On the Lookout for Dialogue: Towards an Extended Dialogism

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What *is* dialogue and where can we search for it? This is the major question asked in this article, with the intention to contribute to a discussion of the essence of *extended dialogism* (ED), the study of dialogue in a broad perspective. I begin with a brief summary of ED formulated in 18 points, and then elaborate on some of these, including the relation between basic utterances (actions) and activity types, between literal and extended (metaphorical) notions of dialogue, and between descriptive and normative dialogism. I argue that ED has the potential to highlight interesting aspects of these issues, and illustrate with relevant examples, concluding with that of the ongoing war of the Russian Federation and its dictator, Vladimir Putin, against the people of Ukraine.

Keywords: extended dialogism, external dialogue, internal dialogue, intersubjectivity, action, activity type, metaphor, normativity, war against Ukraine

1. Introduction

Despite many attempts, dialogism is not an organised movement. The Russian-American philosopher Dimitri Nikulin (2010) provides a historical account of dialogue from antiquity to "modernity". By dialogue, he refers primarily to *embodied, external dialogue between two or more mutually co-present participants*. Nikulin (2006) formulates a number of claims about categories regarding what true dialogue is or is not. His search for the essence of "dialogue" may seem to be rather non-dialogical, as if all dialogues exhibit the same properties across the board. In real life dialogism appears to be characterised by contingencies in different genres or activity types, and "more or less" of phenomena like partiality, gradation, compromises, specialisation, and diversities.

If we look more widely at scholarly as well as mundane approaches to dialogue, we can distinguish three basic contexts and understandings of the concept. First, there is *external dialogue*, which refers to the direct meetings and spoken interactions ("dialogues") between two or several mutually co-present participants, and their bodily and semiotic conduct. Secondly, there are *scientific (scholarly) theories of dialogism* concerning both cognitive and communicative activities, as well as theorising about dialogical data. This implies an *extended* concept of dialogism, including not only studies of external dialogue but also of internal dialogue (thinking and cognition), and communication using other semiotic resources than just verbal language. Thirdly, there are *mundane normative ideas about dialogue*, where the word "dialogue" is used about how people *ought to* treat each other in verbal interaction and in life, rather than about what they actually do. In this context "dialogue" means for most lay persons good and productive exchanges, not aggressive confrontations like fights. We will have occasions to return to these three senses of "dialogue" repeatedly in the following sections of this article.

The term "language" is not less ambiguous. Even in scholarly circles it is treated in very different ways. It may stand for the *language system* as well as for *languaging* (or language use, as most linguists would say), with a term derived from a verb ("to language", or "to do language", e.g., Anward, 2019).[1] Traditional linguistics, including both structural linguistics (e.g., Malmberg, 2012) and large parts of cognitive linguistics (e.g., Croft & Cruse, 2004) focus on the language system, making the following assumptions: (a) The language system of formal resources (grammatical, phonological, lexical, and semantic units and structures) is the first-order notion, and language use is secondary. (b) There are no essential theories of *contexts* or *morality;*

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[1] For a discussion of the relations between *language system* and *languaging*, see Thibault (2011).

language is neutral with respect to both these fields. (c) Minimal units of language are signs, either *morphemes* ("lexical units") or complex constituent structures (composite signs).

In contrast, dialogical approaches to language that focus on languaging assume: (a') Linguistic actions and interactions are the first-order phenomena, and the language system is secondary, abstracted and derived. (b') Contexts and actions are essential. For example, "commitment and position-taking" provide "ethical substance" (Hirschkop, 2011, p.26-27). (c') The minimal unit is that which can give rise to a response (of agreement or disagreement) in interaction or communication (e.g., Bakhtin, 1986).

It is this latter approach to language that is adopted in this article. In Section 2, I elaborate the notion of *extended dialogism* (ED) and its most important assumptions. Sections 3 and 4 explain the notions of action and action ascription in interaction (Deppermann & Hough, 2022), and in Section 5 I address the issue of breaks and pauses. In Section 6 I address the issue of internal dialogue which is an essential aspect of ED and Section 7 introduces some "larger" units than local turn sequences: *communicative projects* and *activities.* In Section 8 I discuss some metaphorical uses of the term "dialogue", and in Section 9, the difference between descriptive (scientific) and normative dialogism. In Section 10 I conclude with an example of a complex political event sequence, namely the war of aggression of the Russian Federation and its leader Putin against Ukraine, and how ED can help make sense of it.

2. Standard and extended dialogism

The standard version of dialogism was undoubtedly built upon "Bakhtin's world" (Holquist, 1990), and developed further by, for example, Rommetveit (1974), Holquist (1990), Morson and Emerson (1990), Nikulin (2006, 2010) and Marková (2016).[2] However, an adequate interdisciplinary approach to dialogue requires a theory of *extended dialogism* (henceforth, ED), which is both more inclusive and more radical version of standard dialogism. At least the following three extensions are implied. First, in addition to verbal signs, other *semiotic resources* such as gaze, facial expressions, body movements, touch must be included. Attention must also be paid to so called "practical actions". Second, ED expands the range of *contexts,* from the focus on local sequences, as in Conversation Analysis (e.g., Stivers & Sidnell, 2012), to larger and more remote contexts, cultures and groups (professional communities, etc.). Thirdly, ED extends the role of verbal and non-verbal resources from only external dialogues to including *internal dialogues* in, for example, thinking, imagining, and dreaming, etc. These experiences go beyond language, but relatively few are completely uninfluenced by knowledge of language, except in young infants and probably some individuals with severe mental disabilities.

Note that this last point does not amount to abolishing the distinction between language and non-language, nor does it imply that language permeates internal processes completely. Internal processes involve conscious, semi-conscious and unconscious, voluntary and involuntary aspects, without any truly sharp boundaries, although this invokes obvious methodological problems. An important point is that external dialogue itself is linked to participants' internal (auto-)dialogues in several ways; we think, feel and do things between, beyond or during own or others' talk. Therefore, we cannot understand external dialogue fully without access to internal dialogue (Linell, 2009, 2022a).[3] Accordingly, if theories are used to describe and explain languaging and thinking adequately, they must be extended beyond standard dialogism.

Some of the more specific assumptions made in ED have been discussed at length in other publications,[4] and can be summarized in the following 18 points, many of which are elaborated in further sections.

