MUTUALITIES IN DIALOGUE

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Preface

The study of communication has become, for scholars, practitioners and engineers alike, one of the most fascinating topics of exploration in the twentieth century. After almost a century the field is still growing, expanding and subdividing into new sub-fields. A sub-field of considerable interest today is the study of *dialogue*. While the focus on dialogue as a method of instruction and of inquiry goes back to ancient Greek philosophy, today the structure and process of dialogue attracts the attention of scholars and researchers in communication research, psychology, linguistics, literary criticism, and philosophy – to mention but a few scholarly disciplines. The study of dialogue is also of interest to practitioners, for example, language and speech therapists, counsellors and practising psychologists.

Dialogue has developed in the course of evolution from more primitive forms of social communication. It refers, in the present volume, to a face-to-face interaction between two or more individuals using a system of signs. Notwithstanding the multitude of definitions, 'to communicate' (and therefore to engage in dialogue) means, not only etymologically but also factually, to share something with someone else or to impart something to someone so that it becomes the common property of all those participating in the dialogue. It is this core meaning of the verb 'to communicate' that has given rise to the present editors' question: what exactly is it that we share in the course of a dialogue?

The standard answer to this question is that it is *information* that we share. Yet, such an answer is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. First, the term 'information' is either poorly defined or is assumed to be well understood by all those concerned. Second, information-based approaches rarely address such questions as: whether we share anything at all before we begin a dialogue; whether or not we enter a dialogue to discover if we share anything with our interactants;

whether any kind of functional commonality presupposes a mutual sharing; and whether mutuality of knowledge and of trust are the *sine qua non* of a meaningful dialogue. These are the questions that are of central importance to the authors of the present volume.

In a sense, these questions also underlie those examined in the previous two volumes, *The dynamics of dialogue* (ed. Marková and Foppa, 1990) and *Asymmetries in dialogue* (ed. Marková and Foppa, 1991). However, while the previous two volumes *assumed* mutualities, the present volume is exclusively concerned with how these mutualities express themselves in dialogue. For example, the authors contributing to *Asymmetries in dialogue* presupposed that both dialogical asymmetries and symmetries *are mutually* constructed, maintained and reconstructed by the interactants. However, while this presupposition is perhaps relatively unproblematic for most readers with respect to dialogical symmetries, a comment may be required in the case of asymmetries. Asymmetries often arise from the attempt of one speaker to impose his or her own perspective upon the other interactant. For example, in order to manipulate, to express dominance and power, to persuade, and to blame the other, one interactant tries to thrust his or her point of view on the other person rather than to establish a joint perspective or to negotiate. Moreover, interactants may be non-cooperative or in a state of dialogical conflict, actively obstructing the establishment of intersubjective understanding. Their interaction may intensify dialogical asymmetries and may even lead to a breakdown in communication. However, even if interactants use non-cooperative strategies and try to manipulate each other, they must at least have something in common in a very basic sense. Such basic common prerequisites for communication include the very language they both speak, the culture in which they both live and at least a very elementary assumption about the other interactant (Graumann, chapter 1). Without such elementary commonalities, techniques of persuasion, of non-cooperation and of manipulation could not be used to any effect. It is in this sense that the term 'mutualities' is more basic than those of 'asymmetries', 'persuasion' 'non-cooperation' and so on.

In drawing attention to dialogical mutualities one is adopting a particular perspective on the study of dialogue. It is a perspective which focuses on the interacting *dyad* rather than on two interacting *individuals*. This particular perspective stems from a variety of approaches, such as dialogism, the phenomenology of perspective-setting

and perspective-taking, interactionism, exchange theories and others. Yet within this broadly based perspective, even the notions of a 'dyad' and of 'interaction within a dyad' are based on different conceptions of mutualities and on diverse manifestations of intersubjectivity in dialogues. An awareness of such pluralities is reflected in the title *Mutualities in dialogue*. In his conceptual introduction Graumann (chapter 1) reviews the vocabulary of ordinary language and the terminology of the social sciences with respect to the usage of terms belonging to the family of commonality, mutuality and reciprocity. The author suggests some possible distinctions between these terms and he draws attention to the fluidity of boundaries, even in the social sciences, with respect to these terms. He argues that *reciprocity*, as a moral principle, refers to interdependent and intersubjective dialogical activities. Reciprocity, so conceived, presupposes a mutuality of knowledge and of trust and this, in turn, requires certain basic commonalities on which knowledge and trust can be built.

The first set of chapters comprising part 1 of the present volume deals with mutualities in preverbal and in nonverbal communication. In chapter 2 Ploog, a primatologist, presents evidence for 'Mutuality and dialogue in nonhuman primate communication'. Illustrating his account with cases of nonvocal mutuality in approach-avoidance and display behaviour in nonhuman primates, the author presents data which he analyses by means of a specific category system. The data show that the *kind* of vocal expressions emitted by one animal influences the vocalizations of the other animal, and vice versa. This mutuality of affection by specific (vocal) utterances is taken as a definiens of the dialogical character of this type of primate communication. A discussion of the issues of intentionality and of deception in animal communication prepares the ground for a discussion of dialogical issues specific to human communication. In chapter 3, Papoušek discusses studies concerned with the 'Origins of reciprocity and mutuality in prelinguistic parent–infant "dialogues"'. Starting from the well-established fact of 'behavioural synchrony' between parents and infants, the author is able to show, with the help of behavioural microanalyses, how parent and child succeed in establishing reciprocity and mutuality in preverbal vocal interchanges. Despite a considerable asymmetry due to an initial lack of 'common ground', parent and child set up a common time frame, a common vocal code, a shared understanding of feelings and intentions and a shared topic.

Part 1 of the volume is rounded off by the chapter by Wallbott on

'Congruence, contagion, and motor mimicry'. The title of Wallbott's chapter indicates that the author is concerned with particular issues dealing with the 'exchange' aspect of nonverbal communication. He also draws attention to related approaches, such as cognitive empathy, interactional synchrony and accommodation theory. The author concludes that since our understanding of these processes is still 'somewhat fragmented', an integrative view of the phenomena that may contribute to dialogical mutuality in nonverbal exchange has to await future research.

