

Appendix A: Probe Questions

To help elaborate the conversational properties of an interaction we used the following questions, following the strategy originally adopted by the Cognitive Dimensions questionnaire (A. F. Blackwell and Green 2000). We list them here not as a canonical set, but to support discussion about what other questions would be helpful to ask.

Context

Who is having the conversation?

Where are they having it?

Why are they having it?

What language are they speaking?

Turns and temporality

How is speaking sequenced?

Do speakers take turns, or say things that come into their head?

How do the speakers know when it's their turn to talk?

How do speakers signal to others that now would be a good time for them to join in?

Can speakers interrupt each other? If speakers end up talking on top of each other, what happens?

How is the pace controlled?

How do speakers and listeners negotiate the speed of the conversation? What signals are there for speed up / slow down?

Who waits for whom in the conversations?

Meaning-making

Which parties of the conversation understand what aspects of the conversation?

How do they come to have that understanding?

Which words do they share a common understanding of?

Tolerance, breakdown & repair

How precise does the description of the elements need to be for the conversation to continue?

How much ambiguity can be absorbed and the conversation continue?

How do breakdowns and divergences in the understanding of the participants become apparent?

When these breakdowns do occur, what happens next?

What happens when conversations can't be repaired?

Explicability

Who in the conversation can ask for more information? How do they do it?

Who in the conversation can provide more information? What kind of information can they provide?

Side-channels & deixis

What other channels of information transfer exist outside the words being said?

How much are people aware of their communication in these channels? How much can they control them (e.g. intentional actions such as nodding, vs physiological ones such as pupil dilation)

Is this information used primarily for substance or for meta-properties of the conversation?

Is there any way outside the conversation of directing the focus of attention within the conversation?