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[2] Holquist (1990) provides a nice, relatively short introduction to Bakhtin's life and work, and Nikulin (2010) describes similarities and differences between dialogism in ancient Greece and modern dialogism.
[3] See Linell (2022a) for examples of episodes mixing linguistic and non-linguistic features of thought.
[4] See Linell (2009, 2020a, 2021, 2022a, 2022b).

ED1. Interdependencies between self and other. Both self and other are social persons, and *participants* in co-ordinated activities.[5] The category of others includes concrete others in the situated encounters: immediate addressee(s), and (momentarily or permanently) passive but present others, and in addition, other more remote or abstract others or conditions. In addition, internal others (Marková, 2006), sometimes called "third parties": generalised others, cultural norms, routines and practices, aspects of situations, different genres and "worlds".[6] This point implies a rejection of (extreme) individualism.

ED2. Initiatory and responsive aspects in utterances. These aspects constitute forward-pointing and backwards-pointing relations between utterances. Utterances and conceptual relations between words exhibit "interpenetrations" or "interlacements" (in dialogist jargon); one cannot talk about the living body without presupposing the active mind, and vice versa.

ED3. Situations and contexts. These are involved in all forms of sense-making and meaning-making. Situations and contexts are dynamic, not static. They are distributed on different *time scales*: specific situations ("occasions") vs. situational traditions ("situation types"). Contexts are more abstract, but they are linked to situations. *Remote* contexts must be made relevant in situ in order to be operative.

ED4. Communication, thinking, sense-making, meaning-making and other semiotic activities. These take place in *situations* (see also point ED7) *in the social and physical world* (environment) and in the person's body and embodied mind; brain processes are not the ultimate foundation.

ED5. Interactivity and intersubjectivity. The interactive dimension of intersubjectivity is more basic than the cognitive/content-oriented one; action is prior to knowledge (Linell, 2022a, § 17.6). We ought to distinguish between *interactivity* (the bodily dimension) and *intersubjectivity* (the cognitive dimension). Interactivity can generate both *partially shared understandings* and *updated subjectivities.* Participants are both *social persons* and *individuals.*

ED6. Languages are not holistic systems. In contrast to the unified systems of structural linguistics, languages are *distributed* (Cowley, 2011) across participants (groups), dialects, activities, genres, media, modalities, time and space.

ED7. Meaning-making. Meaning-making in language and languaging must be assumed to operate at two different levels: as *lexical meanings* in the language system (as *meaning potentials*) and *situated meanings* (these are what participants really mean on situated occasions: references, interpretations in specific situations). Note the distinction between meaning-making and sense-making (ED14).

ED8. Learning and appropriation of language and world through guided participation in praxis. Children begin their socialization through the participation in situated practices (Vygotsky, 1962). Later, there is more of instruction and education through languaging, reading and reflection in a life-long continuation.

ED9. Incremental production. Utterances and thoughts are not ready-made and holistic but emergent over time; they are *incrementally produced* in a piece-meal manner (Chafe, 1994; Gasparov, 2009).

ED10. Act-activity interdependence. Acts (utterances seen as actions) are often *tied to* over-arching *activities* and contexts.

ED11. **Processes and movements.** Although there is a considerable amount of stability in these, subjects' processes and partial adaptations in situ are influential. Situations are not given entirely objective, but based on the subject's (participant's) structurations, potentially dependent on the specific occasion; cf. the notions of *un-givenness* (Holquist, 1990, p.7) and

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[5] Note that there is a clear discrepancy between Self/Ego/I and all the "Others". Self has a unique access to his/her own mind, e.g., voices as "I-for-oneself", the latter concept and related ideas belonging to "advanced Bakhtinian ideas" (see Holquist, 1990, Ch. 6). Another crucial note is that the distinction between speakers and listeners is independent of that between self and others.

[6] Several of the phenomena enumerated hereafter are more or less socioculturally shared but they can also be characteristic of individuals; cf. rules (e.g. Wittgenstein, 1953) and norms vs. routines and practices.

incompletenesses (Zaner, 2010). Movements are characteristic even in short utterances by single speakers (cf. the notion of *multimodality* as understood by Mondada, 2008). But there is a lot more in longer (multi-person) stretches: prosodies, not in the least rhythm, and several musical properties: melodies, polyphony, polyvocality, stylisation, parody, and even "symphonic" features like contraposition.[7]

ED12. External and internal dialogue. Dialogues are both *external* in public languaging and *internal* in private thinking, imagining, etc.

ED13. Partial sharing. Understandings in social interaction are normally not complete, but *partial* and only *partially shared*. We cannot fully *know* what others mean and intend by their actions; we have to rely on *trust* (Linell & Marková, 2014). *Co-ordination and complementarity* are better concepts than shared understandings (Matusov, 1996). Subjects' understandings in and of contexts are not homogeneous, but dynamic. Interaction with partial disagreements is common.[8]

ED14. Sense-making. This is a general kind of semiosis in the ordering and organising of the physical, social and imagined environments involving not only cognition, but also emotion and volition; not only intellectual exchanges but also (needs of) *social power, respect, confidence* in self and others. Sense-making is in this sense a superordinate concept, whereas meaning-making (ED7) is more limited, i.e., culturally, or individually reflected, with a fuzzy boundary between the two.[9]

ED15. The term "dialogue" itself has a core aspect in its meaning potential (ED7): the interactivity between two or more sense-making persons, systems, or organisms. Yet, the term is often used *metaphorically*.

ED16. Normative conceptions of dialogue. These imply openness, equality, equity, democracy in communication and discourse, as mentioned in Section 1. Such ideologies cannot be directly part of (scientific) dialogism, but can be derived from it. Dialogism must account also how and why the "bad" aspects are displayed in human communication.

ED17. Truth and belief. It is important to distinguish between truth, which is about "objective reality" (*istina*) and "subjective", personal convictions about self, others, and the world or *pravda* (Bakhtin, 1993, p.37, 46).

ED18. Unfinalisability and finalisation. Bakhtin points out that no utterance can be the first in history, and no utterance can *logically* be the last one of a conversation. It is always possible to add something beyond what has been said so far. In this sense dialogue never ends; it is "unfinalisable" (Bakhtin,1981, p.330). Dialogue, "especially self-utterances (…) strengthens its internal resistance to all sorts of external finalization" (Bakhtin, 1984, p.79). This, however, is an abstract, ideal consideration. On the specific situated occasion, we must somehow end our utterances, episodes and conversations, by the use of specific closing strategies or by being forced by extrinsic circumstances: "finalization of the (specific) utterance" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.76, parentheses added by the author).