The two chapters in part II have in common a closer examination of the activities and processes that establish and maintain mutuality in dialogues. One contribution uses the perspective and the tools of conversation analysis and the other uses the point of view and the methods of experimental social psychology. Another commonality of these two studies is the belief that conversation is 'by its very nature a cooperative endeavour' (Gumperz, chapter 5); hence, it requires coordination. Both chapters deal with the specifics of coordination in a dialogical cooperation. In chapter 5, Gumperz investigates 'Mutual inferencing in conversation' by means of three case studies. The central assumption of this study is that common ground is established by on-line inferential processes. These depend on background knowledge (presuppositions and expectations) which is retrieved by means of contextualization cues. If contextualization cues are not common, due to unequal learning opportunities, interlocutors with a poor communicative competence will miss the frame of reference and, hence, will tend to misunderstand what is being said.

In chapter 6, on the 'Coordination of perspective in dialogue', Krauss, Fussell and Chen review several of their studies dealing with intrapersonal and interpersonal processes of perspective-taking. By 'intrapersonal perspective-taking' the authors mean all those mental processes involved in the construction of a model of the partner or of the partner's knowledge. The term 'interpersonal' refers, in this context, to any perceived feedback signs that help one interactant to adapt his or her message to the other interactant's perspective. The authors present evidence that both intra- and interpersonal perspective-taking 'work in tandem'.

The two chapters in part III can be subsumed under the heading of 'problems of mutuality' or, more generally, 'problems of understanding'. In chapter 7, Foppa raises and discusses three questions singling out different aspects of the problem of understanding in

dialogue. Under the heading 'On mutual understanding and agreement in dialogues' he asks? first, 'are there any unequivocal signs or symptoms that may be taken as proofs of understanding?'; secondly, 'can we ever be sure about the level of mutual understanding?'; and thirdly, 'what is the relationship between understanding and agreement?' The author tends to answer the first two questions negatively, particularly, if understanding is qualified by the adjective 'exact'. It may be comforting to note, though, that in most (non-technical) dialogues exactness is not an important criterion of understanding. Rather, the criterion of understanding is the interactants' satisfaction that their mutual understanding is sufficient, i.e. 'for all practical purposes'. The answer to the third question is comparatively easy. Understanding and agreement are not mutually contingent. We may agree as well as disagree without having understood each other. Understanding does not imply agreement. None of these processes is necessarily mutual.

Although Linell (chapter 8) draws attention to 'Troubles with mutualities', his contribution carries the promising subtitle 'Towards a dialogical theory of misunderstanding and miscommunication'. Considering that understanding is never complete but is always open to further elaboration, the author maintains that 'understanding and misunderstanding cohabit in discourse and interaction'. In other words, if understanding is a matter of degree, it is always partial and fragmentary. Therefore, the analyst of dialogue must pay as much attention to the acts and processes that result in misunderstanding as to those generating understanding. Using data from dialogue-interpreted conversations with Russian-speaking foreigners, Linell demonstrates how miscommunications in such dialogues are both socio-culturally embedded and collectively generated.

While part III addresses general problems of and with mutuality, part IV focuses on mutuality in special cases of dialogue involving interactants with language- and speech-impairments. In her study of 'Mother–child dialogues' (chapter 9), Grimm compares dialogues between mothers and children with normal speech with dialogues in which mothers converse with children who have specific language impairment. Without displaying any cognitive or other kind of disorder, such children acquire language considerably later than other children. The comparative study shows that mothers of children with specific language impairment very sensitively adapt their speech styles to those of their children. Yet they concentrate rather too closely on

their children's linguistic disabilities and, hence, they tend to ignore their children's cognitive abilities and communicative competences. The obvious constraint on mutuality originates here in an inadequate conception of the dialogical partner.

Chapter 10 by Collins and Marková focuses on 'Complementarity in the construction of a problematic utterance in conversation'. This comprises a case study involving a person with cerebral palsy and her speech and language therapist. On the basis of a transcribed conversation between these two interactants the authors show, in microgenetic detail, how each step in this dialogue is jointly constructed through a sequence of questions and answers, of trials and repairs. The complementary functions of the various kinds of dialogical mutuality are highlighted. This study, as well as the previous one, illustrates how conversations involving speakers with impaired language or speech can make significant contributions to a general theory of conversation and dialogue.

In a brief concluding chapter, written in the form of an epilogue, Farr and Rommetveit highlight, summarize and integrate some of the major themes raised in the various investigations of mutualities in dialogue. Specifically, with reference to Darwin's work on the expression of emotions, the authors discuss the nature of the communicative act. They argue that it is the jointly constructed communicative act rather than the actions of individual interactants that should be the unit of analysis in the study of dialogue.

When two of the present editors, Carl F. Graumann and Klaus Foppa, convened a symposium on mutuality in dialogue in 1988 at the International Congress of Psychology in Sydney, two issues became evident. First, that in order to understand the mutualities involved in dialogues, more should be known about the dynamics of dialogue. Secondly, that any effort to attain a better understanding of these dynamics must be interdisciplinary.

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Commonality, mutuality, reciprocity:
A conceptual introduction

Carl F. Graumann

SHARING

Whenever two or more people meet and engage in a dialogue or conversation they share something. Sharing, i.e. having something in common, will be used here in two ways: (1) Interactants must have something in common in order to be able to enter into and sustain a dialogue; (2) the dialogue itself is a special kind of sharing or of establishing and maintaining commonality, namely by means of symbolic exchange in face-to-face situations (Luckmann, 1990).

Two brief introductory examples may be sufficient to illustrate this distinction between sharing as a prerequisite, and sharing as the essence of dialogue, i.e. as a 'symbolic face-to-face oral and gestural communication' (Marková, 1990, p. 6).

The first example,

A: Hi!
B: Hi!

is one of the shortest verbal types of greeting and, in a given linguistic community, a possible opening to a dialogue. It is easy to show that this adjacency pair presupposes, as well as establishes, commonality. By greeting B with 'Hi!', A presupposes that

in A's and B's common culture 'Hi!' is an informal way of greeting,

B is one of those persons who can and may informally be greeted with 'Hi!', and

the present setting is a proper situation in which to approach and speak to B. (Other presuppositions will be discussed below.)

