DIALOGICAL NETWORKS: USING THE PAST IN CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH

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The volume written by Ivan Leudar and Jiří Nekvapil, *Dialogical Networks: Using the Past in Contemporary Research*, deals with their ongoing project on dialogical networks that has been developing since the 1990s. The concept of dialogical networks stems from their notion that communications between participants might occur within the mass or social media, resembling face-to-face interactions. However, these communications have different spatial and temporal distribution, implying that participants do not meet face-to-face, and the contextualization of their utterances is aided by the media themselves. By duplicating participants' parts of sequences, the media facilitate the noticeability of contributions which subsequently acquire gravitas and are more likely to be responded to; this addresses a prominent feature of dialogical networks, namely multiplication of sequential parts leading to emergent meanings. Apart from that, the cohesion of dialogical networks is provided by their shared thematic focus, reused argumentative structures, and sequential structures.

Organized into thirteen chapters, including an introduction and a conclusion, the volume under review sets out to explore how the authors' work on dialogical networks developed over time using the notion of practical historians. In this way, they analyse how they as researchers contextualised their own research in relation to their and others' past work and established a continuous project. Apart from this being stated in the Introduction, the authors also provide readers with guidelines on how the book could be read and briefly delineate their objectives. While six other chapters constitute their previously published papers, the novel contribution of this book lies in the four Reflections (Chapters 3, 7, 9, 12), mapping the evolution of their project on dialogical networks, and Chapter 11, which is a revised version of one of their papers (Kaderka et al., 2018). The historical contextualisation in the Reflections proceeds from general findings in terms of the origin and change in the methodological aspects of dialogical networks (Chapters 3 and 7) towards specific facets regarding the analysis of sequential characteristics, identities, participation (Chapter 9), multiplication, and emergent meanings in dialogical networks (Chapter 12).

In Reflection 1 (Chapter 3), the authors analyse two of their initial papers (one of them included as Chapter 2) dedicated to reported speech and contextualisation, i.e., the way participants produced context in talking, orienting their remarks outside of the conversation they were engaged in. They not only observe that their project was cursorily tied together by referencing their previous work, but also note that the change in methodology from natural experiment to case study format in the two papers facilitated the demonstration that sequences in dialogical networks supervene on face-to-face interactions. This also relates to the coinage of the term dialogical networks, being the consequence of their analyses rather than their initial research

focus, which represents the embedment of their project in pragmatics and ethno-methodology.

The following Reflection 2 (Chapter 7), based on the historical analysis of three papers written between 1998 and 2004 (Chapters 4, 5, 6), illustrates how the authors provided their project with continuity via juxtaposing not only their prior and new works, but also the work of others. This link demonstrates that the individual case studies cannot be viewed as separate ones, but rather as parts of an extending project on dialogical networks. Also, the authors elucidate that this aspect bears a sense of novelty in a continuity of the project since the individual studies were tied by adjusting Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA); this might be perceived not only in references to MCA researchers, but also in the notion that the cohesion of dialogical networks might be acquired by category work addressed by the participants.

In Reflection 3 (Chapter 9), the authors are predominantly attentive to methodological alterations made to their analyses, accentuating methodological pluralism, and situating the project in ethnomethodology, specifically membership categorisation. The alignment of dialogical networks and MCA correlates with the research focus of the individual studies that was put on category change and contested identities in papers on the emergence of the new political party in the Czech mass media (Chapter 4), stereotyping of the Roma ethnic minority in the Czech Republic and arguments about the proposed migration law (Chapter 5), and presentation of 9/11 attacks in the mass media (Chapter 8). The authors note that the study of members' practices to comprehend social interactions and embedment of their project in ethnomethodology was enabled by the case study format as well as the process of data collection, gathering available materials for the research topics and finding dialogical links. Towards the end of this chapter, the focus is put on sequential structures that serve as one of the main cohesive devices in dialogical networks. Here, the authors remark that sequentiality became pertinent to their project in the study on the political identity of the Democratic Party of Sudetenland (DPS) (Chapter 4), leading their succeeding research to address its particularities in comparison with face-to-face interactions.

The final Reflection 4 (Chapter 12) concentrates on one of the properties of dialogical networks that ensures the production of emergent meanings: multiplication. This chapter tracks how the authors treated multiplication over the years, scrutinizing the individual papers constituting their ongoing project. In this respect, their retrospective analysis regarding the treatment of multiplication might be divided into five phases: (i) exploration of multiplication through sequential structures in the study on the emergence of DPS' identity (Chapter 4), (ii) multiplication as a members' phenomenon changing the illocutionary force of communications (Chapter 5), (iii) multiplied sequential parts as a result of the journalistic intervention of bringing together dialogically contingent actions in papers devoted to dialogical networks in general and sequential characteristics, (iv) intentional multiplication as a members' practice having the characteristics of ubiquity, variability, and mutual coordination in papers focusing on the 9/11 attacks (Chapters 6, 8, and 10), and (v) participants' management of message multiplication and emergent meanings as one of the main aims of the study on the devaluation of the Czech currency (Chapter 11). By

chronological clustering of the studies, the Reflection demonstrates a shift from peripheral concern about multiplication, treated as a complication, towards an analysis of multiplications as participants' practices with notions of their characteristics. In the end, the authors formulate a general conclusion based on their findings, noting that a social stance on an issue might be a result of participants' contributions to the multiplied argumentative positions in the dialogical network.

All in all, this book presents the evolvement of dialogical networks, serving not only as a cementing publication over the papers using this concept, but also as a summary of their current understanding. This might be perceived as a two-fold contribution of the volume under scrutiny. By applying the notion of practical historians, the authors painstakingly inspected and contextualised their previous work, which enabled them to demonstrate continuities, novelties as well as methodological alterations made to the concept over the years. The merit of this book might be perceived in the fact that the authors were able to provide their project with a certain unity so that their individual studies cannot be viewed in isolation, but as parts of the complex project on dialogical networks. However, novices in the field cannot anticipate this book to be a complete collection of all the papers written on dialogical networks because the analyses done here are not solely based on the seven papers provided. Though, an asset for novices might be seen in the fact that this book provides an informative insight into the continual progression of dialogical networks. On the other hand, conversant readers of this publication might find fresh incentives towards the advancement of the current understanding of dialogical networks. This might be predominantly topical for the features of multiplication and emergent meanings, both extensively addressed in Reflection 4, demonstrating that the project on dialogical networks is not unfinished, but affords further development. Such a conception is also factored in the recently published special issue of *Discourse, Context & Media* devoted to dialogical networks (Nekvapil et al., 2021–2023).

REFERENCES

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