence or justice (Emerson, 2002). That world could not be trusted, but Bakhtin found trust above all in the word. As Emerson observes, Bakhtin lived his ideals that were not idealistic in the sense that he would expect to arrive at them, but because they oriented him towards those ideals. In this sense, Bakhtin’s ideal was very realistic. As Emerson says, for Bakhtin it meant that “each individual could always choose to answer for a coherent response to an event. In a word, it is this individual freedom over the response that the ideal facilitates” (2002, p. 23). Bakhtin’s trust in the word also implies that trust is transformed into the individual’s responsibility for the word and for communication; while the individual person can choose what to say, there can be no alibi in communication. In sum, Bakhtin, demanding very little of the external world, made trust and responsibility a dialogical matter enabling the insecure individual to live in an incoherent and unjust world.

8. TRUST AND DISTRUST IN ASYLUM INTERVIEWS

Monologism and dialogism provide different philosophical approaches to ontological and epistemological matters. But since, as Valsiner (2008, p. xii) puts it, “human encounters is the starting point for the making of trust” (italics in original), we should develop the dialogist approach to trust and distrust from empirical data. However, space restrictions impede us from fully demonstrating here the multi-dimensional and heterogeneous nature of trust and distrust in actual life. We will cite one example taken from Linell and Keselman (2012), who analyse interpreter-mediated interviews with Russian adolescents seeking asylum in Sweden. (In addition, some cases are discussed in other chapters in this volume, as well as in Candlin & Critchton, 2012).
The asylum interview is a highly complex communicative activity type. Linell and Keselman (op. cit.) discuss some of those specific conditions which may lead to mutual distrust between the parties in the interviews studied, that is, the interviewers (caseworkers representing the Swedish migration authority) and the applicants (unaccompanied minors arriving in Sweden from Russia or other former Soviet republics), whose communication is on-line interpreted by dialogue interpreters. These conditions include the following:4

- The laws regulating the rights of refugees and other asylum-seekers are hard to implement, because they are only framing laws in need of a great deal of further interpretation. The actual practices may be subject to national policies of restricting immigration. Caseworkers are torn between protecting the rights of applicants to get a fair assessment and critically examining the stories told by applicants.
- The investigative interview is, partly for the reasons just mentioned, a hybrid activity type, involving legal-administrative purposes as well as psychological and humanitarian considerations.
- Cultural backgrounds divide the parties, for example, differences between a Western welfare state and a home country still characterised by a Soviet heritage. The parties to the asylum interviews are strangers to each other, in quite a strong sense.
- Applicants are influenced by several voices and interests, for example, providing relevant information vs. not disclosing information that might be negative for their cause.
- The interviews are highly asymmetrical, involving one (or several) adult caseworkers with influence over future decisions, representing a majority culture partly unknown to the applicants, who are adolescents from other cultures, often with traumatic experiences and acting alone (although sometimes assisted by a lawyer and/or trustee).
- The interactions are mediated by interpreters, some of whom (in our data) are not authorised. Interpretations do not always accurately reflect what was said in the Swedish or Russian originals.

It is probable that these, and other, background conditions will strongly influence mutual trust and distrust among parties.

While it is impossible to find one single example that could illustrate all the difficulties facing the participants in the investigative asylum interview, we shall give only one excerpt in abbreviated form. This interview involves a boy, aged 17 at the time of the interview, whom we have called Misha and who had been smuggled from Russia to Sweden (M below), and a female caseworker (C) around the age of 50. There is also a male interpreter (around 50), whose contributions are only exceptionally included in the excerpt (due to space limitations). As we come in, the caseworker has brought up an incident in which A allegedly had stolen a bottle of vodka in a state liquor store in Stockholm:5,6

1. C: you know, you ought to know of course that one can not just walk in and pick up something in a store and then walk out
2. I: but you know of course you must know that it's forbidden simply to walk into a store and quite simply take things
3. M: I wanted to buy it
4. I: ((Swedish rendition))
5. M: they didn't sell it to me
6. I: ((Swedish rendition))

((4 contributions omitted; these deal with the prohibition for minors to buy liquor))

11. C: yeah, if one is not allowed to buy, does one simply pinch it, or—?
12. M: ((Russian rendition))

((2 contributions omitted))

13. C: well, I'm sure I refused to take "that bottle of vodka"
14. I: I needed that vodka bottle
15. C: that's no good you see, not at all

16. ((8 contributions omitted in which M claims he was to meet a girl and had to treat her on vodka, according to Russian custom)))