However, only when B reciprocates with 'Hi!' (or with some other mode of greeting), is the commonality of A's knowledge dialogically confirmed. Or, more carefully phrased, B's 'Hi!' indicates that B is able and willing to share A's politeness by reciprocating it. Taking 'Hi!' as a

sign of politeness or even of friendliness, we understand that this brief greeting sequence is a symbolic exchange, the symbolic value here being politeness. Since politeness, as any other manner of interpersonal relationship, implies a set of rules, the knowledge common to A and B is both the knowledge with regard to contents and to procedure (procedural knowledge). At least, for our understanding of dialogue our knowledge of *how* to say something is just as important as knowing *what* to say.

One may debate whether or not this first example is dialogical. It certainly is a symbolic face-to-face oral and (usually) gestural communication. However, equally certain, a mere exchange of greetings lacks the content or topic of a normal dialogue. To approach an initial understanding of what sharing a topic presupposes a further example is necessary. For our introductory purposes the second example can again be very brief:

A: That's a pretty one.
B: You really think so?

While the three types of presupposition identified above that make the greeting sequence intelligible also hold for our second example, a few additional specifications must be made:

A's utterance refers B to an object X that A knows to be perceived by B. For A's statement to be understandable and answerable, X must be in the common, i.e., perceptually shared environment of both A and B;

A's statement is the expression (or disclosure) of a specific (aesthetic) position or perspective that A takes with respect to X;

Expressing this perspective *vis-à-vis* B signifies that A thinks that B is both capable and willing to pass (aesthetic) judgement on X;

At the same time, in addressing B, A is inviting B, however casually, to reciprocate by either sharing or, at least, responding to A's judgement;

B's utterance, in turn, confirms (a) the commonality of X, (b) that A's perspective has been understood as a possible position from which to evaluate objects like X, (c) that B feels able and willing to reciprocate, namely to react to A's judgement;

B's interrogative type of response, however, is ambiguous. It either leaves open the question as to whether B will share A's judgement, or it is a hedged way of B's disagreeing with A.

However, whether agreement or disagreement emerges in the

further course of the dialogue, in both cases the prerequisite is that B takes the perspective set by A, either to adopt, to reject, or to modify it (Graumann, 1990). Sharing is an activity. It is not restricted to what A and B *have* in common. It involves what A and B *do* with respect to each other.

These two examples were meant to introduce into a problem-field what the contributors to this volume have tried to indicate with the hypothetical plural form 'mutualities in dialogue'. Why mutuality has been chosen as the key concept should become evident in the arguments and chapters that follow.

MUTUALITY—A KEY ISSUE IN THE STUDY OF SOCIAL LIFE

Judging from the ubiquity of mutuality terms in the social sciences, mutuality, however defined, must be a central issue in the study of social life. Although phenomena of mutuality are the subject of interest in such diverse disciplines as anthropology, ethology, sociology, social psychology, economics, political science and ethics, they are described in different and frequently fuzzy terms. Why this is so can be apparent even from the most general meaning of 'mutuality' as the term is used in ordinary language. If mutuality refers to actions and feelings of all individuals as long as they are related to others and, hence, if it characterizes social interaction and interdependence, any science dealing with social life, with how society is realized in and through social action, must necessarily make use of terms taken from the 'mutuality' family.

At least, for a social psychologist who is concerned with the dialectics of the individual and society, 'social' always means what Wundt, the author of *Völkerpsychologie*, called *die Wechselwirkung der Individuen* (Wundt, 1975, p.20), a term which we may translate either as 'mutual' or as 'reciprocal' interaction. In any case it is the term for an 'active mutual other-orientation'.

Mutual other-orientation is also a constituent of dialogues since in dialogues, as in any fully-fledged communication, participants are mutually related to each other through discourse. The question is how?; or, more precisely, how many discernible kinds of mutual other-relatedness are there? Hence, the plural form of 'mutualities in dialogue'.

We may gain a first impression of this plurality by way of a brief and selective review of the major usages of 'mutuality' terms in ordinary language (a dictionary and encyclopedia approach restricted to three

languages: English, French and German).[1] We will then consider, again selectively, the conceptual and theoretical uses of 'mutuality' terms in some of the social and behavioural sciences. In both sections the inevitable selectivity is justified by our desire to present evidence for a differential usage of terms of mutual 'other-directedness' in the study of dialogues.

THE GENERAL LINGUISTIC USAGE: A SELECTIVE USAGE OF 'MUTUALITY' TERMS IN ORDINARY LANGUAGE.

The most common and the least specific term in the heading of this chapter is *common*. It usually refers to *joint* participation or possession; it denotes the quality of being *shared* by a community or by a number of individuals, often implying a notion of equality, i.e. that which is shared equally by the members of a category or community. What is generally shared by the community at large is also what is encountered frequently or regularly and, hence, *known widely* as usual. In this sense, the common lacks peculiarity, i.e. it lacks distinguishing features.

More specific than 'common' and, in many instances, even a special case of commonality is the term 'mutual'. Its usage, however, is quite common in English (*mutual*), French (*mutuel*) and German (*gegenseitig, wechselseitig*). Leaving aside the occasionally practised quasi-synonymity of 'mutual' with 'common' (e.g. a mutual friend) or 'joint' (e.g. mutual advantage), a traditional (cf. Latin *mutuus*), but still basic and frequent use of 'mutual' concerns the states or behaviours shared by given two or more individuals with respect to one another. Hence, if we speak of mutual respect or mutual aid, this state or this action is not merely shared by two or more people but is entertained and offered *with respect to one another or each other*. As distinguished from mere sharing or commonality, mutuality stresses the 'respective' relationship between two or more people as having something in common, be it mutual love or mutual hate, mutual assistance or mutual property.

One aspect or, rather, one function of mutuality is that one person's contribution is *complementary* to that of another person's. The idea of designating individual contributions within a mutual relationship as complementary is that they 'fill in' and make up for what is lacking: they mutually round off. Whether in action or in discourse, such contributions literally make something complete (as in the German verb *ergänzen*). The notion that in a social relationship each partner

provides what the other lacks, is both more specific and more postulatory than mutuality, as the traditional but controversial cliché of the alleged 'complementarity of the sexes' may demonstrate. In any case, complementarity testifies to *asymmetry* as an inherent characteristic of dialogues (Marková and Foppa, 1991).