Several of these 18 points actually imply dialogical relations between paired concepts that could often be regarded as opposites within monologist theories. Dialogically, however, they are interdependent, so that each concept penetrates and is penetrated by its companion concept. Examples of such paired concepts are self and other (speaker and respondent, etc.) (ED1), initiative and response (ED2), situation and discursive message (ED3), occasion and tradition (ED3), interactivity and intersubjectivity (ED5), external and internal dialogues (ED12), utterance and (communicative) activity type (ED10), meaning-making and sense-making (ED 7, ED14).

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[7] Music theorists usually do not recognise their notions in the applications to speech and dialogue by language scientists. It remains a task for the latter to transpose musical concepts in a reasonable fashion.

[8] Gurwitsch (1942) distinguishes between apprehension (non-reflective), comprehension (emulations of a source version), and responsive understandings (reflected).

[9] For others, especially in cognitive semiotics (e.g., Zlatev, 2018; Konderak, 2021), meaning-making is the broader concept, including any kind of semiosis, including what is here called sense-making.

These interpenetrations have briefly been explicated in the descriptions above, and I will return to several of these as well as others in the following sections.

Another way to summarise the 18 points could be to highlight the two sides of human communication: sociality and individuality. Sociality alludes to the other-relatedness of meaning and messages, especially as regards natural languages. However, languaging is material or bodily in the sense of processes that involve physiology and biological life; only individuals and organisms, not groups and cultures, have feelings, volitions, metabolism, etc. This speaks for a certain kind of materialism and individualism. Merleau-Ponty (1962 [1945]) and followers (among others: Meyer, Streeck & Jordan, 2017; Cekaite & Mondada, 2021) developed the idea of *intercorporeality,* which is an attempt to combine culture and individual people with their cognitive and executive abilities. Communicative situations are both culturally *situated* and *embodied* by participants (Zlatev, 1997). In what follows, I will illustrate and elaborates several of these 18 points of ED.

3. Utterances and actions

Utterances are understood in ED as units in spoken languaging (Bakhtin, 1986, p.128), without regard to particular forms or functions. It is reasonable to use such a relatively vague notion as a start. An utterance or a turn at talk is not just what the philosopher Searle (1969, p.3) once called "an acoustic blast", i.e., that the speaker lets the body emit sounds. Speakers mean something by their sounds and bodily movements. Utterances are semiotic gestures rather than mere vocalisations. Searle himself points out, in line with dialogists and most pragmatists, that utterances are primarily *actions*. As well-known, his basic notion was that of *speech acts*: individual acts planned and carried out by singular speakers. But actions are embedded in semiotic projects in the interactional sequencing by interlocutors in dialogues. They are what Linell and Marková (1993) called "inter-acts". An external dialogue is about *relations* between persons and between their contributions to external dialogues.

Utterances are, accordingly, both *material* and *semiotic* (involving meaning-making, ED7). They are part of sequences, both local ones and larger units, at several levels and timescales. Let us start with the simple example in (1).

(1)   1. Sam: I met Fred this morning
       2. Dick: who's Fred?
       3. Sam: Fred in the fourth grade.
       4. Dick: okay.[10]

The school-boy Sam is Dick's son, and here he meets with his father in the late morning. Sam initiates the short episode by providing some news in line 1, this projecting a continuation. But it is also a response to a situation (the encounter with his daddy), rather than to a prior verbal action. Heritage (2022, p.298) would call it a "first action", because it comes first in a local verbal sequence or conversational episode. Dick does not understand Sam's reference to "Fred", and follows up with a so-called repair question, requesting a specification. This points backwards, and at the same time forward to line 3. The status of line 2 is both as a response to line 1 and as a repair initiation in relation to line 3. Line 2 is thereby integrated in the local sequence; it is not a self-standing verbal action, but an "inter-act". Backwards-and-forward-relations are typical of most utterances. Line 4 is a neutral acknowledgement, with responsive relations to line 3, and possibly also to the whole sequence of lines 1-3.

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[10] Several of the excerpts contain no marks of prosody or peripheral non-verbal accompaniments; this is partly because they were either not given in the originals, or I do not address their functions in my commenting text. However, I do assume thay they are integrated aspects of utterances (Linell, 2022a).

Now let us consider the slightly more complex example in (2) from a conversation in a research organization in mid 1980s, in which L(oes) is "the receptionist and keeper of supplies", and M(arty) is a "visiting researcher".[11]

(2) 1. M: Loes, do you have a calender,
     2. L: yeah ((reaches for her desk calender))
     3. M: do you have one that hangs on the wall?
     4. L: oh, you WANT one.
     5. M: yeah

Here, lines 1 and 2 form an initial two-position (pair) structure, which seems to be followed by another two-position structure, a repair that is subordinated to the misunderstanding implicit in L's practical action in line 2 (what Conversation Analysis theorists would call an "adjacency pair"). There are also a couple of sequences that can alternatively be analysed as three-position structures: (a) lines 2+3+4 (the repair action seems to contain three constituents) and (b) lines 1+2+3. All these occur in the same episode, and the respective basic structures must be assumed to be there simultaneously (Arundale, 2022). Responsivity is a backwards-pointing relation, but it is not locked up in a pair of utterances.

As noted above, Searle postulated only initiatives as "speech acts" in his model. In contrast, Bakhtin, often regarded as the father of modern dialogism, argues that the response, and not the first initiative, is the most important contribution of a *social dialogue*. Dialogues are, according to this view, about responding to others, that is, actions which are not primarily initiatives, but rather reactions directed to other persons, or oneself (Tsui, 1989; Linell & Marková, 1993; Linell, 1998).

Addressivity (initiatives directed to the addressee, or the whole audience) and responsivity are fundamentals in dialogist theorisation. A more balanced view, in line with ED, would be to regard both relations as equally important, in line with the work of Cassirer (1955-57), who considered *continuity* (response) and *innovation* (initiative) as the basic combination that propels a dialogue forward.

