
Issue Framing in Conversations for Change: Discursive Interaction Strategies for “Doing Differences”

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Abstract

In conversations for change between multiple actors about complex issues, differences in issue framing are bound to emerge. When the participants frame the meaning of an issue in diverging terms, they face the challenge of dealing with this frame difference in the further conversation. The authors draw on literature on framing, dualities, and interaction to explore how participants in conversations deal with these frame differences through language-in-interaction. With discourse and conversation analysis as a methodological approach, the authors analyzed interaction sequences in the context of multi-actor projects of natural resources management. Five interaction strategies that involve different ways of “doing differences” are identified—frame incorporation, frame disconnection, frame polarization, frame accommodation, and frame reconnection. The discursive characteristics of each of these interaction strategies can be understood by considering the multiple interactional challenges faced by participants when they engage in conversations for change.

Keywords

framing, change, conversation, discourse, interaction

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Any particular event, situation, or issue can be understood and represented in very different ways, by approaching it from different perspectives. This phenomenon has been studied as framing in a variety of fields and disciplines, including communication, conflict and negotiation, decision making, leadership, and change management (Benford & Snow, 2000; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Davidson, 2006; Dewulf et al., 2009; Entman, 1993; Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Schön & Rein, 1994; Tversky & Kahneman, 1981; Van Vuuren & Elving, 2008). The concept has proved useful to capture differences in meaning between people, groups, or organizations. Framing differences abound in how people make sense of decision problems, change processes, or their conflictive interactions with other people.

In this study, we take the research on frame diversity and change a step further by asking what happens when differences in issue framing emerge in conversations for change (Ford & Ford, 1995). We examine the interaction strategies people use to deal with these frame differences and analyze how participants discursively deal with the framing differences they face in actual conversations. Given the scarcity of studies on this topic, the theory section of this article brings together the necessary conceptual building blocks that will guide our empirical analysis of conversation for change. After situating our questions in the interactional approach to framing, we discuss literature on (a) dealing with dualities and (b) the discursive construction of meaning in interaction. These will provide conceptual building blocks for our empirical inquiry into interaction strategies for dealing with differences in issue framing. In the methods section, we clarify how we used discourse and conversation analysis of interaction transcripts to study multi-actor meetings in the context of international natural resources projects, where important frame diversity can be expected. In the results section, we present the resulting typology of five interaction strategies for dealing with differences in issue framing and tease out the discursive mechanisms at play in each of the strategies for “doing differences”—with this term we refer back to the expression “doing being ordinary” used by the conversation analyst Sacks (1984, p. 215) to indicate the interactional and discursive work involved in acting as an ordinary person. In this study, we will similarly scrutinize the interactional work involved in dealing with differences in issue framing, at the micro-level of language use in conversations for change. Finally, we present our conclusions and discuss their implications.

Theoretical Framework

Interactional Framing Theory

In the interactional approach, framing is defined as the dynamic enactment and alignment of meaning in ongoing interactions (and frames as transient communication structures that people build around issues during each turn at talk). The interactional approach to framing (Dewulf et al., 2009) contrasts with the more common cognitive approach, where frames are defined as representations stored in memory (and framing as the process of applying cognitive frames to situations).

The interactional approach to issue framing starts from the observation that people seek to comprehend complex situations and make sense of ambiguous issues in and through conversations (Ford & Ford, 1995). The interactive rather than individual character of issue framing is stressed, arguing that the enactment of a certain frame depends on the reactions of others to establish its meaning (Drake & Donohue, 1996; Weick, 1995). Starting from the general observation that people talk differently about certain issues depending on whom they are talking to, the interactional approach stresses the communicative aspects of framing, concluding that people use frames that serve their current interactional goals in a conversation (Benford & Snow, 2000; Dewulf, Craps, & Dercon, 2004). The interactional approach also stresses the discursive rather than mental characteristics of issue framing, which are based on the possibilities of linguistic choices to generate alternative descriptive versions of events with very different implications (Edwards, 1997; te Molder & Potter, 2005).

Interactional issue framing works through arranging and rearranging the elements of an issue such that its meaning is altered, a process that involves selecting certain issue elements as part of the frame while leaving out others and putting particular issue elements into focus while leaving only a marginal role for other elements (Dewulf, Mancero, Cárdenas, & Sucozhañay, 2011). Selecting and arranging issue elements into meaningful frames does not happen in an abstract universe but at the level of discourse or language-in-use (Wood & Kroger, 2000), through the way issues are linguistically formulated.

In sum, interactional framing conceives of people as conversationalists or lay rhetoricians (rather than information processors or lay scientists), constructing the meaning of situations through discourse or language-in-interaction (rather than representing the world in cognitions). Frames are understood here as perspective-based coconstructions of meaning (rather than individual-biased representations), and therefore the criterion for frame change lies in the interaction (rather than in the cognitions).

Taking this interactional approach to issue framing seriously leads us to the question of how differences in issue framing are addressed interactionally and discursively. As to the interactional process of dealing with differences in issue framing, relevant conceptualizations and studies are scarce. Therefore, we draw on literature from two related domains to inspire our inquiry into interaction strategies for dealing with differences in issue framing: (a) organizational and management literature on dealing with dualities and (b) literature on the discursive construction of meaning through language-in-interaction. Finally, we discuss the concept of double interact, whose three-part structure provides a useful structural template to conceptualize interaction strategies for dealing with differences in issue framing.

Dealing With Dualities

If we assume that frame differences among actors can be understood as dualities between related but incompatible frames, the organizational and management literature on dealing with dualities between opposing but related poles (such as integration/fragmentation, continuity/change, or individual/organizational) can provide useful contributions (Janssens & Steyaert, 1999; Lewis, 2000).

Getting rid of one of both poles is a first strategy for dealing with tension between them. This has been variously conceptualized as *elimination* or *pruning* (Bouwen & Steyaert, 1990), *excluding* diversity by keeping diverse elements out, *selection* as favoring one pole of a dichotomy over the other (Bartunek, 2004), or in a slightly different manner, *assimilating* the different elements into clones of the dominant element (Thomas, 1995).

Another possibility is that both sides use a dominating strategy, leading to an escalating tension between the poles. This process of *polarization* (Bouwen & Steyaert, 1990) or *escalating* differences has been observed in task groups in the influence phase (Srivastva, Obert, & Neilsen, 1977).

Splitting the difference through some form of compromise is another strategy to deal with differences, variously referred to as *mutual adaptation* of the different parts to each other (Thomas, 1995), splitting the difference (Bartunek, 2004), or *bargaining* as jointly seeking means to split the differences, set trade-offs, or take turns (Kindler, 1988). Both poles are thus somewhat acknowledged but never fully credited.