In cases of mutual aid or mutual property the notion of mutual benefit suggests itself, and here the meaning of 'mutuality' fuses with that of 'reciprocity'. The mutual benefit, normally and normatively implied in mutual aid, is reciprocal to the degree that whatever is shared or done jointly is associated with a notion of balance or equity or equivalence of sharing. Hence, 'reciprocity' very often refers to activities of *reciprocating*, i.e. *returning in kind or in degree*. With respect to such cases of mutual dependence (interdependence) and mutual exchange, 'reciprocal' refers sometimes to the mere *give-and-take* as practised by partners in exchange; sometimes to the recognition by the partners that a principle of reciprocity prevails which makes them expect reciprocations. Hence, both the descriptive give-and-take and the intentional *do ut des* (giving *so that* something may be received) are referents of 'reciprocity'.

This brief excursion into the general linguistic usage of some key terms of the 'mutuality' family must be read with all due caution. First, the variety and the interchangeability of related terms is irritatingly larger than the rather simplified order or classification presented here. Secondly, the few examples given here were taken from the field of human experience and social action while the application of the above terms to the fields of mathematics (e.g. common denominator, reciprocal ratio), physics (e.g. mutual induction) or biology (e.g. reciprocal crosses) has been bypassed. The major interest of this paper is in the applicability of terms like 'common', 'mutual' and 'reciprocal' to the structure and dynamics of dialogues.

A SELECTIVE USAGE OF 'MUTUALITY' TERMS IN THE SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES

We may enter this field by considering some technical, though everyday, usages of 'mutuality'. Most of them have something to do with the old idea of mutual cooperative aid as opposed to competitive forces operating in a given social group or community. Taken as a principle, mutual aid has frequently become institutionalized, as in mutual insurance, i.e. a system of insurance by which all policy-holders

become *company members by contract*, similarly, the Mutual Savings Bank, the Mutual Fund, etc.

It is important that in this context mutuality (or reciprocity) is recognized as a *principle* that *obliges* those who acknowledge it and adhere to it to perform certain actions, usually prescribed in a contract. Since individuals are motivated to take part in this contract (invest), believing that others act similarly or even equitably and, hence, expecting an equitable return, such systems of mutual aid are practically cases of reciprocity under the *do ut des* principle. To illustrate the (mutually) obligatory character of this principle, two contrastive historical cases will be cited, one sinister and the other humorous. In the darkest period of the Cold War the very apt abbreviation 'MAD', short for Mutual Assured Destruction, referred to a 'US doctrine of reciprocal deterrence resting on the US and Soviet Union each being able to inflict unacceptable damage on the other in retaliation for a nuclear attack' (*Random House Dictionary*, 1983, p. 1,270). On the other hand, scholars and artists will be familiar with the quasi-technical but satirical term of the 'Mutual Admiration Society', which, according to the OED, is 'a coterie of persons who are accused of over-estimating each other's merits'. As a close relative we recognize the mutual citation 'trusts' in most scientific communities.

What we may take from these few examples is that if 'mutual' and 'reciprocal' are applied to social situations, there is more involved than just common knowledge and beliefs. Both terms refer to a person's (or group's) belief (or knowledge) that the other person (or group) also knows or believes whatever is shared or what is to be done jointly. Hence, the expectation is that what I feel or do with respect to another person will somehow be reciprocated. Knowledge, belief, and expectation would then make 'mutuality' as applied to social situations a cognitive or even an intentional term. However, that this is not necessarily so we can gather from the last linguistic example of the technical term 'mutualism'. It is used in two different fields. In its sociological meaning it refers to the doctrine, associated with Proudhon and the French *mutualistes* that the individual and social well-being is attainable only by means of mutual dependence (as, for instance, by common ownership). However, 'mutualism' is also a biological term for a mutually beneficial association between different kinds of organisms (symbiosis), i.e. an 'objective' term with no reference to the mental states of the organisms under consideration. Yet the biologist's insight that for two different kinds of organisms 'a shared way of life is

obligatory ... if the population of each is to increase' (*Webster Dictionary*) brings this animal mutuality functionally close to the analogous human example. Since we know that any human mutuality or reciprocity can also be described (however unsatisfactorily) in purely behavioural terms, we conclude that 'mutual' and 'reciprocal' can be and are being used in both ways: with and without any reference to awareness and intentionality. Together with the frequent interchange of 'common' and 'mutual' and with the occasional synonymity of 'mutual' and 'reciprocal', the conceptual status of these terms is unsatisfactory, all the more so if they are used to convey socially significant meanings.

The question is whether the situation is better in the context of social science theories. Again, only a brief selection of concepts can be presented, restricted to usages that are likely to have relevance for a theory of dialogue.

Though controversial, the most comprehensive and influential concept that gave rise to a series of models and theories is that of *social exchange*. Since dialogues are often referred to as exchanges of ideas or, at least, verbal exchanges, the question may be asked whether there is an exchange theory that may explain what is going on in dialogues. Conceptions of social exchange have been developed, for a long time quite independently, both in anthropology and in psychology. Befu (1980, p. 199) even speaks of a 'mutual disregard'. In social anthropological conceptions of social exchange the notion of reciprocity has been central from the beginning. While Thurnwald (1936/1957) and Malinowski (1922) have given early examples of reciprocity as 'a cohesive form holding societies together' (Gergen et al. 1980, p. 126), it was Mauss (1925/1954), Becker (1956), Gouldner (1960) and Sahlins (1965) who gave 'reciprocity' a theoretical status. It was Gouldner (1960) who proclaimed a *universal norm of reciprocity*. This norm

makes two interrelated, minimal demands (1) people should help those who have helped them, and (2) people should not injure those who have helped them. Generically, the norms of reciprocity may be conceived of as a dimension to be found in all value systems and, in particular, as one among a *number* of 'Principal Components' universally present in moral codes. (Gouldner, 1960, p. 171)

Without trying to transfer these demands to our problem we should make a note of the *intrinsically moral character* of this principle whose universality, however, has been questioned as a 'myth' (Pryor and Graburn, 1980).