4. Situated meaning and the "why of communication"

Lexical units (words and constructions) are not linguistic resources with fixated and unique meanings, as *terms* are usually understood to be. Instead, they carry with them *meaning potentials* that participants in various activities use in combination with contexts to accomplish *situated meanings* (Norén & Linell, 2007).

In addition, meanings and contexts are usually *multi-layered* (Gurwitsch, 1964; Goffman, 1981, p.82) or "laminated" (Goodwin, 2018); communication does not normally take place only in one well-defined context (in the singular). The multiplicity of contextual aspects was a reason for Gurwitsch to prefer the term *contexture*, rather than context. Yet, Gurwitsch was still influenced by Gestalt psychology, and regarded situations as relatively fully structured fields of consciousness. Later critiques have pointed out that contextures are more dynamic and allow for many "incompletenesses" (Zaner, 2010). Structures are arguably not given in the environment as such; instead, they are the outcomes of structuration processes in participants' practices of handling, perceiving and understanding (central) aspects of situations (Lynch & Eisenman, n.d.). In the same vein, Holquist (1990) points out that a recurrent characteristic of Bakhtin's dialogism is "his emphasis on *process*, the radical "*un*-givenness" of experience, with its openness and energy" (1990, p.7).

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[11] Cited here from (Arundale, 2020, 2022, p.36f, 41f), the passage is originally a field note, observed and transcribed in the Netherlands, and discussed by Schegloff, 1992, p.1321 *et passim*).

A situated utterance may be said to have an explicit formulation which is the basis for parts of language-driven interpretations. But there is always something more, which has come to be called the "*why of communication*" (e.g., Bilmes, 1985), which can be expanded as "why do you direct this utterance to me now and here (in this social and physical situation)". There are many pertinent remarks made about this notion in the literature. A basic point would be that many everyday utterances are not designed to simply be taken "literally" (Goffman, 1981, p.47), but as discreet allusions, irony, playful deceits and other jokes, etc. Bakhtin used the following terms for distinguishing explicit expression from the "why of communication": *danie* 'gift' (from the common verb *dat'* 'give'), vs. *zadanie* 'task' from *zadat'* 'impose' a task on somebody.

Turning to laminated contexts, that is, attending to both explicit formulations and their "why of communication", we may consider an example coming from an authentic psychotherapy session (3). This excerpt is taken out of one of the regular weekly meetings between a teenage girl and her therapist. The two have agreed that their sessions should discuss recent influential events in the patient's everyday life, and how she currently feels in terms of mental health. The excerpt in (3) is drawn from the very beginning of the session. Line 1 is the therapist's first turn dealing with today's topic; note that this "first utterance" connects to the given situation, more exactly to its agreed activity type with its two foci.

(3)   IT FELT HOPELESS (Bäck et.al., 2021; see also Linell, 2022a, p.129; Th = therapist, Cl = client)

    1. Th: uh how have you been feeling since last time °we met°
    2. Cl: (sighing) .hhh °like° (rubbing her eye) (.) it'll be a
    3.   really hard day (Th nods) heavy I felt awfully (Pt rubs
    4.   her eye) awfully depressed yesterday the whole day (.)
    5.   I couldn't do anything at all,
    6.   (.)°was just indoors in my room°
    7. Th: mm (.) yeah, what was it that had (happened)?
    8. Cl: (0.3) nothing after all
    9. Th: no
    10.Cl: I felt awfully down in the dumps--
    11.   (.)
    12.Th: yeah but (.) what (.) what was it that- tri- (.)
    13.   triggered it?
    14.Cl: (0.7) no I dunno °it was° (0.5, sighing) I began feeling
    15.   fed up with school an'such like (.) it felt hopeless
    16.Th: why (.) or what was °felt° hopeless?
    19.Cl: (sighing) °hopeless° I lose my interest wholly (.)in it--
    20.   this work as a hairdresser,(.) I think anyway I
    21.   don't want to be there when I even didn't
    22.   want to be there (.) what's (.) the point standing
    23.   there cutting hair when—it won't help me in the
    24.   future (xxx)
    25. Th: does it feel like (.) you don't want to

On the surface, this episode is about questions and answers about last week's events. However, it is rather clear that these turns at talk serve to contribute to the other topical target of the encounter, that of the client's overarching state of mental health and its possible development. This is a central aspect of the "why" of the whole activity (interpersonal psychotherapy), and it takes place at some depth of the discourse.

5. Breaks in discourse and dialogue

A central point of Nikulin (2010) is his claims that breaks ("pauses", "interruptions") are typical of informal talk ("dialogue"), unlike in written texts. The phenomenon is something that Bakhtin (1984, p.265) has commented on and indeed there are many examples of pauses in improvised talk (Linell, 2022, p.232f).

However, in the practices and processes of actual *text events* (performances), there are also often breaks or pauses. In reading, processes often "unfold in breaks from the visual perception of symbols" (Trasmundi, 2022, p.1). Reading is understood by Trasmundi as different genres or "reading ecologies", e.g., the consumption of argumentative or narrative texts, such as, fiction (novels and biographies), when readers frequently make short and even longer breaks in order to think about what they have just read. There is of course room in breaks for rejoinders in oral presentations of personal texts, such as traditional letter reading. Another reading ecology with lots of breaks is concerned with scientific literature or textbooks, in argumentative parts of natural as well social sciences. Thus, several genres of solitary readings texts are typically shot through by pauses.

But printed texts have various conventions for indicating where breaks would or should appear when the texts are read aloud, i.e., in spoken text events too. For example, poems use line shifts, and various kinds of punctuations for this purpose. In printed prose, you find the division into paragraphs, as well as various punctuations "at lower levels". There are of course also changes between different voices in literary dialogue. In (4) in the following section, for example, we can notice how the different strands of internal and multi-voiced dialogue have consequences for how breaks appear when the text is being recited. In other genres of solitary reading there are few if any breaks: reading newspapers (finding out today's most important news) or reading administrative reports and other documents (identifying the most important points as fast as possible).

Let us look at some of examples from the literature. Strömqvist (2000) reports on a study in which university students had the task to improvise in compiling and writing texts of their own while typing the emergent texts into a computer. These subjects produce texts by incrementation, making pauses intermittently in order to find ways to continue to change in the text already written. In a later publication, Strömqvist (2022) generalises his studies to a couple of additional experimental tasks. His general theoretical proposal is that the "production" of speech and (in particular) written text is built on "drafting" and affordances of the "external representations" produced so far. Thus, we have here yet other text-related practices where breaks are useful, much like what happens in spontaneous talk.