A next possible way of dealing with the relation between the elements of a difference is integrating both poles into something that transcends the difference. This has been called *transcendence* or *reframing* (Bartunek, 2004; Lewis, 2000). According to Bartunek (2004), integration works by transforming dualities into a new perspective or a reformulated whole. This dialectical approach assumes a thesis and an antithesis, which can be transcended in a synthesis, removing the original tension among the duality.

A final possible strategy to deal with the relation between the poles while leaving the elements themselves relatively intact is *connection* (Bartunek, 2004) or *interpenetration* (Janssens & Steyaert, 1999). This approach recognizes the simultaneous operation of opposites, so that they can become joined elements in a larger more dynamic system, playing out against each other like two teams in good sports game. The *connection* approach (Bartunek, 2004) seeks ways to embrace, to draw energy from, and to give equal voice to bipolar positions. This strategy can be linked to a *trialectical* approach (Janssens & Steyaert, 1999) or *triadisation* (Hovelynck, Dewulf, François, & Taillieu, 2010; Van Dongen, De Laat, & Maas, 1996), in which a third element plays a crucial role. This new element, in the form of a third party or a new idea, can help to redefine the situation and to create the possibility for the two opposed poles to interact in a more constructive way.

Although these ways of dealing with dualities are important building blocks for our analysis, these concepts are not specifically targeted at frame dualities, and they do not address how dealing with dualities would work in actual interactions.

Discursive Construction of Meaning Through Language-in-Interaction

When we turn to literature that has used interaction and conversations as its primary data, such as conversation analytic studies and discursive psychology, a lot can be

learned about (a) how people construct the meaning of issues in interaction through the use of discursive devices and (b) the interactional challenges involved in managing favorable and unfavorable discursive implications of what's being said (Edwards, 1997; Heritage, 1997; Pomerantz, 1984; Wood & Kroger, 2000).

At the level of language use in conversations, a number of discursive devices are involved in constructing the meaning of issues. People sometimes formulate a summary of what has been said. Studies of *formulations* (Firth, 1995; Heritage & Watson, 1979) have shown that participants in conversations use gists, upshots, or resumés of what the other is saying and thereby select and underline certain elements while omitting or transforming others. These formulations are constructive and interaction-oriented by proposing what is essential, or currently relevant, and as a basis on which to proceed. Conversational studies of *partial* agreement/disagreement have also identified ways of reworking the meaning of another's statement. The well-known *yes-but* structure, for example, is used as a conversational strategy to manage conflict, by allowing for agreement and at the same time for continuing disagreement (Graumann, 1990; Knoblauch, 1991). These discursive devices do not take the meaning of the preceding assertion as entirely given or fixed, but *reformulate* it to manage differences by endorsing certain aspects and challenging others.

Participants in a conversation do not only negotiate the meaning of events at the occasion of formulations. Discursive psychological research (Edwards & Potter, 2005) has studied ubiquitous *descriptions* as discursive devices, with a lot of attention for how participants handle competing descriptions with divergent implications in actual conversations. In the following extract from Edwards (1997, p. 96), a staff member (A) and a caller of a helpline (B) negotiate the proper words for describing a troublesome situation:

- B: ... Well, she (wife of B) stepped between me and the child, I got up to walk out the door. When she stepped between me and the child, I went to move her out of the way. And then about that time her sister had called the police. I don't know how she ... what she ...
- A: Didn't you smack her one?
- B: No.
- A: You're not telling me the story, Mr. B.
- B: Well, you see when you say smack you mean hit.
- A: Yeah, you shoved her. Is that it?
- B: Yeah, I shoved her.

Four alternative descriptions are used in this extract for describing and redescribing an act: move, smack, hit, and shove. B introduces the act by describing it as "moving her out of the way" (3) and as merely instrumental in his rather innocuous-looking intention "to walk out the door" (2). A proposes an alternative description, namely "smack her one" (6), which B does not accept with the justification that "smacking"

would mean “hitting.” A then proposes the alternative “shoving” that B does accept as a description of his act. Edwards (1997, p. 97) concludes that “by attending to what each other means by the words they say, the nature of the events at issue is negotiated, and along with that, the nature of B’s culpability in those events.” Indeed, what is pursued in the negotiation of these alternative descriptions is not so much semantic accurateness but the management of possible implications of these descriptions, for example, in terms of guilt.

From a discursive psychological point of view (Edwards & Potter, 2005), one can be held socially accountable for one’s conduct and interactions. Therefore, all kind of favorable and unfavorable discursive implications need to be managed. Participants’ event reports generally attend to causality, agency, and accountability for the events, thereby assigning blame or credit for what is reported. At the same time, participants manage accountability for the current action done in the reporting. To prevent the risk of being discredited as biased, for example, participants can downplay their own stake in the issue. In a study of complaining, Edwards (2005) argues that participants manage the discursive implications of the act of complaining by promoting or undermining possible evaluative inferences about the propriety, fairness, justice, or accuracy of what the speaker is doing. Complaining is interactionally complicated because the complainer may not be heard as simply reporting factual and “complainable” matters, but as “moaning, whining, ranting, biased, prone to complaining, paranoid, invested, over-reacting, over-sensitive, or whatever other vernacular category might apply” (Edwards, 2005, p. 5). In this sense, the complainer faces a double challenge: producing a serious complaint and avoiding the implication that the complainer—rather than the one who’s complained about—is responsible for the complaint. In general, the discursive complexity of actual conversation can be much better understood when considering the multiple interactional challenges that participants have to navigate, for example, disagreeing without threatening the face of another participant.

Interaction Strategies for Dealing With Differences in Issue Framing

Until now, we have discussed the following building blocks that will serve as conceptual tools for our empirical analysis of interaction strategies for dealing with differences in issue framing: interactional arrangement and rearrangement of issue elements, ways of dealing with dualities, discursive devices such as formulations and descriptions, and the interactional challenges of managing favorable and unfavorable discursive implications. A final building block of our conceptual framework is the concept of *double interact* (Weick, 1979), which allows us to conceptualize the process of dealing with differences in terms of interaction strategies. The three-part structure of act—interact—double interact provides a structural template for operationalizing interaction strategies for dealing with differences in issue framing. The act refers to any interactional move of participant A. The interact refers to any kind of reaction of another participant B to the initial act. The double interact refers to the reaction of the original participant A to the reaction of B. A minimal sequence of

act—interact (or two speaking turns) is necessary for a difference in issue framing to emerge. When we want to look at how this difference is dealt with, this minimal sequence of three interactional steps needs to be completed with a double interact, because it is only from this third move on that it can become clear what the created difference will be taken to mean for the ongoing interaction. In this sense, the interact is the step at which a difference becomes visible, while the double interact offers the possibility of acting on the difference (Van Dongen et al., 1996, p. 173). To identify interaction strategies for dealing with differences in issue framing, we will analyze how the double interacts act on the frame duality, how meaning is reconstructed through rearranging the configuration of issue elements that form the interactional issue frames, which discursive devices are used, and which interactional challenges participants face in managing favorable and unfavorable implications of their talk.