A typology along the continuum of solidarity has been proposed by Sahlins (1965). According to his scheme there are the following types of reciprocity: (1) *generalized reciprocity*, involving unstipulated reciprocating: a contribution is made without the expectation of immediate return; (2) *balanced reciprocity*, involving direct and equivalent return; and (3) expressing the least degree of solidarity, *negative reciprocity*, in which each individual tries to maximize his or her 'reward' at the other's expense. With all due caution one may try to exemplify these types by different kinds of dialogue: (1) A dialogue between close friends who, after a long separation, meet again and take turns in 'pouring out their hearts'; (2) a dialogue as a means of getting acquainted with the other partner. Each individual discloses his or her self only if the other reciprocates; and (3) a negotiation between representatives of competing corporations.

What is true for reciprocity in general also holds true for dialogues. Balance or symmetry is not a constitutive feature of dialogues. On the contrary, it has been argued that reciprocity is a necessary condition for balance (Zajonc and Burnstein, 1965) and that asymmetry is an inherent feature of dialogues (Marková and Foppa, 1991).

Following Kantor (1929), who had introduced the concept of 'interbehaviour', *role theory*, almost by definition, deals with interbehaviour. Hence, Sarbin and Allen (1968, p. 68) state that a person's conduct takes into account the role behaviours of other positions, the specific nature of the conduct varying with the position held by the other interactant. This is an unambiguous description of a reciprocal and perspectival other-orientation. The notion of role complementarity (or of 'role set'), too, refers to such reciprocity which, if disturbed by incompatibilities, overload, or other forms of imbalance, gives rise to role conflict. Of the two major types, inter-role and intra-role conflict, the latter is the more relevant for studying the dynamics of dialogue. In conversations with three or more participants, a set of reciprocal interactions may entail mutually incompatible role expectations held by different participants with respect to one and the same interlocutor. For example, in a given conversation, B expects A to be witty, whereas C would rather have A to be serious (for a change). A, either knowing or misjudging her different partners, holds two partner-hypotheses the consequences of which cannot be easily reconciled. Similarly, in so-called arbitration talks, two genuinely reciprocal relationships cannot coexist without conflict.

Whereas the anthropological approach to social exchange has been highlighted as structural, the psychological approach focuses on the

motivational factors involved in social exchange (Befu, 1980). In addition to Thibaut and Kelley (1959; cf. Kelley, 1979; Kelley and Thibaut, 1978) and Blau (1964), it was mainly Homans (1974) who conceived of social behaviour as an exchange of ultimately 'rewarding' activities or even as an exchange of rewards, punishments and costs. In this basically hedonistic framework, 'reward' is everything that is satisfactory for a person in the unspecific psychological sense of the word. Moreover, each reward is also evaluated on its own merits. Homans argues that the more valuable to B is A's activity or sentiment given to him, the more valuable to A is an activity given to him by B. This reciprocity of values is also expressed in Homans' concept of *distributive justice*. The conditions of this rule are met when the ratio of the measures of two (or more) persons' contributions to a social exchange are equal to the ratio of the measures of their respective rewards (Homans, 1974, p. 249). Although sometimes distributive justice and reciprocity have been used interchangeably, they are not synonyms. Homans has demonstrated how the expectation of distributive justice may lead to different reciprocal norms.

Homans' conception of distributive justice has been criticized on several grounds (Chadwick-Jones, 1976; Deutsch and Krauss, 1965; cf. Gergen, Greenberg and Willis, 1980). Here it may suffice to indicate why it is difficult to apply reciprocity based on distributive justice to dialogues. It is not that distributive justice as such would be alien to conversations. It may well be the case that a person A invests time and energy in a dialogue and, hence, will expect some kind of return or satisfaction from this expenditure. Homans (1974, pp. 54–7) himself gives examples of an exchange of advice for approval. Thus any question–answer, reproach–apology, demand–comply sequence in verbal communication may also serve as an example of the exchange character of dialogues.

However, the difficulty arises in the usage of the unspecified elementary constructs such as reward and punishment, and cost and profit. The pairs of terms referring to these constructs have been taken out of their original educational, psychological or economic contexts where they may have had a more definite usage. In the context of social exchange theories, including that of Homans, they are used in so generalized a fashion that their choice appears almost arbitrary. For instance, when A talks to B or to a group of others, the activity of talking may be considered to be an expenditure of mental and physical energy, i.e. an investment of time (which for some may mean money).

Yet, simultaneously, talking to B may be highly rewarding for A. It is even possible that talking *per se* and listening to himself could be a libidinous affair for A, while listening to A may be a kind of punishment for B who, however, may be rewarded by learning from A about the latter's motives, plans, etc. Even if this makes sense and, at a conceptual level, we are able to construct cases and degrees of reciprocity in such verbal exchanges and to determine whether distributive justice or injustice obtains in a given dialogue, we are left with the following empirical problem. How can the speaker, the addressee and ultimately both interactants identify the meaning of a word as a 'reward' rather than a 'punishment', as a 'profit' rather than a 'cost'? This dilemma has not been settled in a satisfactory manner. Hence, the 'costs' of going into the details of an exchange-theoretical approach to the study of dialogues still outweigh the recognizable 'profit'. Yet, as we shall see, some communication theorists, who work with exchange notions, seriously discuss 'conversational profit-seeking' (Roloff and Campion, 1985).

In a related approach to the study of social interaction (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959; Kelley and Thibaut, 1978; Kelley, 1979) we come across the technical term of *mutual outcome control*, originally introduced into the analysis of power in interpersonal relations. It deserves a brief consideration since a dialogue in general, rather than only that of a debate type, may be a prototypical referent of this term. At least, asymmetry in dialogues frequently implies the exertion of social power (Marková and Foppa, 1991). What 'outcome control' means is best exemplified by two of its major manifestations, 'fate control' and 'behaviour control'. If, by varying his or her behaviour, person A can affect person B's outcomes regardless of what B does, A is said to have a *fate control* over B (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959, p. 102). If, however, by varying his or her behaviour, A can make it desirable for B to vary his or her behaviour, A has a *behaviour control* over B (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959, p. 103). In both cases mutuality is obtained if B can exert as much control over A as A does over B. Turn-taking would be the rule.

What we can gain from this concept of 'mutual outcome control' for the study of dialogue is easier to recognize in cases when mutuality is not attained or is disturbed, i.e. when dominance of one interactant prevails. At least, we should be able to distinguish a 'fate control' from a 'behaviour control' dialogue. In the former one interlocutor holds the other one in a kind of 'doublebind' position; the addressee is always 'wrong', in whatever way he or she may answer. In the latter case one

of the interlocutors structures the dialogue and the other one merely fills the slots provided by the dominant partner (see Rommetveit's (1991) analysis of *A Doll's House*).

