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Dialogic resonance in the negotiation of stance

A study of spontaneous conversation in the London-Lund Corpus 2

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Drawing on Dialogic Syntax and the notion of resonance (Du Bois, 2014), this study explores the nature of backward and forward resonance in a recently compiled corpus of spoken British English, the London-Lund Corpus 2, and how they differ from each other in terms of the pragmatic effect that they create. According to Du Bois (2014), dialogic resonance is the "catalytic activation of affinities across utterances" (p. 372). Speakers resonate with each other to achieve shared communicative goals in discourse (Clark, 1996). Studies in Dialogic Syntax have mainly focused on backward resonance. For example, Du Bois (2007) notes that when addressees qualify their response with *too*, (1), or *either*, (2), they index a specific intersubjective relation with the previous speaker.

(1) I think so *too*.
(2) I don't think so *either*.

Very little work has been done on backward resonance and even less on forward resonance, or the dialogic juxtaposition between a given utterance and a subsequent one (see Giora et al., 2014). The aim of this study is to describe the use of the two types of resonance in conversation and to determine their communicative motivations and mechanisms with a focus on epistemic stance constructions, such as epistemic verbs, adverbs, adjectives and modals.

The data for the study come from a recently compiled corpus of spoken discourse, the London-Lund Corpus 2 of spoken British English. The data set under investigation contains 50,000 words of face-to-face conversations in various settings, ranging from informal conversations among friends to formal business meetings. The analysis is carried out as follows. First, the data are manually searched for instances of dialogic resonance across speaker turns. The main criterion is that the extracted utterances share an object of stance that is framed by the same or different stance constructions (e.g. *I'm sure she's fine – She might be*). Next, the stance couplings are analysed in terms of both structural and functional parameters (e.g. type of resonance, type of construction, speech act, relationship between speakers). In order to achieve a maximum level of reliability, the task is carried out by two annotators. Finally, parameters that correlate with either backward or forward resonance or both are identified.

Preliminary findings of the study suggest that there are fundamental differences between the backward and forward resonance of epistemic stance constructions. For example, while backward resonance builds on previous stance constructions to establish alignment between the speakers, forward resonance emerges in contexts that require strategic action from the speaker in order to maintain social relations with the addressee, such as in disagreements. The results obtained from the corpus study are in line with previous work in psycholinguistics, such as the interactive alignment theory (Garrod & Pickering, 2004, 2015), but they also inform these studies by accounting for the socio-communicative goals that speakers pursue in interaction.

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