Relying on these conceptualizations, the research question that guides our analysis can now be formulated more precisely: How do participants discursively deal with their mutual differences in how they frame the issues? This general question can be broken down into the following specific questions: (a) Which interaction strategies can be identified in the ways participants deal with those differences in actual conversations? (2) Which discursive devices do participants employ and which interactional challenges do participants face in managing favorable and unfavorable implications of their talk when enacting these interaction strategies?

Method and Data: Discourse Analysis of Difference Sequences

Discourse and Conversation Analysis

Discourse analysis has its roots in linguistics, social and cognitive psychology, sociolinguistics, and poststructuralism and has a lot to offer for the study of framing in interaction. In this study, the primary emphasis is on interaction strategies as enacted in specific texts (Phillips & Hardy, 2002), although the study of the surrounding context is necessary for the interpretation of the issues and issue elements in the conversations. Our approach to discourse analysis is closest to conversational analysis, as outlined by Heritage (1997), who characterizes conversation analysis as “a field that focuses heavily on issues of meaning and context in interaction” (p. 162). The goal is to analyze what is being done in the discourse and how this is accomplished (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wood & Kroger, 2000).

To guide our analysis, we relied on guidelines and interpretation strategies for doing discourse analysis (Wood & Kroger, 2000) and discursive psychological analysis (Edwards & Potter, 1992). Of key importance for this analysis were analyze sequentially, rhetorically, and semiotically, concentrate on what the speaker is doing through the talk, and be alert for multiple functions of discourse. Discourse analysis and discursive psychology have been criticized for overemphasizing the inductive character of qualitative research. In its purest form, the assumption is that the researcher

is an empty page and works only from the participants' understanding of the context or process. Critics have argued that researchers inevitably draw on their own understandings, both personal and theoretical, and that these are even crucial for the researcher to be able to meaningfully interact with the participants and engage in an analysis. Others have proposed the use of sensitizing concepts (Charmaz, 2000; van den Hoonaard, 1997). These are understandings that researchers build from existing theory—the more and more varied sensitizing concepts one has available, the more different aspects of the data one can pick up, analyze, and develop into new concepts or theories. This approach, which is not purely inductive or deductive, is best understood as abduction (Eco, 1984). This can be understood as an iterative interplay between (existing and newly developed) theoretical concepts and the data in a search for those concepts that render the data most intelligible.

Data Collection

The studied conversations were part of an irrigation management case in southern Ecuador, with an engineering center at the University of Cuenca and an indigenous irrigation organization as key actors. During the studied interaction moment between these two actors, which was entirely audio-recorded, the discussion was on the possibility of improving the hydraulic management of the irrigation system using a hydraulic model developed by the university engineering center. This case was chosen because of the varied cultural backgrounds (Ecuadorian—indigenous and mestizo—and Western European) and professional backgrounds (water engineering, software engineering, and irrigation management) of the participants, and the interorganizational nature of the interaction. These context factors were likely to lead to the emergence of relevant frame differences.

The role of the first author was partly that of an observer and partly that of an action researcher. He cooperated temporarily in an interdisciplinary action research project on the participative development of technological innovations at the University of Cuenca, of which the aforementioned initiative formed part. The researcher actively supported the local project staff in conceptual, methodological and practical issues. Concretely, the researcher participated in planning and preparing some of the meetings with the convening engineers while he participated as a mere observer of the analyzed interaction moment. The second author was supervisor of the whole project, interacting with the Ecuadorian project staff mainly through yearly visits.

Data Analysis

The interaction moments were analyzed for signs of differences in issue framing, including disagreements, opposing questions, and signs of surprise or confusion. When a participant is challenging an issue element of another participant at that point, the emergence of that difference was traced back and the beginning of a *difference sequence* marked off. The difference sequence ends where the difference is either

resolved or left behind, that is, after minimally one interaction strategy but possibly after a series of consecutive interaction strategies. These difference sequences were then transcribed according to conversation analytic conventions (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 193) and analyzed in detail. The analyses were done in Atlas-ti on a turn-by-turn basis, using the original Spanish-language transcripts, which were translated afterward for presentation purposes.

Every intervention of a new actor with a substantial contribution to the content was marked off as an interactional step within a difference sequence. A difference sequence starts with the two interactional steps (act–interact) that are necessary to establish a difference in framing. The third and following interactional steps are marked as double interacts, which were analyzed in terms of the (re)arrangement of issue elements, discursive devices and implications, and interpreted in terms of possible interaction strategies. We thus engaged in an iterative and abductive (Eco, 1984) process of data analysis, deriving possible types of interaction strategies, reanalyzing the data, adjusting and redefining the types, and so forth, until the set of interaction strategies and their characteristics satisfactorily captured the variety in the data.

Ensuring and Warranting Quality

Wood and Kroger (2000) developed quality criteria that are specifically applicable to ensuring and warranting quality in discourse analysis: *trustworthiness* and *soundness*. Trustworthiness refers to the systematic and thorough way in which claims are arrived at and was achieved in this study through orderliness and documentation of the entire analytic process in Atlas-ti and audits of the data analysis by research colleagues. Soundness refers to the solidity and credibility of the claims and was achieved in this study on the basis of demonstration of the steps involved in the analysis of extracts, coherence of the set of analytical claims in a typology, and their plausibility in the light of previous research, and the fruitfulness of the analysis in making the discursive complexity of conversations across frame differences intelligible.

Results: Discursive Interaction Strategies for “Doing Differences”

The results of our analysis of how participants in actual conversations enact different ways of dealing with their mutual differences in how they frame the issues can be presented in the form of a typology of interaction strategies. After presenting the necessary context about the setting and the frame difference sequences, we discuss the five types of interaction strategies we identified in those sequences, illustrating each of them with the analysis of a transcript to clarify their discursive form and interactional logic. Finally, we discuss our findings about the discursive mechanisms involved in navigating the multiple interactional challenges in each of the interaction strategies for “doing differences.”

Frame Difference Sequences

Some context is needed to understand the “hydraulic model presentation” and its analysis. During this interaction moment from the irrigation management case, the junior engineer who is giving the presentation (E) speaks as a representative of a center at the University of Cuenca (Ecuador) specialized in water and soil engineering. This center has worked together for a number of years already with an indigenous organization that manages a mid-sized irrigation system in the Ecuadorian Andes mountains, north to the city of Cuenca. The president (P) and the irrigation technician (T) of the indigenous organization were invited to a first meeting concerning a new topic, which is formulated on the first slide of the presentation as “Improvement of the hydraulic management of the irrigation system.” The meeting takes place at the university. Apart from the junior engineer giving the presentation and the two representatives of the irrigation organization, two senior engineers and two researchers, including the first author, attended the meeting.