Ehn and Löfgren (2007) describe a study with the translated title "When nothing seems to happen?" (2007), dealing with what people tend to do when they are waiting for a core activity, which has been interrupted. Under such conditions, people often try to do something relevant during the often unexpected breaks. Further, when people are carrying out some automatised core activity (rituals and ingrained habits), people often speak, think or do something simultaneously with the core activity, which does not demand continuous attention. Such multi-tasking is also typical of daydreaming. We could add "open states of talk" (Goffman, 1983), in which there are often silences between conversational snippets that occur sporadically, e.g., during travelling together in a car-ride or a train journey.

Finally, Steffensen et al. (2017) use their method of Cognitive Event Analysis to observe and document subjects who try to solve a cognitive task that has been imposed on them (the core activity). Subjects then often need time-outs from the core activity, in order to think, experiment or looking for solutions of the task.

To sum up, breaks (in talk, practical activities, reading, etc.) are not necessarily passive, or the absence of events. For example, when interlocutors talk, other participants in the interaction may fill their minds with reflections (internal auto-dialogues). Speakers too may entertain parallel thoughts while planning and even execute ongoing talk. Introducing breaks ("pauses") into main

activities makes possible interstitial (inserted) activities, e.g., chances for speakers to search for words, for listeners to follow speaker's meaning-making and to predict the approaching ends of speaker's current turn (parallelism according to Pickering & Garrod, 2013). Here we detect obvious links to internal dialogue and remote contexts, as discussed further in the following section. Unlike Nikulin's focus only on external spoken dialogues, we find many more practices that are shot through by breaks that provide space for useful comments and reflections. Extra insertions accompany main activities; main and extra activities form internal dialogues (auto- or self-dialogues; Linell, 2009). Nikulin's insistence that written or printed texts are free from breaks is in fact a case of the "written language bias" in the language sciences (Linell, 2005).

6. Internal dialogue

In his introduction to Bakhtin (1986, p.xxii, 8), Holquist claims that the concept of internal dialogue was first developed by Aleksandr Potebnya (1835-1891) (Potebnya, 1962) , and then further developed by Shpet, Bakhtin and Vygotsky. Literary demonstrations of a person's inner dialogue directed to oneself are among the Russian novelist Fjodor Dostoyevsky's specialities (see Bakhtin, 1984). Here I cite a brief part of one out of many agony-ridden auto-dialogues of one of the Karamazov brothers, Dimitri Karamazov, called Mitia, who is suspected of having murdered his own father.[12] Where we come in, Mitia has invited many people to a grand party in the neighbouring town of Chermashnaja. The excerpt is the beginning of one of several dramatic situations in which Mitia's agony surfaces in his internal dialogue. He is vacillating between inclinations to give up by admitting guilt and ending his life, or to deny guilt, thus behaving extremely equivocally.

The constituent units are tagged into three types: U = the character's (Mitia) silent *utterance*, Th = the character's *thought* (not necessarily put into words; close to what literary scholars called *erlebte Rede*, an indirect way of reported speech, feeling or thinking; cf. Voloshinov, 1973) Au = *author's description* of Mitia's actions, narrated in the third person.

(4) Au1: Mitia's head became hot. He went out into the big hall, then out on the gallery that was surrounding parts of the building. The fresh air enlivened him a bit.
Au 2: He was standing quite by himself, in a dark corner, and suddenly he put both of his hands around his head.
Th 1: All his loose thoughts were suddenly unified, and his feelings and sensations became blurred so that his inner life lit up. A ghastly, terrifying light!
U 1: "If you are to shoot yourself, why don't you do it now?" This crossed his head.
U 2: "Go down and fetch your gun, and then end everything precisely in this dark and dirty corner."
Au 3: For almost a whole minute he was standing like that without being able to decide.
Au 4: Before, when he rushed down here, he had been haunted by his shame, the consummated theft that he had just acted out, and then this blood, this blood!
Th 2: (…) (empty mind)
Th 3: But it had been easier for him then, o yes, easier!
Th 4: Then everything had been over and done with, he had lost her, did without her, for him she was gone, missing – o yes, the death sentence would have been easier for him, in any case it had seemed more unavoidable, for what had he then had to live for?
Th 5: But now! Now it was not the same as before, was it?

Excerpt (4) is the author's depiction of a couple of minutes in Mitia's haunted life. As we could expect, the three categories (Au, Th, U) shade into each other. They are all present in Mitia's

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[12] I have translated (4) into English from a Swedish translation (1986, p.480) of the Russian original.

confused mind, but in different ways. But (4) could also be regarded simply as aspects only of the main – in fact, the only character's (if we disregard his lost fiancée, "her" in Th 4) – figure's mental events (or "day-dream"). If we choose this alternative, we could see the whole episode (which continues in Dostoyevsky's classical novel) as a monologue in Mitia's mind. But at the same time it is an internal dialogue, sometimes imagined as externalised and multi-voiced, perhaps with the three voices proposed above.[13]

7. "Larger units"

Utterances as actions are not related only to adjacent other actions at the same level as themselves. Actions are also often characteristic of particular over-arching activity types. Thus, utterances and utterance types are regularly defined *by act(ion)–activity interdependences.*

Goffman (1974, 1983) was arguably relatively superficial in his concerns about activity types. In his *Frame Analysis* (1974), he was strongly structuralist in general, with not much focus on the dynamics in dialogue, even though he considered the latter with the help of concepts like "reframing" and "rekeying". Gumperz (1982) was anchored in the interactional sociolinguistics of different language communities. Levinson (1979) wrote about activity types and language, and pointed out, that pragmatics tended to be more universal and less culture-specific than grammar.

Here, I focus on local communicative projects (Linell, 1998, 2009, 2012) and – most of my time – communicative activity types (Goffman, 1974; Levinson, 1979; Gumperz, 1982, Drew & Heritage, 1992, Linell, 2010, 2011, 2022b). A *local communicative project* (LCP) can take the form of a relatively short episode, or a small topical project, as in examples (1) and (2), or a social activity like an entry into a conversation or a closing (fairwell) sequence. *Communicative activity types* (CATs) include "activity contexts" (e.g. Heritage, 2022, p.298), such as court trials, classroom interactions, lectures, social welfare talks, psychotherapy, family interaction. and countless others.

