Context change

In dialogue, context change simply refers to the effects that participants’ utterances have on the conversation and the overall task.

Because language use is joint activity, any agreed context change reflects the action of all participants in the conversation.

Joint participation in context change

Clark’s four levels.
Level 1. Joint attention.
\[\text{joint}\{A \text{ executes behavior } t \text{ for } B \text{ to perceive; } B \text{ attends perceptually to behavior } t \text{ from } A\}\]

Level 2. Joint presentation and identification.
\[\text{joint}\{A \text{ presents signal } s \text{ for } B; B \text{ identifies signals from } A\}\]

\[\text{joint}\{A \text{ signals to } B \text{ that } p; B \text{ recognizes that } A \text{ means that } p\}\]
Joint participation in context change
Clark's four levels.
Level 4. Proposing, considering & taking up.
joint[A proposes joint project w/ for A and B; B addresses whether to take up w/]

Reactions to events in the world

Reactions and construals

Example: K places wine on the table.
Case 1.
J's construal: K is doing J a favor.
J's utterance: “Thanks”
Case 2.
J's construal: K is doing a duty for J.
J's utterance: “Right”
Case 3.
J's construal: K is showing J a new skill.
J's utterance: “Nicely done”

“Negotiation” of meaning

K brings wine for H but places it between H and J
J says “Thanks” (construing it as for himself)
K says “You’re welcome” and goes to get more wine for H.
Grounding and closure

Closure
Agents performing an action require evidence, sufficient for current purposes, that they have succeeded in performing it.

Joint closure
The participants in a joint action try to establish the mutual belief that they have succeeded well enough for current purposes.

Grounding = joint closure on actions in dialogue

Grounding:
Presentation and acceptance
You can think of joint closure being reached in two phases:
A presents B with an utterance
B provides evidence of what B does or does not perceive, identify, or understand until the two accept that the understanding is good enough for current purposes.

Reactions, construals, evidence of understanding

Assertions of understanding
“uh huh”, “I see”, “m”

Presuppositions of understanding
uptake, moving on

Displays of understanding
answer to question

Exemplifications of understanding
paraphrase

Reactions and language

Acknowledgment
“it was a lovely day”
“yes”
I understand what you just said

Reactions and language

Uncertainty marker
“OK, the next one is the rabbit”
“Uuuh”
I don’t yet understand what you just said

Reactions and language

Collaborative completion
“So I’d wanna, when I make a tape – ”
“be able to speed it up?”
is this how you meant to continue?
Reactions and language

Truncation
“where’s the other –”
“on the back shelf”
I already know what you’re going to ask

Seeking reactions

Trial constituent
“A man H* called L- Allegra H* H-H%”
confirm that you know who I mean by Allegra
“yeah, Allegra”

Seeking reactions

Installment
“So Mr D Chatham L+H* L-H%” (+length)
confirm that you understand this phrase
“yes”

Seeking reactions

Fade out
“You know, she’s just gonna –”
I am sure you understand (well enough) without my completing this.

Clark’s two “tracks”

Track 1.
The main event, some joint activity in the world.
Track 2.
A collateral event - communication: a joint activity to understand and be understood.

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