Technically, the irrigation system consists of an upstream water reservoir, with an outlet to regulate the flow rate that goes into an uncoated canal of about 30 km in length that descends while going around a mountain. The reservoir stores water for irrigation during the dry season. At different points in the main canal, smaller canals (branches) lead the water to mostly small-scale farming communities where it is used on the fields by approximately 1,500 families who are registered as users of the system. Water that goes down the canal and is not used for irrigation flows into the downstream river. The proposal of the engineers focuses on the water that flows through the canal at night and is not used for irrigation. They propose to close the main reservoir outlet at night and store that water in the reservoir for later use. However, the water flow through a canal of that size is a technically very complex matter. Depending on the direction and the size of flow-rate variations at the outlet, it can take between a few hours and half a day until these variations take their effect, such as halfway the canal. With the hydraulic model of the irrigation system that the engineers have implemented, they can calculate at which time the outlet should be manipulated if a certain flow rate is wanted at a given time at a given point in the canal.

The meeting took 1 hour 25 minutes in which most of the time the junior engineer was presenting, interrupting his presentation from time to time to check comprehension and ask questions to the indigenous representatives. The latter also interrupted the presentation a number of times to ask questions or to start a discussion. Generally speaking, the engineers are presenting their well-prepared framing of the issue, and the indigenous irrigation managers are now more or less required to assemble their framing of the issue on the spot. Their questions and reactions set in motion a conversation for understanding regarding the proposal for changing the hydraulic management of the irrigation system.

In the transcript of this meeting, five sequences of differences in framing were identified, ranging in length from 3 to 14 interactional steps. We summarize them below.

Sequence 1. A first difference emerges when P challenges the way E describes the irrigation system as having a constant flow rate. This is a crucial element of E’s story,

allowing him to contrast the current situation with the proposed improvement of reducing the flow rate at night. P argues, however, that the flow rate is not stable, because there are droughts and further connects this to issue elements such as water wastage, organization, and distribution of the water. In the next interactional step, E reacts to this by connecting back the element of variable flow rate in different seasons to the proposed changes in the nightly flow rate, by suggesting that nightly reduction of the flow rate can save water for the dry season. Both meanings of (un)stability, namely day–night variation and seasonal variation are retained in the remaining discussion. This example of the interaction strategy “frame reconnection” will be analyzed in more detail below.

Sequence 2. A second difference emerges while E is presenting figures about flow rates at different points in the canal, as part of explaining the calibration of the model through a field experiment. P challenges the numbers by bringing up the element of infiltration, arguing that quite a bit of water is lost due to infiltrations in the canal bed and that this may affect the figures in the model. P connects this further to the practical question of how to detect and remedy these infiltrations and thus directs the discussion away from model calibration to practical problems. In the next interactional step, E answers that they did take into account infiltration as a parameter in calibrating the mathematical model of the water flow in the canal—this example of the interaction strategy “frame incorporation” is analyzed below on the basis of Extracts 1 to 3. This answer is not challenged by the irrigation managers at this point, but infiltration pops up again in the next sequence.

Sequence 3. A third difference sequence starts when T asks for a practical report about the points of infiltration in the canal while E is still explaining the calibration of the model. E first argues again that infiltration was taken into account in the development of the model but leaves out the practical aspect of detecting infiltrations—this example of the interaction strategy “frame disconnection” is analyzed below on the basis of Extract 4. However, P and T insist further on the practical side of the infiltration problem—this example of the interaction strategy “frame polarization” is analyzed below on the basis of Extract 5. This sequence develops over six interactional steps into an oppositional framing of theory (a framing in which management can be improved through the hydraulic model) against practice (a framing in which infiltration and other problems figure are at the foreground), in which mutual “frame disconnection” is the most frequent strategy. The sequence is ended by the intervention of a second engineer stressing the importance of theoretical background and the advantages of the model, which is silently accepted by the irrigation managers—infiltration does not appear anymore in the further discussion.

Sequence 4. A fourth difference emerges when P questions the proven merits of the proposed model by inquiring if they would be the pilot case. In the next interactional step, E differentiates between the specific model for their system, which is a new application, and the general model software that was used, which has proven its worth for water systems all over the world—an example of the interaction strategy “frame incorporation” discussed below.

Sequence 5. A fifth difference emerges during E’s explanation of the reduction of the nightly flow rate, which is framed by E as the solution for nightly waste of water.

T challenges this by framing nightly irrigation as an alternative solution and refers to a number of social and technical conditions that influence the water use at night. E translates all of this back to the model by inviting the people from the irrigation organization to take into account all these issues as parameters that influence the nightly flow rate. They should put together a water demand scheme that can then be fed into the mathematical model for calculating the recommendations for operating the valves at the water reservoir. Over a total of 14 interactional steps, in which “frame polarization” is the most frequent interaction strategy, the additional problems brought up by P are treated both by P and by E as examples of more general issues, namely the feasibility and usefulness of the mathematical model (E) versus the existence of other more important and urgent problems (P). In this long sequence, both repeatedly reaffirm their own point, and at some moments slightly adapt their own framing. This sequence ends when the official meeting ends, without resolving this difference. Another meeting at the irrigation organization was organized to follow-up on this discussion, but this did not lead to a joint project that could have improved the hydraulic management of the irrigation system and could have led to an interesting research and development project for the university engineering center.

Interaction Strategies for Dealing With Differences in Issue Framing

The in-depth analysis of the difference sequences led to the identification of the following interaction strategies for dealing with differences in issue framing:

- *Frame incorporation.* Incorporating a downgraded reformulation of a challenging element into your own issue framing (8 instances)
- *Frame accommodation.* Accommodating your own issue framing to the challenging issue element (6 instances)
- *Frame disconnection.* Disconnecting the challenging element from the ongoing conversation as irrelevant, unimportant or the like (11 instances)
- *Frame polarization.* Polarizing the difference by reaffirming your own issue framing or an upgraded version of your own issue framing (13 instances)
- *Frame reconnection.* Reconnecting frames by taking both elements seriously and taking away the incompatibility between them (1 instance)

The interaction strategies are graphically depicted in Figure 1. The starting situation for each sequence is the emergence of a difference when B (the interact) challenges an element in A’s preceding issue framing (the act). An issue frame is here understood as a specific arrangement of issue elements constructed in one or more speaking turns. The tension between the focal issue elements is embedded in a set of other issue elements in the surrounding discourse (the half circle of elements in the figures). The interaction strategies characterize the double interacts following the emergence of a difference and focus on the actions performed on the issue elements of the frames that are in tension. To clarify the different interaction strategies and to illustrate our analysis, we discuss each interaction strategy by analyzing one instance from the data.