Deppermann & Haugh (2022) call CATs "larger units", as if they were just extended sequences of utterances, perhaps organised in phases (cf. Linell, 2011). But CATs are primarily *(activity) contexts*, which determine the functions and social significances of situation types, as discussed in Section 4. Again, we find that utterance types are interlaced with situations and contexts.

Several dialogists (e.g., Rommetveit, 1979, Matusov, 1996) have pointed out that interlocutors can use recollections related to earlier contributions and anticipated possibilities ("remote contexts" in Bakhtin, 1986, p.160), that is, their inner dialogue can entertain backwards- or forward-pointing associations that engage things that are, in Bakhtin's terms, "already said" or "not yet said". The first-mentioned type, flashbacks of something which was close at hand earlier on in the conversation but was never taken up at that stage. These "recollections" can be actualised later in the conversation, or even on a later occasion, or they can fall into oblivion for the time being or for ever.

8. Extended and metaphorical senses of "dialogue"

A real dialogue involves (by definition) mutually relevant sense-makings in and between two or more interacting persons with agency, including a sense-making mind (ED14). But the word "dialogue" is used about many interactions that do not live up to this definition. Instead, the intended interpretations are in fact partly metaphorical. Examples are the interaction between a reader and the text, a subject providing a painting or a sculpture with meaning, or a person's rendering a text in singing it, somebody recognising things in the perceptually available environments, for example, in nature or in a room with unusual furnishing, a child involved in

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[13] See Bakhtin (1981) about multivoicedness in internal dialogue (auto-dialogue).

make-believe playing with spruce cones, etc. The most extreme case is perhaps the "dialogue" in transfer processes between neurons in the brain.

The case of reading is probably the most frequent example. The reader is namely often said to be "in dialogue with" the text being read. The characterisation of this as a dialogue may seem especially near at hand, since the text consists of symbols that have been assembled by an author who wants to send a message. But the book is a static object that by itself cannot produce meaning actively. In other words, reading is not a dialogue in the full sense, since it is just an interaction in which the reader explores the "affordances" (Gibson, 1979) of the text: a static artefact without mental capacities of its own. It is just a lot of doodles. Yet, a smart reader can create several relevant "readings" based on the text's affordances. In addition, readers can recruit their previous expectations and knowledge that give rise to responses to their current interpretations, whether these responses agree with the text or question it. Thus, there *is* a responsive understanding of the text interpretation, and there *is* a dialogue, but this dialogue is not external, but rather internal between the reader's expectations and her actualised responses to the text.

Paradoxically, this internal dialogue becomes a monologue with several "voices" (polyvocality) within the reader's mind, as illustrated with Mitia's inner dialogue in (4). This is an important observation: a subject's mental activities can be an *inner monologue* addressed to the subject's own mind, and this monologue is an inner dialogue (between observations, interpretations and rejoinders) at the same time. If the subject engages in an external dialogue, (s)he can similarly and simultaneously – in an auto-dialogue – go beyond the interlocutor's utterances, sometimes partly before these utterances have been completed.

A similar reasoning may apply to a person's understanding of a painting, sculpture or piece of music, which are all originally creations of other human minds. For example, how would we explain an opera singer's rendering of a scene in a particular opera? It is more far-fetched to claim that there is a "dialogue" going, when a subject perceives and cognises the physical environments in specific ways, for example, as nature, buildings, etc. These involve *interactions* that are partly similar to dialogue but don't quite live up to the requirements of being a genuine dialogue. They are thus metaphorical extensions of the term "dialogue". Even more far-fetched are some posthumanist accounts (Linell, 2022a, p.366).

9. Normative notions of dialogue

The word of "dialogue" has a firm position in most Western languages and elsewhere. The mundane version is, however, different from the scientific accounts of dialogical communication, based on the first 15 points of Section 2. The popular idea of dialogue that is so well-known in everyday cultures is *normative* and defines "good dialogue": it is concerned with how people *ought* to treat one another (ED16). Normative understandings of dialogue are founded on notions like openness, sincerity, truthfulness, equity, equality, harmony, and mutual tolerance. The idea of democracy is closely connected (Hirschkop, 2011). Normative ideals have been expressed in the French Revolution, the U.S. Constitution, various UN documents, etc.

Scientific models of dialogue, including that of extended dialogism, are, however, clearly dependent on mundane versions. Normative models of moral behaviour can be found in dialogical theory (e.g., the work of Bakhtin, Buber, Lévinas, and others). Conversely, scholars working with external dialogue and classical dialogism have often borrowed ideas from normative theory. Influence of normative ideas are common versions of complete and shared understandings, symmetries and co-operation among interlocutors.

An example is the Conversation-Analytic (CA) principle of "one person speaks at a time" underlying their turn-taking theory (Linell, 2022b). By contrast, on the basis of empirical data from genres in many cultures, Bassetti and Liberman (2021) have argued against the universal validity of the turn-taking model. These authors suggest that the principle of minimisation of overlapping utterances is more typical of (mostly Western) genres like lectures, formal meetings,

institutional encounters (such as professional-lay encounters). Instead, they propose a theory of "Talking Together".

C*o-operation* and *altruism* are often seen as undeniably human properties (Goodwin, 2018), but we also have egoism, power, rivalry, competition, etc. as shown in the following section. Several accounts claim that *democracy* must be assumed to be an inherent idea of dialogue. If we were to take this as a definitional of authentic dialogue in this world, it would definitely be wishful thinking. Currently, there are many countries in which democratic attitudes have receded in favour of authoritarian regimes.

10. Political projects and Russia's war against Ukraine

Utterances may lead to practical actions, including military violence, and these factual, physical, and practical events lead to interpretations in verbal interaction. Together, languaging and practical actions form games in which linguistic initiatives and practical responses, or practical initiatives and linguistic responses, build up multi-layered contextures. Alex Gillespie has demonstrated this kind of interplay convincingly in several studies, dealing with the Cuban missile crisis between USA and the Soviet Union (Gillespie, 2012), and the Northern Rock Bank run between the bank and the government on the one side and bank customers on the other (Gillespie & Cornish, 2014).