One may debate whether any type of mutual outcome control in dialogues could be the ideal type of a free conversation between equal partners. For Jones and Gerard (1967) a free conversation is the prototype of what they call *mutual contingency*, i.e. the fully fledged form of social interaction. Each kind of interaction can be defined by two components, the actor's own plans and his or her responses to the other interactant. Mutuality in a conversation is described as follows:

Each comes into the situation with certain goals in mind, certain cognitions about how these goals may be achieved, and a pattern of attitudes about the situation and the other person. Thus the person approaches the interaction with a set of motivationally relevant *plans* that serve to launch his end of the conversation. These plans may themselves try to take into account the probable responses of the other, or they may be less elaborate ...

Once the conversation begins, social contingency is immediately present. To some extent, thereafter, the next response of person A will be contingent on the last response of person B. Person B's next response will in turn be determined by the preceding A response, and so it goes. (Jones and Gerard, 1967, pp. 505–6).

Hence, each utterance in a conversation is 'jointly determined' by the personal 'plan' and by the 'socially produced stimulation'. Mutuality in this theoretical framework means that 'the actions of both parties are to an important extent purposeful and self-determined, but each is responsive to the other' (Jones and Gerard, 1967, p. 715).

For the study of interpersonal, mainly intimate, relationships, mutuality has advanced to the status of a key-concept wherever interaction is thought of as an exchange of symbolic resources (cf. Chelune et al., 1984; Miller and Berg, 1984). Of primary concern has been the investigation of *self-disclosure*, which originally (Jourard, 1971) had been almost exclusively defined in terms of reciprocity: 'disclosure begets disclosure' (Jourard, 1971, p. 66). Further research, however, has yielded an important differentiation. Wherever we have self-disclosure we encounter mutuality in one of its two basic forms: 'reciprocity or mutual positive influence, and compensation or mutual negative influence' (Dindia, 1985, p. 143). Where B responds to A with a similar behaviour, we speak of reciprocation. If, however, B's response is dissimilar, we are concerned with *compensation*. If, for instance, A increases proximity and also B gets closer, B reciprocates.

If, on the other hand, B reacts with increasing distance, B compensates (for a loss of comfortable distance). Cappella (1985) has demonstrated how two types of mutuality, matching and reciprocity vs. mismatching and compensation, are used as a means of 'conversational management'.

This mutual responsiveness, which is generally agreed to be constitutive of social interaction, has, in the case of verbal interaction, become further specified in terms of *perspectivity*. Originally, 'perspectivity' refers to the relation between a person's position (viewpoint) and that aspect of an object which is perceived from this position. In a generalized sense, it refers to the position-relatedness of cognition and its manifestation in language use (cf. Graumann, 1960; 1989; 1992). In the study of social interaction, the interest in perspectivity has focused on what has been called the 'reciprocity of perspectives' and 'mutual perspective-taking'. The first term was introduced into social philosophy by Theodor Litt (1924) when he described that Ego, in perceiving objects from his perspective, is bound to discover that some of the objects have a perspective of their own. Within my horizon I perceive human beings for whom evidently I belong to their horizon. The originally absolute Ego perspective becomes relative in the reciprocity: 'I see that you see me seeing you etc.' (Litt, 1924, p. 38).

For Schutz (1962), too, the reciprocity of perspectives was an issue to be dealt with in the analysis of the intersubjective character of common-sense knowledge. Although people know that things look different from different positions and for different individuals, they overcome the differences in individual perspectives by two 'idealizations': (1) of the interchangeability of the standpoints, and (2) of the (practical) congruency of different systems of relevance.

These two idealizations constitute together the 'general thesis of reciprocal perspectives' which 'leads to the apprehension of objects and their aspects actually known by me and potentially known by you as everyone's knowledge' (Schutz, 1962, p. 12). The foundation for this reciprocity thesis is to be seen in the common 'stock of knowledge', i.e. in highly typified knowledge about the world, differentially shared by the members of a community. Although Berger and Luckmann (1966) prefer to call this socially distributed knowledge 'common' it is also, in an essential sense, mutual (cf. below). Moreover, according to Schutz and his followers, it is socially distributed, which restricts the meaning of commonality. If universal or 'communal knowledge' (Perner and Garnham, 1988) is unevenly distributed, only part of it is

truly common; it remains an empirical question, which part is common.

It is not only the commonality of everybody's stock of knowledge at hand that has to be qualified but it is also the epistemic character of this knowledge that needs clarification. If we look closer into Schutz's (1962) and Schutz and Luckmann's (1974) conception of knowledge, we find that it contains everything that is taken for granted and that we accept as self-evident 'until further notice'. Since this holds for widely accepted assumptions and beliefs, including stereotypes and prejudices, we should define this common stock of knowledge as a mutual stock of beliefs. I prefer to call it 'mutual' since we have acquired the larger part of this 'knowledge' from others so that we *know* that we *share* it. Furthermore, it is continuously *exchanged* with others in our everyday interactions.

We are not, as a rule, confined within our individual perspectives, but we have learnt how to transcend this confinement. This knowledge has led G.H. Mead (1934) to develop his conception of perspective-taking (or role-taking). Unless we have acquired the cognitive skill of taking another person's perspective, there can be no true interpersonal communication. On the other hand, it is only in and by communicative acts that we can acquire this skill.

While it may be true that the reciprocity of perspectives is essential for an effective interpersonal communication, there are many instances where the perspectives of two participants have become so interlaced or intertwined that the partners are unable to disentangle themselves from the assumed or 'projected' perspective of the other one.

It is Laing's merit to have demonstrated how, in cases of mutual mistrust (as in jealousy), 'spirals of reciprocal perspectives' are built up through an incessant iterative reflexivity of 'I think that you think that I think you ...', leading to meta- and meta-meta-perspectives (Laing, Phillipson and Lee, 1966). Since this spiralling process develops not only in an individual mind but also quite patently in verbal exchange, Laing's concept of meta-perspective is useful for studying the dynamics of those dialogues that are characterized by an absence of mutual trust.