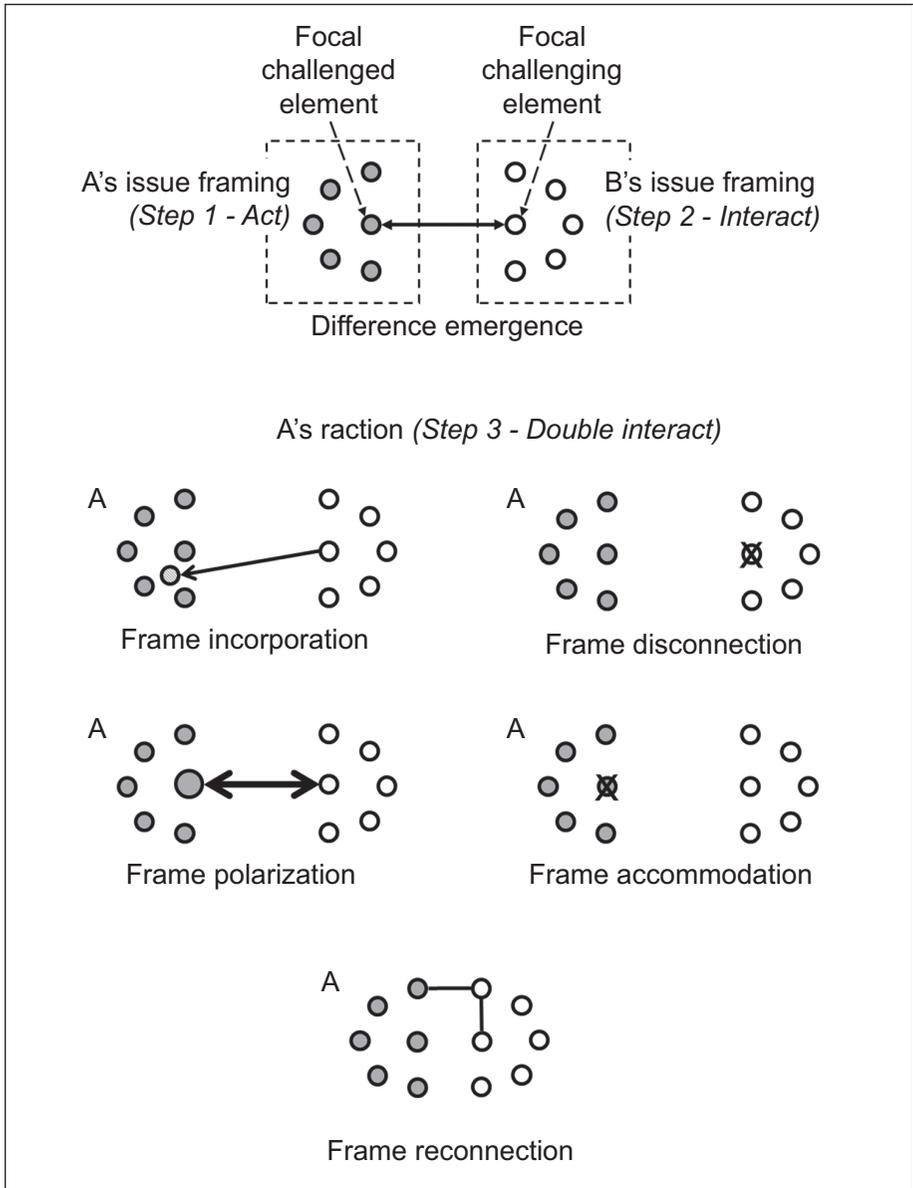


Figure 1. Interaction strategies for dealing with differences in issue framing

Frame Incorporation

As an interaction strategy for dealing with differences in issue framing, incorporating refers to fitting a downgraded reformulation of a challenging element into your own

issue framing. To analyze this interaction strategy, we go to Sequence 2, consisting of three steps, which are presented below in Extract 1 to Extract 3.

Extract 1. Hydraulic model presentation, S2: 3-37 (simplified transcript).

E: I told you that in the year 2000, we conducted an experiment. What did that consist of? Well, we were a group of about 6 or 7 people, and well, using the valves for manipulating the canal, we carried out the following activity. From the main valve we produced some variations of the flow rate . . . Here we can see in this graph, this is 6 am 8 am 10 am until 6 pm. This experiment had this span of time, approximately from 7 am until 4 pm. What we see here is the flow rate, I will explain, at 7 am the main valve or let's say the outlet the flow rate was around 400 liters per second, we read at the valve that the flow rate is close to 400, 375 exactly we read at the valve. What we did is close the valve in a very small time span, in less than 5 minutes we closed the valve and we lowered the flow rate to 150 liters per second, and further, after a period of half an hour or almost an hour, we came back and closed the valve more, almost until making the canal dry . . . almost to 0 liters per second, this also in a short time span.

P: This depends on what?

E: Well this here, let's say, was only with the goal of obtaining data for us, for calibrating our model, which is what I will explain later on.

In Extract 1, the university engineer (E) is giving the presentation about the possibilities of the hydraulic model to representatives of the irrigation organization (the president, P and the irrigation technician, T) administering that irrigation system. At this point, E is explaining how they did the field experiments to calibrate the mathematical model. In his explanation, the most important issue elements are the physical parts of the irrigation system (canal, valves, outlet), flow rates and variations, and time, with "obtaining data" as the focal issue element and "calibration of the model" as the overall issue. While giving this explanation, he thus frames the issue by selecting certain elements of the issue and assembling them into a meaningful whole.

In Extract 2—the interact—the irrigation organization president (P) and technician (T) react to the explanation of the engineer and frame the issue differently.

Extract 2. Hydraulic model presentation, S2: 39-56 (simplified transcript).

P: There we have seen a little bit already, that's where the practice comes in. Perhaps, that flow rate . . . what goes down after closing the valves, doesn't perhaps also influence there the infiltrations in the canal? Because recently we have detected a loss of more than 60 liters, no? It amounts almost to 70 liters of loss, I mean, no more than km 3, isn't it?

T: More or less

P: In that part there is a serious problem. This could affect or even vary, I would say, the results that have been reached, because of these situations in the physical part. I don't know how could they be detected practically?

P puts a new issue element (“infiltration”) into focus, which might influence the results of the experiment. Infiltration, which refers to water infiltrating into the porous parts of the uncoated irrigation canal, becomes here the focal element of a difference in issue framing, which is further clarified with concrete numbers about loss of water (confirmed by T). Toward the end of the intervention, P upgrades his formulations (“serious problem” that could “vary the results”) and adds the practical question as to how these situations could be “practically detected.” With these interventions, a difference emerges, which rearranges some of the issue elements mentioned by the engineer (e.g., canal, flow rate, and valves, putting a new issue element into focus [“infiltration”]) and embedding this in the category of “practical problems.”

In the third step of the double interact in this interaction sequence, the engineer now reacts to the difference that the irrigation organization representatives created by putting forward infiltration as being in tension with the model figures and asking how these infiltrations could be practically detected.

Extract 3. Hydraulic model presentation, S2: 60-68 (simplified transcript).