The situation in world politics, especially in Europe, has become fatally critical in recent times. Dealing dialogistically with such events in the world, often very vital or fatal events, implies focus on large-scale movements within and across cultures in the wide world. The current war of the Russian Federation and its president Vladimir Putin against Ukraine was accompanied by a plenitude of side-events, many contextual specifics of discourse genres involved (e.g., social media vs. official messages, divergent representations within "expertise" vs. public opinions on different sides, etc.), facts vs. speculations, so-called "alternative realities", conspiracies, the possibility of several perspectives used as "narrative tools" (Wertsch, 2017), and so on. Despite the heterogeneities of all these phenomena, I will use this case as an illustration of dialogism, especially regarding the interpenetration of linguistic statements and proclamations vs. practical actions, the interplay between physical and symbolic meanings (*what* is said, and *why* it is said or communicated), and the necessity to understand the actions of dictators as dialogical. What goes on in the whirls of warfare and in commentaries on them are cases of both meaning-making and attempts at establishing power relations, both discursive and practical actions.

There are many analyses of dialogue between cultures (communities, organisations, nations, etc.) in the literature. This has attracted scholars, since communities produce ideas that tend be formulated in verbal terms. On the other hand, "dialogue" within and between cultures involves metaphorical uses of the word, as discussed in Section 8, since communities as such cannot communicate messages in themselves. Utterances and specific meanings are always issued, interpreted and responded to by individuals, even of often via mediators and artefacts.

Here I will try to provide a communicative analysis, especially in terms of initiatives and responses of the beginning of the war of the Russian Federation and its President against Ukraine in 2022, above all as this process was portrayed in Swedish media, that is, TV and radio, and some leading newspapers. Many of the views expressed there are the results of (often subjective) opinion-making activities by politicians, journalists and so-called experts from authorities and well-known organisations. Swedish reflections on the war are probably similar to those of other countries in the West. However, it is important to stress that my account here will be a communicative or dialogistic analysis based on a very selective data basis (as almost all communicative analyses have to be). In other words, we are not looking at the true and complete history of the events. Nor can we trace the pre-history of the war, or the potential continuations into the future. Yet, people's dialogue often integrates "recollections and anticipations", as pointed out in Section 7. The Russian invasion was seen as an attempt to silence and enslave the people in a formerly member republic in the Soviet Union. Most descriptions, whether in

responsive and interventional terms, or initiatory, are integrated in harsh, verbal-cum-practical dialogues, referring to divergent background understandings of largely the same factual events.

In the build-up process prior to the attack on Ukraine, Russian president Vladimir Putin claimed several times that Ukraine had never been a normal, unified state. Western, Mid, and Eastern (Donbass) parts had different historical backgrounds (Habsburg, Russian empire, and various mixtures were involved). To some degree, different groups understand their own and the other groups' backgrounds and history in different, and often partly opposed, ways (Walker, 2018). But the Russian media continued to repeat narratives about "unjustified attacks on our peace-loving country". Russia had had to "defend itself", for example, against Napoleon's armies and the Germans in WW2 ("the Great Patriotic war"). This narrative has had many applications over time as a national, mnemonic tool (Wertsch, 2002, 2017). Putin thus could claim that NATO plays the role of the aggressor, and that there was no other option for Russia in early 2022 than to take strong and effective measures. The West has very different understandings of contexts and events. However, these narratives, are too many and too varied to be accounted for here. For the general media public in many countries, before the start of the core actions, i.e., the actual invasion and military operations, the plans of Russia for Ukraine were made known in the televised speech in the morning of February 24, 2022, held by Putin. I will take up only three citations from this speech.

First, the attack on Ukraine was presented as a "*specialised operation* involving military techniques". This formulation, "specialised operation" (not "war"), sounds like referring to relatively small infringements by military means. Ukraine is an independent state in Mid Europe, and Ukrainians were often to be mentioned, also by Putin, as "a brother people". The "specialised operation" was originally targeted on the capital Kyiv, but the Russian troops soon retracted, as a response to the strong defence by Ukrainians. Instead, very soon Putin went for a full-scale war with all sorts of modern military equipment, even threatening to use mass-destruction weapons. The general situation naturally involved a comprehensive share of propaganda and desinformation. Putin's goal might well have been, from the very beginning, that of destroying the independence of Ukraine. However, the development away from a smaller "operation" to a real war was described by Putin, in his 9th of May speech, as a *response* to Western threats and delivery of modern equipment to Ukraine, whereas Western spokesmen viewed it as an escalation that is, of a more initiatory character.

A second point in Putin's declaration of February 24, 2022, was in fact the stated intention to eliminate fascism in Ukraine ("*denazification*"). While this statement might have been primarily intended for his domestic audience, it was of course received by foreign powers too. Nazism is, at least outside Russia, associated with the German regime which some of the grandparents of today's Ukrainians once, in WWII, fought against. Now the present reference of "being nazist" was used about the grandchildren's generation. Irrespective of whether this reference was in any way true, it would amount to a strongly infamous action. Ironically, it was issued by the leader of the Russian super-power, integrated in his justification of something like a potential totalitarian occupation of Ukraine.

A third and related goal according to Putin's speech of February 24, and again on May 9, was said by him to be the "*demilitarisation*" of Ukraine. Obviously, this alludes to actions by Ukrainian defence, those who were opposed to the elimination of the country's democratic system, and to kill substantial numbers of its citizens.

These initial proclamations are not just a few utterances made public by Putin in front of the television cameras, and hence open to citing by Western media; they were key to his (dialogical) agenda. It goes without saying that he had a very much wider audience than the small group of ministers, general, etc. present in the hall; he addressed the public in foreign countries and a broad domestic audience. His announcements could not be seen simply as some short

utterances belonging to the moments of talking: they were evidently designed to be taken as warnings and arouse responses of fear.[14]

Putin's three first statements of February 24, projected, from the start, "practical" actions by Russian troops: concrete military actions, such as destroying buildings, killing people, bombardments of Ukraine installations close to the border of Poland, i.e., to Western Europe. However, apart from the physical destruction and human casualties, these may be given a so-called *symbolic meaning* as political *signals*, in this case threats or warnings that Russians might attack other countries than Ukraine in the vicinity and in the near future. There are close connections between brutal, physical violence and linguistic messages of hatred and threats.