24. C: what's crazy in all this that's that you are saying somewhat different things now and then, (.) to the police you tell that you would have this for dabbing some rash you had on your arms
25. I: ((Russian rendition))
26. M: "remedy"
27. I: yeah, as medicine, yes
28. C: yes why are you saying that?
29. I: why did you say that?
30. M: but they asked me where I stopped over in Stockholm and I didn't want to tell them that I stayed with her therefore...
31. I: that is they asked me where I had stopped in Stockholm and I didn't want to tell them
32. M: ((overlapping)): what girl it is, where she lives
33. I: had I told them that I stay with a chick they would have asked like ghot kind of chick it was and much more
34. C: but you are it is like this on the whole that's why I'm asking you too where you are in Stockholm, once you are here and you have no parents who look after you so to speak and then one wants to know what you are up to whereabouts you are and so on

5 The interpreter's renditions are given, in this excerpt, only where they clearly deviate from the originals. All utterances have here been translated into English. We use bold italics for translations of Swedish contributions, and plain italics for Russian contributions. Of course, our analyses were carried on the Swedish and Russian data, not on the translations.
6 The word "stories" appears in English in the original.
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75. I: but since you were already there then they wanted to ask you
76. C: but there I'm wondering why you provide different (-) stories
77. I: but my question is about why you are telling in different ways in different places
78. M: how in different ways in different places?
79. I: how then differently in different places?
80. C: because you tell me that daddy disappeared in November and you tell the police that daddy fixed this trip

((about 25 short contributions omitted; M claims that he does not remember what he told the police in the first interview. He also suggests that the telephone interpreter may have misrepresented what he said on that occasion. In addition, there is a disagreement as to whether the interpreter had been male or female. This is followed by the following sequences))

105. C: oh, then then the police have written something wrong you mean?
106. I: well what do you think that the police wrote incorrectly?
107. M: well can be
108. I: it's possible
109. C: I don't believe it
110. I: I don't think so
111. M: what?
112. I: I don't think so

((4.0)
113. C: mm, this is just a little bit about trust

The caseworker's grounding of distrust in this excerpt lies in Misha's providing discrepant versions of his doings (e.g. contribution 76). We are dealing with, on the one hand, his explanations of why he stole a bottle of vodka in the liquor store, and on the other, his accounts for how the transportation to Sweden was organised. In the latter case, he first avoids the question (46, responding to the caseworkers' (abruptly introduced) questions about this second topic: 42, 44). Nonetheless, Misha eventually provides at least partial explanations of why he had to provide different stories to different addressess, that is, to selectively lie or not disclose everything.

At the same time, Misha seems to have grounds for distrust in the authorities. He points out that he has been told that he does not have to tell everybody about his background (46, 66), and yet it turns out that he is now obliged to tell the police as well as the migration authority (61, 68, 70). Another confusing point for him is that professionals are said to abide with rules of confidentiality (46), and yet the police have told the migration authority what he has told only to them. The caseworker claims that her interest in Misha's doings is based on caring for his best (34, 36, 40); in this sequence, Misha does not get any opportunity to respond because of the caseworker's sudden change of topic (42), but he comes back to his perspective of private integrity later (59).

At times, the communication is somewhat confounded by the influence of the interpreter's renditions. For example, when in contribution 59 he asks if he is obliged to tell "everybody," this word is not translated in (60),
which means that the caseworker answers (in 61) on the premise that the question is just about the migration authority. In this case, however, the potential misunderstanding is cleared up later.

Towards the end of the excerpt we find a rather close-knit mistrust sequence (Linell & Keselman, 2012). Misha has given divergent accounts of his journey to Sweden, and the caseworker makes a summary of the upshot (80). Later, she seeks confirmation of the claim that there is really a mistake in the police report (105). When Misha says that this is possible (107), she first attests to her disbelief (109), thus suggesting that Misha is mistaken (or lying). The sequence ends up with the caseworker making the explicit meta-comment that the whole encounter is “a little bit about trust” (113).

These are just some of the many small signs of distrust in the interview (and other investigative interviews contain other kinds). It is clear that inconsistencies in what one party perceives in the other’s accounts or explanations are a major source of distrust. Even if Misha may have had reasons to tell different “stories” to different people, discrepancies provide the caseworker with reasons for doubt and suspicion. At the same time, Misha finds the talk about confidentiality untrustworthy. Some discrepancies may have become enhanced by misleading translations. At the same time, as already noted, parties arguably come to the interview with expectations that the other can not be expected to be entirely trustworthy.

Do the parties then not trust each other at all? Well, they do. In fact, they seem to trust each other when it comes to the basic cognitive assumptions discussed in section 1. For example, they take for granted that the other uses language in a normal fashion. They do not problematise the concepts or meanings of, say, ‘buy’, ‘steal’ or ‘lie’; yet, Misha could have argued that since he was impeded from buying the vodka, he did not intentionally “steal” (or “pinch”) it, or the caseworker could have said that Misha sometimes lied, when he told “different stories” about the same events.