E: Because precisely with this experiment we also have detected that this infiltration problem exists. In this case . . . how is it . . . that we obtained these data?
 But I want you to focus that this here simply served us for obtaining data for calibrating our model, so that the model represents the system in the best way.

In his reaction, the engineer deals with the difference by doing something with the infiltration issue element. At first sight, it looks as if he takes this aspect seriously by stating “that they have detected also that this infiltration problem exists.” But infiltration does not refer here any longer to “practically detecting” where the infiltrations occur. The issue element of “infiltration as a practical problem” is reformulated into “infiltration as a parameter in the model” and in this way a downgraded formulation of infiltration gets *incorporated* in his own issue framing. Note how P frames the issue as “practically detecting these situations in the physical part” while E frames the issue as “we can detect that this problem of infiltration exists.” In the former framing of the issue, detecting is aimed at solving practical problems while in the latter, detecting is aimed at improving the model. The use of the same word “detecting” however, contributes to making the reformulated element still recognizable for the others, although in a different linguistic context that changes its meaning.

Given the tension that was created between the challenging issue element and one’s own framing, frame incorporation is not an easy task. Discursively, this is accomplished by reformulating the issue element in a way it can become a more or less unproblematic part of your own frame. In P’s statement, infiltration was a “serious practical problem” whereas in E’s reaction, it’s a problem whose existence has been identified and effectively accounted for in the model. Reformulation however has its own risks in the context of incorporation. The molding of the challenging issue element in terms of one’s own frame should go far enough to remove the tension and allow the issue element to become part of your own frame. On the other hand, the issue

element should not be reformulated so strongly that it becomes unrecognizable for the other. A subtle way of navigating this double interactional challenge can be observed in the above example, where an important shift of meaning in the use of the word “detecting” occurs.

The interaction strategy “incorporation” suggests that the incorporated issue elements become part of one’s own issue framing. Although this was not the focus of our analysis, since we singled out difference sequences, the infiltration issue element reappeared as part of E’s issue framing further down. At the start of Sequence 3, during his further explanation about how well the calibrated model fits the field measurements, the engineer includes statements, such as “If there were no infiltrations at this point the flow rate would also be at 425 but due to the problem of the infiltrations around 50 to 70 liters is lost” (S3: 14-18), indicating that infiltration became part of engineers ongoing issue framing, but only to show that the model works well despite the infiltrations.

Frame Disconnection

This interaction strategy consists of disconnecting the challenging element from the ongoing conversation as irrelevant, unimportant, or off topic. To analyze this interaction strategy, we move to Sequence 3, where a new difference emerges, again focused on the issue element of “infiltration.” The difference emerges when E invites questions after further explaining the calibration process and T brings up the issue of “infiltration as a practical problem” again, connecting it at the end of his statement to a request for specific information. Extract 4 gives the last part of T’s statement, and E’s reaction to it.

Extract 4. Hydraulic model presentation, S3: 65-90 (simplified transcript).

T: Because we have seen there that, at critical points, in some cases we really lose a lot. Of 300 liters, at only 2.5 km, a quantity of 40 liters is lost. There are a lot of infiltrations, there are some at 6 km, I mean, in the end the water must have, there’s 300 liters entering in the end, more or less 240, 230 arrives, 60 to 70 liters gets lost. I don’t know if, at that point, you who have done this work, you should more or less inform us in which segment most infiltrations occur.

E: Indeed. To begin with, we have to tell you that this experiment, we conducted it in September, that’s already a bit more than a year ago and perhaps the conditions can have changed over time.

P: as a matter of fact, isn’t it?

E: In order to, to tell you exactly, in which segment which infiltrations occur, perhaps, a new experiment would have to be conducted.

At the end of his intervention, after mentioning detailed figures about infiltration, T urges the engineer to “inform us in which segments most infiltrations occur,” thereby framing the possible topic for a joint project quite differently. The immediate

positive response of the engineer (“indeed”) is followed by the introduction of a new issue element: the infiltration may have changed since the original experiment. This is confirmed by the president of the irrigation organization while the engineer goes on to state that a new experiment would be necessary for specifying where exactly the infiltrations occur.

When the practical infiltration information is requested directly by T, the engineer now separates the model from that information by introducing possible changes over time. This has the effect of framing the request as having nothing to do with the ongoing presentation and as impossible to honor at this moment. The practical aspect of infiltration is thus *disconnected* from the ongoing conversation and put on a sidetrack as a vague possibility. The phrase “To begin with” seems to account for this move, by framing what he will say as something that could just as well have been said at the beginning of the presentation, which counters the unfavorable implication that he throws in this argument at this specific spot with the aim of dismissing the infiltration issue.

Disconnecting an issue element that the other brought up risks to be interpreted as an offense, specifically as not taking the other seriously. To deal with this double interactional challenge of disconnecting and taking seriously, disconnecting an issue element cannot be done too explicitly—in 9 of the 11 instances of disconnecting in our data, it is accomplished in an intervention in combination with other interaction strategies, which allows the disconnecting to stay out of focus. When it becomes too obvious or explicit it should be accounted for or its negative implications countered, as we showed here.

Frame Polarization

This interaction strategy involves making the difference bigger by reaffirming a possibly upgraded version of your own issue framing.

In Extract 5, we turn to the last part of the intervention of P—following E’s disconnecting of the “infiltration as a practical problem” issue element analyzed in Extract 4—for analyzing polarizing as an interaction strategy for dealing with differences in issue framing. Since we moved forward an interactional step in the sequence, T’s intervention in Extract 4 now becomes the act, and E’s interventions in Extract 4 now becomes the interact. Extract 5 presents the double interact, which was analyzed as the interaction strategy of frame polarization.

Extract 5. Hydraulic model presentation, S3: 112-121 (simplified transcript).

P: . . . I think that, concretely, these studies are basic and the theoretical part is adequate, but for us the concern is rather, to give a good service, to put forward proposals. Concretely we were looking at, coating of the canal no? So I think that this information is very important, but this should rather put forward a proposal, a proposal that can be openly operated there, in the field itself . . .

At this point, P’s tone becomes firmer and makes a contrast between these “basic” and “theoretical” studies, which are good but not as important as providing a good irrigation service and coming up with proposals such as coating the canal that is currently

only dug out in the soil. The practical element that E disconnected from the conversation earlier is here put on the table again by the irrigation organization representatives and the difference turns here into “theoretical model” versus “practical proposal.” The contrast is made twice by the parallel use of “but” in P’s statement. In this way, the difference gets upgraded by framing it as a more general contrast between theory and practice. This interaction strategy of making the frame difference bigger than it was, we termed *frame polarization*. In our sequences, frame polarization took the form of reaffirming your own point in an upgraded way. In a meaningful conversation, in which each interactional step adds relevant new information, an unmodified reaffirming of your point would be senseless. In this sense, it is the upgrading that allows one to repeat one’s point, thus addressing the double challenge of reaffirming one’s point and not repeating oneself.