Putin's "special military operation" has continued to be a reckless war of destruction, with time including more and more regions and cities. Cities have been turned into ruins and heaps of gravel, in a way that has earlier been seen in Russia's warfare in Chechenya and Syria. Rather than being a classical military campaign, the war has focused on destroying schools, hospitals, supermarkets, theatres, local administrative buildings, and also technology like power plants, electricity supplies, and water distribution networks. It is about destruction of ordinary people's lives and their life-worlds. In late November 2022 we are informed about not only continuations but in fact escalations of these atrocities on the part of Russia.

There are wide gaps between Putin's actual utterances and the possible and presumably intended ascriptions of the "why of communication", see Section 4. The comments above showed that the three points made by Putin could justifiably be seen as downright desinformation. In any case, the war is entirely non-proportional as a response to the "history" that had been invoked by the Russian leader.

A relevant comment on Putin's speech would be that it contains a number of descriptions that are quite similar to the slogans used in George Orwell's (1949) dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* Orwell's examples included one-liners like "*War is Peace*", "*Freedom is Slavery*", and "*Ignorance is Strength*", as well as plenty of new language usages of "Newspeak". Putin's foreign secretary Sergej Lavrov has followed his boss in adopting many examples of such Newspeak, similar to what Klemperer (1975, p.327) called a "poisonous jargon" in the case of Nazi German.[15] For example, Lavrov claimed that Western countries have forgotten some of their own most cherished virtues, including the "presumption of innocence", which means that nobody should be burdened with the guilt for various crimes before they have been proved in a fair trial. For anybody who has seen the videos of the dreadful destruction afflicted on, for example, the city of Mariupol, it would be incomprehensible that Ukrainian troops caused this (as may be implied in Lavrov's statement).

Examples like "Putin's war" confirm that linguistic actions and practical actions are interlaced. This point does, of course, in no way imply that languaging and practical actions are equally strong; obviously, practical action, especially in warfare, is almost always much more serious for the targets. It seems absurd to try to elucidate the interactivity of wars without bringing in practical actions. One may analyse some aspects, or phases, in terms of verbal semantics, but the concept of war comprises by definition practical actions, and technologised violent actions at that. Many aspects of Russia's war against Ukraine could hardly be analyses without extending dialogism in some of the respects sketched in Section 2. In fact, it would not be possible to find

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[14] At this point it should be admitted that the responses to Putin's speeches as formulated above are my own, but they are typical of Western interpretations of the situation. The Russian goal is evidently the annihilation of Ukrainians' capacity and willingness to resist the aggression. In the beginning of October 2022, a high-ranked representative of the Russian regime was reported in Swedish media to have said: "The Ukrainian people have become accustomed to the war and are no longer afraid. This has to be rectified (i.e., "corrected") by the re-creation of fear."

[15] Orwell's (op.cit., 188) specification of the "atrocities" that the Party described in his dystopia can use, is in all "details" the same as those of Russia's in Ukraine: "massacres, deportations, lootings, rapings, torture of prisoners, bombing of civilians, lying propaganda, unjust aggressions, broken treaties".

out the essence of real *fights* without the inclusion of "blows and counterblows", as suggested above. Dialogism needs a pragma-semantic approach.

Above, I cast some doubt on the idea that whole communities like ethnic groups and nation states could entertain a "dialogue" amongst themselves; they are not meaning-making organisms with agency of their own. The case of the war in Ukraine could be such a case. Indeed, we see that many of the significant actions have been exercised predominantly by one individual, namely Vladimir Putin. On the other hand, he has been acting in the name of Russia. In addition, he seems to be an unusually strong leader, an autocrat.

Even the discourse of despots can, and must, be describable in dialogical terms. Violent acts, warfare and torture can be understood in terms of initiatives and responses at one level (ED2), and at an abstract level, domination and submission are complementary. Putin and his associates are presumably calculating a future of the "game", calculating their and the others' strengths and weaknesses, all in accordance with the logic of warfare, including propaganda based on desinformation about the enemy. It consists of blows and counter-blows. In other words, Putin's languaging and actions are characterised by dialogical phenomena, such as *responsivity* (he describes his actions as responses to the threats of other powers like NATO), *addressivity* (his messages are addressed to particular recipients) and *genre-belongingness* (it follows regularities of propagandistic languaging and warfare).[16] His statements and actions are responsive and addressed to a number of heterogeneous partners and opponents, such as Russian history, domestic opinions among Russian citizens, and international powers. His conduct is therefore dependent not only on self but also on others. But all this would then be a theorisation that belongs to extended dialogism.

Of course, normative dialogism, as discussed on Section 9, which normally argues in favour of serious and morally acceptable interaction, must condemn Putin. From this point-of-view, he must be seen as one of the most Machiavellian, authoritarian, demonising, non-dialogising (i.e., monologising), and dreadful despots in world history. From a normative point-of-view, he is an individual who consistently tries to monologise, that is, he always starts out entirely from his own situation and ideas.

11. Epilogue

In this paper I have introduced a number of aspects of an extended dialogism (ED), ultimately showing how it helps understand one of the most tragic events in the world of today: the war of the Russian Federation and its dictator against Ukraine.

The account is not exhaustive, and a much larger one is provided (in Swedish) in Linell (2022a). I could, for example, have discussed the relations between ED and Conversation Analysis (CA), an approach that for a long time has been the dominant analytic method of analysing local sequences of spoken interaction. In Linell (2022b), I point to a few of its theoretical weaknesses, included its exaggerated focus on paired actions ("adjacency pairs") and on one universal turn-taking system, the partial neglect of activity types, its lack of a comprehensive theory of contexts, and a mistaken theory of intersubjectivity. These issues are different from the main topics of the present paper.

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[16] For example, a simple military command pronounced by an officer in front of his soldiers is "dialogical" in several respects, *responsive* (to a situation), *addressed* to a group of people (the soldiers), and belongs to a particular activity type (which, among other things, requires that the speaker issuing the order is legitimised to do so.) The three dialogistic universals (responsivity, addressivity, genre-belongingness) were launched by Morson & Emerson (1990). At the same time, the command is of course "monological" (spoken by one person who imposes a particular kind of response on the respondents). See also Linell (2009, p.167f).

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