Furthermore, parties share basic assumptions about the world, such as there being different countries and languages around. Also some more specific knowledge about, for example, Sweden and Russia is shared (unless they find evidence that the other is not properly informed). Parties also abide by normal interaction routines; a question by the other is taken up as a request for a response. They even seem to share some understandings of what the activity type, the asylum interview, is designed to be (e.g., Mishas’s lines 58, 59). (As we noted above, one cannot communicate if there are doubts and suspicions at all levels.) By contrast, the “ethical” responsibilities discussed in section 1 do not seem to be fully honoured. This ethical

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1 Caseworkers are committed to obeying rules of confidentiality, but this is a promise they can never hold, since they have to exchange information with the police and social authorities, when it comes to collecting data, e.g. regarding personal identity, necessary for the processing of the case.

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distrust, in combination with discrepant stories, may occasionally generate doubt in more basic assumptions too; the overarching maxim seems to be “trust until further notice.”

9. DISCUSSION: THEORY AND METHOD

In this chapter, we have sketched some relevant background for a dialogist approach to trust and distrust, and we have provided an empirical example from a distrust-loaded activity type. In this concluding discussion we shall take up a few theoretical and methodological considerations.

On the theoretical side we will be very brief, since we will come back to a more comprehensive account in our Epilogue (Linell & Marková, 2013). We have seen that trust and distrust are dynamic; they change with situations and over time. Trust is weighed against its dialectically related opposites, like doubt and distrust/mistrust. Hence, they must be analysed together.

Like several other contributors to this volume, we have seen that trust is partial and generic, activity- and situation-specific; people often trust other persons and institutions, but sometimes only in specific and limited respects. Furthermore, distrust and especially trust are normally implicit and only indexed, rather than expressed, by language; this will create some problems for the empirical analysis (see below). Finally, we have seen that trust and distrust are linked to morality and ethics. It also appears that trust/distrust in the other’s intentions/purposes is more basic than trust in various kinds of information. Yet, these dimensions are clearly dialectically intertwined; discrepant information may induce suspicion and distrust.

Finally, we will turn to a methodological point. In the example above (and elsewhere), we have shown features of displayed (partial) distrust, rather than trust. Indeed, one may argue that trust is so elusive that it becomes virtually inaccessible to explicit discourse analysis (Linell & Keselman, 2012). However, some scholars argue that adjustments of discourse and behaviour in ways that can be heard as affiliation, alignment and agreement (moving together in apparent sympathy) can be signs of trust in the other. For example, Hall et al. (2012) have pointed to various features of trust-inducing conduct in meetings in the domain of child protection. (Similar arguments could of course be based on data from other kinds of social encounters.) Hall et al. offer data and analyses from two kinds of meetings, child protection meetings (CPMs; relatively formal meetings with representatives of different professions with clients/parents present) and core group meetings (CGMs; more informal meetings between parents and those professionals directly working with the cases of the child(ren) concerned). Both activity types deal with child protection issues (family life, perhaps marital problems, abuse, custody battles), that is, topics that are threatening personal integrity, and participants may need to move between trust-building actions, and more face-threatening moments, these latter perhaps followed
by attempts to restore trust. The framings of the two activity types may offer partly different types of affordances for trust and distrust. The authors point to the chair person’s trust-inviting actions in the CPMs, such as offering regular opportunities for all parties to have their voices heard. This may increase trust in the institution as a whole. In the CGMs, by contrast, which involve social workers, health visitors and other professionals who are out in the field, we find more of informal turn-taking, seating arrangements allowing for sideplay sequences, humorous ingredients and various mitigating devices, all of which may also arguably support trustful communication, although here it may be more about specific professionals. At the same time, the authors point to a “rule of optimism” which parties often seem to orient to, that is, that things will turn out to be better than they appear to be. That is, in an uncertain and ambiguous situation, parties often have to “suspend doubts or suspicions” and take a “leap of faith” (Möllering, 2006). But, after all, their conduct may involve a good deal of faked—as opposed to genuine—trust, after all.

In conclusion, real trust is elusive, and trust-building actions may be faked (or feigned), rather than genuine. Faked trust may be just perfunctory and self-professed agreement and affiliation with the other, without much reflection but perhaps with a diffuse hope that things are after all OK, or it may be based on a reflected and genuine (but masked) doubt about the other’s competence or true intentions. As Cornejo (2018, p. 249) suggests, in the latter case we have a mistrust which resides only in an inner dialogue but is kept silent publicly. In any case, the distinction between genuine and faked trust may be ontologically and analytically difficult to sustain. By contrast, when there is a leakage of distrust in discourse, as in our empirical examples above, this may be analytically more reliable.

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