Frame Accommodation

For analyzing frame accommodation, we move forward to Sequence 5. In the extracts given below, we contrast parts of two of E’s interventions. One of the issues that is at stake in Sequence 5 concerns “who should do what” in establishing a night and day water demand scheme for the irrigation system, which could then be fed in to the mathematical model for determining the optimal schedule for opening and closing the valves at the reservoir outlet.

Extract 6. Hydraulic model presentation, S5: 83-84 (simplified transcript).

E: . . . However these schemes should come from you . . .

Extract 7. Hydraulic model presentation, S5: 181-186 (simplified transcript).

E: . . . All the, all the things that you have told us, well, it would be good that you go and discuss back home, maybe with our help, with your technical staff.

We can reach, we could reach one or various schemes . . .

In the talk between Extract 6 and 7, the representatives of the irrigation organization suggested the engineers would have to come up with water demand schemes. E’s formulation of this point from Extract 6 to 7 differs in an important respect, namely the addition of “maybe with our help” and the switch from specifying “you” to “we” as actors. A double interactional challenge is managed here through maintaining coherence, by retaining the elements of “you go and discuss” and “with your technical staff,” and at the same time doing a concession (“maybe with our help” and “we can/could”).

In our data, accommodating strategies generally formed part of larger interventions with other interaction strategies, functioning as concessions on particular points while polarizing or disconnecting other points.

Frame Reconnection

A final interaction strategy for dealing with differences in issue framing consists of indirectly reconnecting a challenging issue element from the other’s framing to your

own framing. Because we identified only one instance of this interaction strategy and because that particular extract is quite long, we do not reproduce the transcript but describe and analyze the sequence of interaction here. As described above, in Sequence 1, a difference emerges when P challenges the way E describes the irrigation system as having a constant flow rate. P argues that the flow rate is not stable, because there are droughts and he connects this to other issues such as water wastage, organization, and distribution problems. P introduces here a new issue element, namely “the flow rate is not stable” because there are “periods of drought” in which the flow rate diminishes substantially. This refers back to the “constant flow rate” that the engineer mentioned several times before.

In his answer, E picks up the element of changes in the flow rate connected to the periods of drought and rainfall, stating “we know that” because “we have visited the canal in different seasons.” We want to focus on what happens with the focal elements of the difference, between “constant” and “unstable” flow rate. E connects the solution he is proposing (namely nightly reduction of the flow rate in the irrigation canal) specifically to the periods of drought—the scheme will save water during the night, which can then be used during the day, so they will not feel that the flow rate has lowered substantially in dry periods. This connection is made here for the first time in this conversation.

The original difference is here dealt with by not directly addressing it but by reconnecting the challenging element (“unstable flow rate”) to the original story, indirectly through the intermediary element of droughts. The engineer treats the challenging element (“unstable flow rate” because of “drought”) as an issue element in its own right, for which the proposed solution will bring relief. E takes P’s way of framing of “flow rate (un)stability” (in terms of stability over seasons) rather than his own way of framing it (in terms of stability over night and day) as a starting point and connects it back to his own issue framing in terms of water savings through better hydraulic management. The interesting part of this way of dealing with this difference in issue framing is that, although the issue element raised by P challenges an important aspect of E’s framing, the challenging element is neither incorporated nor disconnected but indirectly reconnected to the unaccommodated framing of the engineer. In this way, both sides of the difference are preserved, and a workable relation between them is constructed through this intervention of the engineer and the silent acceptance by the irrigation organization representatives.

Interactional Challenges in “Doing Differences”

Table 1 presents a discursive psychological interpretation of the identified interaction strategies, based on a comparative analysis of the 39 interaction strategies in our data. The complexity and discursive design of “doing differences” in issue framing can be made more intelligible by understanding how participants navigate the interactional challenges they face through managing favorable and unfavorable discursive implications (Edwards, 1997). In Table 1, we analyze each interaction strategy in terms of the multiple and often-conflicting challenges the speaker faces, the unfavorable implications

Table 1. Discursive Implications of the Interaction Strategies

	Multiple interactional challenges	Risk for unfavorable implication	Discursive device or strategy	Suggested favorable implication
Frame incorporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molding other issue element into own frame • Keeping it recognizable for the other 	Not understanding, misrepresenting the other's point of view	Reformulating other issue elements (downgraded)	Valuing other's issue elements, taking into account
Frame disconnection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing away with a challenging element • Taking the other seriously 	Not taking into account, not taking seriously	Masking (combining with other interaction strategies) or accounting for it	Only partially or temporarily glossing over other's issue elements
Frame polarization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaffirming own point • Not repeating yourself 	Insisting, keep hammering away at your point	Reformulating own and/or other issue elements (upgraded)	Making yourself heard, explaining own point more clearly
Frame accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make your framing acceptable for the other • Maintaining the coherence in own framing 	Being incoherent, untrustworthy	Reformulating own issue elements (downgraded)	Making a concession
Frame reconnection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking own and other's issue framing simultaneously serious • Find a workable relation between them 	Not addressing the difference	Reconnect indirectly through related issue elements	Finding a mutually satisfying way of addressing the difference

the speaker counters, the discursive devices the speaker uses, and the favorable implications that the speaker suggests. It is important to note that these interpretations are based on a varying number of instances of the different interaction strategies in our data.

When *incorporating* a challenging issue element through reformulating it in a downgraded way, participants shape their intervention, such that it fits their own issue framing while at the same keeping it recognizable (as being the same element) for the other.

In the context of frame incorporation, reformulation has its own risks. The reformulation of the challenging issue element in terms of your own frame should go far enough to remove the tension and allow the issue element to become part of your own frame. On the other hand, the issue element should not be reformulated so strongly that it becomes unrecognizable for the other, risking the implication that the speaker has not understood or is even misrepresenting what the other has said. A subtle way of dealing with this double interactional challenge can be observed in Extract 3, where using the same word (detecting) in a different discursive context allows E to mold the challenging issue element in his own framing while keeping it recognizable for the others.

Disconnecting in some form dismisses an element of the other's frame but at the same time maintains the stance of taking seriously what the other has said. Disconnecting an issue element could be interpreted as an offense, specifically as not taking the other seriously. Therefore, frame disconnection is generally not done too explicitly but rather is "masked" by combining it with other interaction strategies. When it does figure as the only interaction strategy in an interactional step in our data, it is accounted for to counter its negative implications (see, e.g., Extract 4).

Polarizing involves the double interactional challenge of reaffirming one's own issue framing while avoiding to repeat oneself. This involves mostly an upgraded reformulation of one's own issue framing, possibly combined with an upgraded reformulation of the other's framing, with the effect of making the frame difference bigger. This challenge involves avoiding the risk of being seen as someone who does not stop insisting or keeps hammering away at his point and suggesting the more favorable implication of making oneself heard or explaining one's point more clearly because it has been taken up by the others in the discussion.