That perspectivity is not only a cognitive affair but is also manifest in the language use, has been recently shown in a series of studies (Linell and Jönsson, 1991; Rommetveit, 1991; cf. Graumann, 1989; 1990; 1992).

One cannot discuss conceptions of mutuality in the social sciences

without reference (or even homage) to Erving Goffman who, in practically all of his major publications, deals with different manifestations of social interaction and interdependence. With a view to our main topic, the study of dialogue, we may concentrate on Goffman's analysis of *interpersonal rituals* which he describes as having a 'dialogistic character' (Goffman, 1971, p. 63). For such rituals he states that when

one individual provides a sign of involvement in and connectedness to another, it behooves the recipient to show that the message has been received, that its import has been appreciated, that the affirmed relationship actually exists as the performer implies, that the performer himself has worth as a person, and finally, that the recipient has an appreciative, grateful nature.

The similarity between this special kind of *do ut des* and Marcel Mauss' (1954) prestation-counterprestation model of gift reciprocation is deliberate. This kind of mutually supportive interchange' is not restricted to cases of 'grooming talk'[2] between friends and acquaintances, but is also common in interactions between strangers 'as when, upon request, an individual gives directions, the time, a match or some other 'free good' to a stranger ... acts of identificatory sympathy' (Goffman, 1967, p. 66).

Goffman's special contribution to the analysis of social interaction in general, but explicitly to spoken interaction, is his detailed study of the 'taken-for-granted' (Goffman, 1983), and in particular his emphasis on the *minima moralia* as an a priori of communication. Whenever we open a conversation, we do so within a 'system of practices, conventions, and procedural rules' in which an understanding will prevail 'as to when and where it will be permissible to initiate talk, among whom, and by means of what topics of conversation' (Goffman, 1967, pp. 3–4). Under these rules significant gestures are employed not only to initiate, to structure and to conclude a conversation, but also 'as a means for the persons concerned to *accredit each other as legitimate participants*' (Goffman, 1971, p. 34; stress added). Goffman speaks here of a 'process of reciprocal ratification'. Accordingly, overhearing the conversations of others is 'unratified' and non-reciprocal participation (ibid.).

This brief and, again, highly selective reference to Goffman's work is sufficient to emphasize the importance of rules of reciprocity for the initiation and maintenance of social interaction. This focus is of immediate interest for the study of dialogue and has also been studied by ethnographers of discourse.

MUTUALITIES IN DIALOGUE

Mutuality/reciprocity conceptions in the social sciences have also been adopted by communication research and are relevant for the study of dialogues. As may be expected from our initial examples, the commonality of everyday knowledge is an essential feature of verbal communication. However, the debate about the adequate usage of the terms 'common knowledge' versus 'mutual knowledge' led to controversy after Lewis (1969) and Schiffer (1972) had introduced these terms. The controversy produced a series of publications among which two monographs attracted wider attention (Smith, 1982; Sperber and Wilson, 1986). Instead of following the various stages of this still open controversy, I will try to highlight what seems to be a largely conceptual issue in this debate. This issue is closely related to our consideration of what is common, what is mutual, and what is reciprocal in a dialogue.

What must people have in common if they want to communicate successfully?[3] From a phenomenological perspective, I shall name, first, the stock of knowledge in the sense of Schutz, i.e., whatever is taken for granted in the natural attitude of everyday life. Of the major characteristics of this natural attitude, as presented by Schutz and Luckmann (1974, p. 5), we recognize some that are of immediate relevance to mutualities in dialogue.

(a) the corporeal existence of other men; (b) that these bodies are endowed with consciousness essentially similar to my own; (c) that the things in the outer world included in my environs and that of my fellow-men are the same for us and have fundamentally the same meaning; (d) that I can enter into interrelations and reciprocal actions with my fellow-men; (e) that I can make myself understood to them.

Such assumptions are 'silent' in the sense that we do not normally reflect them until they are questioned by disturbances, inconsistencies and challenges. We have already discussed why it is scarcely possible to call such assumptions 'knowledge' in the strict sense of the word. However, it is safe to say that they enter our knowledge (as unreflected and, hence, unverified presuppositions). What Schutz (1962) as well as Berger and Luckmann (1966) describe, is our everyday stock of assumptions or beliefs rather than our knowledge. However, these authors are correct to suppose that in the natural attitude the difference between knowledge and belief may be of little concern.

Within this natural attitude, the question as to whether the taken for

granted is common or mutual, must be answered in favour of the latter. It is a belief that in everyday life the environment I perceive and grasp is perceived and grasped similarly by fellow-beings endowed with a consciousness 'essentially similar to my own'. Hence, this environment is mutually perceived and grasped. This means that mutuality is an assumption rather than the conclusion of an inferential process. Hence, before we speak of a mutuality of belief, let us consider the underlying *common belief in mutuality*.

If we suppose that there is a common belief in mutuality as an essential part of the natural attitude in everyday life, then there is no need to hypothesize an iterative and ultimately infinite sequence of suppositions of the kind proposed by Schiffer (1972):

A believes that p
B believes that p
A believes that B believes that p
B believes that A believes that p
A believes that B believes that A believes that p
B believes that A believes that B believes that p

and so on, *ad infinitum.*

Clark and Marshall (1981) have criticized this 'mutual knowledge paradox' due to which two people could never verify mutuality. They replaced Schiffer's highly improbable sequence by a 'triple copresence heuristic' which applies either to physical copresence, linguistic copresence or to community membership. In the case of physical copresence, there can be two persons, A and B and a common object X openly visible to both, as was the case in our introductory example (see above, p. 2). Linguistic copresence obtains if the existence of X is unambiguously posited by a reference to it in a conversation between A and B. Community membership concerns the beliefs that are shared by the members of a given community or subcommunity. Once two or more individuals mutually believe or otherwise can ensure that they are members of the same community, they will expect that they share the community-specific beliefs. Clark (1985; Clark and Carlson, 1982; Clark and Marshall, 1981) has taken together these three types of copresence, as a basis for common or mutual knowledge, beliefs and suppositions, calling them 'common ground'.