Accommodating involves the double interactional challenge of making your own issue framing acceptable for the other, while maintaining the coherence in your own framing. Taking back parts of your earlier statements risk to threaten your trustworthiness as a speaker while making a concession suggests more favorable implications. Discursively, this challenge is navigated through reformulating (rather than explicitly taking back) an earlier issue element, but in a downgraded way.

Finally, *reconnecting* faces the double challenge of taking one's own and the challenging issue framing simultaneously as serious and finding a workable relation between them. In the example in our data, this challenge is navigated using an oblique approach of indirectly reconnecting the challenging issue element to one's own framing through related issue elements. Although the issue element raised by P challenges an important aspect of E's framing, the challenging element is neither incorporated nor disconnected but indirectly reconnected to the unaccommodated framing of the engineer. This involves preventing the impression that one is avoiding or not addressing the difference but rather suggesting that one is taking both sides of the frame difference seriously.

These different interaction strategies are not definite or final ways of dealing with an emerging or developing difference: The other speaker has various options for the next move but there are constraints. In the studied differences in framing, strategies

such as frame disconnection and frame polarization were meaningfully linked in a sequential way. When someone disconnects an issue element that you have put on the table, the two relevant next actions are (a) go along with the disconnection and no longer use the element as part of the issue frame or (b) put it back on the table. Our data include examples of both these reactions, the second reaction being the most frequent one. Given that raising your point again in exactly the same way risks being interpreted as not having paid attention to what the other has said, expanding, arguing, and upgrading your point are conversationally meaningful options, which result however in polarizing the difference. Although the number of sequences we studied is too limited to make general statements about this, a development from unaccepted frame incorporation over unaccepted frame disconnection to mutual frame polarization seems to have occurred in S5. Finally, the way a frame difference sequence is resolved does seem to carry forward into the further conversation—as when the practical problem of infiltration disappears from the conversation after an unchallenged disconnection at the end of S3.

Discussion and Conclusion

Our discursive approach to change has led us to the level of conversations for understanding, where issues are forged out of diverse frames, and to frame interaction strategies through which frame differences are acted on. This operationalization of the interactional approach to framing (Dewulf et al., 2009) has resulted in a typology of interaction strategies for dealing with differences in issue framing.

The actors involved in these conversations for understanding can be seen to engage in an interactive process of issue framing, whereby they make sense of the issues for themselves and at the same time for the others. In fact, judging from the complex issue formulations, it seems that the participants primarily take care of framing the issues in reaction and anticipation to the others' frames. They try to proceed such that the framing they use for making sense of the issues can be meaningfully used by the others as well. In conversations where no frame differences emerge, this is a more or less self-evident process in which issue elements from both sides are treated as unproblematic parts of a common conversational line. When differences in issue framing do emerge, as they do frequently in multi-actor projects where the issues are still ambiguous, the involved participants face the problem that their respective framing turns out to be problematic for the others. Each of these moments form small but critical steps in a longer change process, because the connection or disconnection of frames, and the meaning of the issues demanding change, is at stake. The five interaction strategies we identified show different ways of "doing differences" in these circumstances, with particular implications for the connection or disconnection of frames.

Frame incorporation resembles mutual adaptation (Thomas, 1995) or splitting the difference (Bartunek, 2004) as a way of dealing with dualities, but the framing of an issue cannot just be split in half. Rather, reworking the meaning of elements of another's frame so as to fit them into one's own frame is the crucial mechanism here. *Frame*

disconnection resembles elimination or pruning (Bouwen & Steyaert, 1990), but a statement in a conversation cannot just be removed. Rather, disconnecting works through sidetracking the challenging issue element as irrelevant or unimportant for the present conversation. *Frame accommodation*, resembling selection (Bartunek, 2004) as another way of doing away with one of the poles of the frame duality (through conceding), is interactionally not the mirror image of frame disconnection. Rather, to preserve coherence, it works through a downgraded reformulation of one's own issue framing. Resembling escalation or polarization (Bouwen & Steyaert, 1990) as a way of dealing with dualities, *frame polarization* need not involve overt conflict, but works interactionally through reaffirming and upgrading one's own issue framing, thereby making the frame difference bigger. *Frame reconnection*, finally, resembles more closely connection (Bartunek, 2004) and interpenetration (Bouwen & Steyaert, 1990) by leaving both frames relatively intact and reconnecting them indirectly, rather than trying to integrate them through some form of transcendence or reframing (Bartunek, 2004; Lewis, 2000).

Given the various strands of literature from which we drew our theoretical building blocks, the contributions of this study are threefold. First, through our qualitative empirical analysis, we operationalize interactional framing theory and show its fruitfulness for analyzing interaction strategies in conversations for understanding. Second, insights on dealing with dualities inspired the analysis, but we identified specific ways of dealing with frame dualities, which rely on the process of selecting and (re)arranging issue elements. Furthermore, the interaction strategies show how dealing with frame differences works in actual conversations. Third, we show the particular role of a range of discursive devices (such as upgraded reformulation, downgraded reformulation, and masking) in navigating the multiple interactional challenges and discursive implications faced by participants in conversations for change.

Overall, through this analysis, we further develop the seminal idea of understanding change as unfolding through series of conversations (Ford & Ford, 1995). Our fine-grained analysis reveals how participants continuously frame and reframe issues in anticipation of and reaction to other people's framing, resembling more closely a continuous frame change process than an episodic frame change process, to use Weick and Quinn's (1999) terms. The interaction strategies capture the range of micro-decisions enacted by participants at critical points in conversations for understanding. These micro-decisions can get assembled into divergent, conflictive, or collaborative change trajectories. The recurring sequence of frame disconnection and frame polarization we observed in our data represents a divergent trajectory that did not lead to a common project.

These results have important implications for understanding and facilitating change processes. First, the process of framing issues and dealing with the emerging differences steers the change process in important but mostly implicit ways, by defining the meaning of the issues that demand change in the first place. Second, doing differences in constructive ways, rather than by doing away with the differences as quickly as possible, puts high requirements on change agents and participants, because these differences can emerge at almost any time and micro-decisions on how to respond to

them have to be made instantly. Third, the interaction strategies provide a set of conceptual tools for observing, reflecting on and intervening in conversations for understanding—a type of conversation often organized by process facilitators.

To further substantiate the typology and its interpretation in terms of discursive mechanisms, other cases and interaction moments would need to be analyzed, particularly for the reconnecting strategy of which we only found one instance in our data. Further analyses of the types and characteristics of interaction strategies in other cultural and professional contexts would also be very useful to assess the broader applicability of this typology and to complement or amend it where necessary. As a limitation of this study and another opportunity for further research, our focus on what happens *within* conversations could be complemented by analyzing what happens as understanding, framing, and change develop from one conversation to the next.

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Bios

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