While Sperber and Wilson (1982; 1986) question the mutual knowledge framework as a necessary condition for comprehension and replace it with an inferential model (governed by a principle of

relevance), they, nevertheless, retain the notion of a 'mutual cognitive environment'. By this they mean 'any shared cognitive environment in which it is manifest which people share it' (1986, p. 41). Perner and Garnham (1988) are critical of both Clark and Marshall's (1981) triple copresence heuristic as empirically incorrect and of Sperber and Wilson's (1986) move from mutual knowledge to mutual manifestness and a mutual cognitive environment. They argue, instead that for a person *a* to decide whether *a* and *b* have mutual knowledge (of a proposition *p*), it is already presupposed that 'a stock of mutual or communal knowledge is already available to *a* and *b*' (1988, p. 8).

Since the debate concerning the conception of and conditions for mutuality with respect to belief, knowledge and suppositions is still going on, any summary can only be preliminary. However, taking together evidence and arguments from research on language, cognition and social interaction, we may state the following. Social actions and interactions (including dialogue) are frequently initiated and maintained in cognitive environments or contexts in which it is taken for granted that they are common to or shared by the actors. 'Cognitive' refers here to either a perceptual or linguistic context of the present or of a common past and as long as this is manifest, mutuality need not be inferred but is evident. We may be mistaken though, or doubts may arise whether mutuality is indeed 'given' and we may wish to test the mutuality hypothesis: does B really know that p? This, however, would be a brief test rather than an iterative succession of questions. Inversely stated, we should accept that mutuality, be it of knowledge or of beliefs, be it assumed or verified, is never without risks; it is a *probabilistic* term. Hence, interpersonal communication can never be fail-safe, and 'the frequent misunderstandings in human interactions are probably attributable, at least in part, to unfounded assumptions of mutuality' (Perner and Garnham, 1988, p. 383). Despite all efforts to establish mutual understanding by means of mutual perspective-taking, there remains a trace of scepticism which, slightly exaggerated (in the sense of Laing's meta-perspective), may read: I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant.[4]

CONCLUSION

While the full picture of what we share in dialogue either as a common or as a mutual 'world' and 'word' knowledge cannot here be given, it

should, in conclusion, be possible to summarize and exemplify what we can take from the social science conceptions of mutuality for the study of dialogue. It seemed appropriate, for conceptual reasons, to trace the meanings of the three key terms to progress from the elementary, i.e. commonality to the more complex, i.e. reciprocity. However, for a theoretical interim balance we may proceed in a descending order since, in some respects, reciprocity presupposes mutuality which, in turn, is based on certain kinds of commonality.

The fundamental meaning of reciprocity seems to lie in the fact that it is a *moral principle* rather than a technical term. It is, of course, descriptive of the awareness of an interdependence which is actualized and preserved by acts of reciprocation. It inevitably suggests that interactants who reciprocate do so not merely because of cognitive expectation but because of moral obligation. Roloff and Campion (1985, p. 134) summarize the gist of several exchange theories of communication with the following definition:

we define the norm of reciprocity as the shared expectation that the recipient of a resource is obliged to and at the same time will return to the giver a resource roughly equivalent to that which was received.

The main obligation in dialogue is a commitment *to cooperate*. In the study of conversations it was Grice (1975; 1978) who established a 'cooperative principle'. This principle requires speakers to make their conversational contribution as adequate to the purpose and the situation as possible, which adequacy is further elucidated by a set of maxims and sub-maxims. The normative idea is that if we take up a conversation we are supposed and expected to adhere to the cooperative principle and we expect that our partner does so too. Clark and Wilkes-Gibbs (1986) and Clark and Schaefer (1989) have demonstrated in detail how interlocutors collaborate in the referential establishment of a topic. Conversely, Groeben and his associates (Schreier et al., 1993; Schreier et al., in press) have studied how violations of the expected 'argumentational integrity' (or fairness) of conversational contributions are perceived and reacted to in dialogues.

This idea of mutual obligation cannot be reduced to a dominant principle of relevance as suggested by Sperber and Wilson (1986). Rather, this idea suggests that a kind of (silent) *contract* (Rommetveit, 1974) joins and binds the interlocutors of a dialogue by establishing the meaning and the sincerity of their utterances, at least for the duration of their conversation. Moreover, the idea of a contract-like

structure of a dialogue emphasizes the binding character of a principled reciprocity.

While it is true that reciprocity, in its general social science usage, means more than mutual expectancy, one must not overlook the constitutive role of this cognitive mutuality for dialogical reciprocity. We scarcely begin a dialogue without any assumptions about our chosen partner's personality and his or her social background. We normally expect, whether by intuition or by inference, that our partner makes similar assumptions about us and our knowledge of the subject topic presumably to be talked about. Hence, both parties have not only 'partner hypotheses' (e.g. Hannapel and Melenk, 1979; von Polenz, 1985), but also expectations, however vague, of how the other partner will respond or otherwise contribute to the developing dialogue.[5] In extreme cases, this may lead to hearing what one expects to hear rather than what our interlocutor actually utters and, hence, to responding to what one believes one has heard. Although this kind of 'exchange' is rather one-sided, it is still a case of assumed or apparent mutuality. As we have seen above (p. 6-7), 'mutuality' and 'reciprocity' can be used with or without reference to consciousness. If we accept the cognitive usage of 'mutuality', we must concede that occasionally mutuality can exist only in the mind of a single person. Without falling back on Schiffer's individualistic model (see p. 16) we should provide for the case, probably not too rare, that a verbal exchange which A considers to be a 'dialogue' could be more like a monologue-plus-audience from the point of view of B and C. A similar bias may hold for a 'reciprocity' that exists only within one partner's mind.

In general, however, we should include the mutuality of beliefs and of expectations as a part of our concept of dialogue regardless of whether mutuality is a constituent of dialogues or whether dialogues are instrumental to the establishment of mutuality. Equally essential for the concept of dialogue is a certain degree of *mutual trust*, i.e. an intrinsically moral dimension of dialogues.

Whereas both reciprocity and mutuality involve (cognitive or 'silent') reference to the other person, what we have called 'commonality' is the objective prerequisite of any dialogue. It is simply everything that human (or infrahuman) beings have to share in order to communicate by means of symbols. However, to identify in detail what, for instance, human interlocutors need to share in order to be able to enter and to sustain a dialogue, is far from simple. The ability to articulate and communicate one's ideas and feelings has its foundations in the physical