

CREATING KNOWLEDGE WITH AND FROM THE DIFFERENCES: THE REQUIRED DIALOGICALITY AND DIALOGICAL COMPETENCES

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the current conceptual article is to contribute to theorizing tacit knowledge creation (tacit knowing or knowing), by investigating its primary, foundational, and underlying condition: dialogicality. Drawing from dialogism – an epistemological and ontological framework – and the epistemology of practice, key concepts and approaches were intersected to explain dialogicality in knowing and the competences for crafting and refining it. As the emphasis on knowledge creation in organizational settings has often been on the need of interacting with other individuals to create knowledge – the more the better – the current study centres on a qualitative aspect of such knowing. There has been a de-skilling in creating knowledge with different experts and from their different experiences, and dialogicality is critical to help harnessing the generative and transformative power of such differences in knowing. Moreover, theorizing ‘dialogic’ or ‘dialogical’ knowing has been mostly based on cognitive and structural approaches and transmission models of knowledge communication, and such phenomenon has been limitedly understood in concrete and empirical sense, as knowing by means of face-to-face interactions through talk, verbal interactions with turn-takings, and ‘ideal dialogues’. It is argued the need to go beyond the idea of knowing-through-dialogue to knowing-through-dialogicality. It is claimed that it is not any dialogue that enables knowing with different experts and from their different experiences; such knowing-dialogue needs to be dialogically understood and conceived and for such, dialogicality is a central condition. Based on dialogism, the dialogicality in knowing is explained and four dialogical competences that help crafting and refining such dialogicality are suggested. The study extends and deepens the understanding and role of dialogicality in creating knowledge with and from the differences by analysing its epistemological, meta-theoretical, and ontological assumptions and by proposing its formative competences.

Keywords: Knowledge creation; Knowing; Tacit knowing; Sense-making; Dialogical; Dialogism; Dialogicality; Tacit knowledge communication.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The current conceptual article investigates the dialogicality in knowledge creation in the organizational context. Dialogicality, the ability of making sense together with others and in situation-transcending practices (traditions or sociocultural practices) (Linell, 2015, forthcoming), is a critical concern in knowledge creation theories and practices. This is because it is anchored in one of the primary and foundational conditions of human being and human relating, and therefore, of knowing, notably that *our sense-making is interdependent with others' sense-makings*; that is, the self-other interdependencies (Linell, 2009, 2015, forthcoming; Marková et al., 2007). Such axiomatic assumption requires even deeper attention when knowledge creationⁱ (knowing or tacit knowing) involves relating amongst individuals who are considerable different in their practical knowledge. Thus, the point of departure of the current reflection is not the individual, but the individual making sense with the different othersⁱⁱ and their inherent *self-other interdependencings*. “A human being, a person, is interdependent with others' experiences, actions, thoughts and utterances” (Linell, 2009, p. 11), “our being in the world is thoroughly interdependent with the existence of others” (Linell, 2009, p. 7).

The main purpose of the current article is to contribute to theorizing dialogical knowledge creation by providing a deep, interdisciplinary, practice-based, and dialogism-oriented understanding of *the dialogicality in knowledge creation* and of some of the *competences*ⁱⁱⁱ that dynamically craft such dialogicality. This means that the current study draws from *dialogism, which is an epistemological and ontological framework*, rather than from normative ‘dialogue theories’ or ‘normative dialogism’ (for details see Linell, 2009, 2015, forthcoming). Thus, knowing is understood dialogically, as anchored on a dialogism^{iv} epistemology and ontology (Linell, 2009, 2014, 2015, forthcoming) or on the “extended dialogism” (Linell, 2015, p. 3, forthcoming, p. 9). “Dialogism is a meta-theoretical approach to human sense-making that is based on the assumption that humans possess dialogicality” (Linell, 2014, p. 32), it is “an epistemological framework that takes dialogicality systematically into consideration” (Linell, 2009, p. 7). Dialogism is not a method, and it is “not just about talk-in-interaction, or other types of social interaction, or overt ‘linguaging’ (language use)” (Linell, 2009, p. 12). Therefore, the central point of reflection that is addressed here is *how participants can craft dialogicality in knowledge creation with different experts and from their differences*, opening up more for a rich sense-making in which the generative and transformative power of the differences and consequent tensions are dynamically harnessed. For the above contributions, the study draws on the epistemology of practice^v, on dialogism epistemology and meta-theory, and by intersecting and analysing pertinent literature on the topic.

There has been a *de-skilling in collaborating with the differences* (Sennett, 2012). Dialogicality is critical to help harnessing the potential of differences for knowledge creation and the current study proposes dialogical competences that help crafting and refining the dialogicality in knowing. In dialogical knowledge creation differences are treated as a resource, rather than a problem or a barrier. Knowledge creation originates in differences, in the use of such diversity at a level that is transformative, i.e. in treating such diversity as essential and positive forces in sense-making. By ‘differences’ it is meant any kind of differences-*in-practice*, those that are enacted in individuals’ knowing-in-practice or practical experiences. Dialogicality is critical for using the differences in knowing as “dynamic, necessary, and positive forces in meaning making” (Phillips, 2011, p. 53). As dialogicality is a primary condition for knowledge creation, especially when it involves considerable different participants and different experiences, ways to craft and refine such dialogicality in knowing become a central concern.

As the emphasis on knowledge creation studies has often been on the need of interacting with different experts to create knowledge – the more the better – the current research centres on a foundational and qualitative human-relating aspect in such knowing-interactions, that is, the dialogicality in knowing. “Any concern with ‘*improving*’ knowledge-creating capacity becomes a concern with the qualities and the dynamics of human relating in the living present ... Attention is focused on the dynamical qualities of communicative interaction” (Stacey, 2001, pp. 227-228) (Emphasis added).

It is argued the need to go beyond the idea of knowing-through-dialogue to knowing-through-dialogicality. It is claimed that knowledge creation with different experts and from their different experiences is not a mere, ordinary talk, an ideal dialogue, or a mechanic-question-answer. Even being carried out through dialogues, such dialogues can be monologically understood and organized, that is, marked by monoperspectivity and imposition of response or of one possible way of understanding or responding (Linell, 2009; Souto & Hammarén, 2015), strongly inhibiting the other-orientation and jeopardizing knowledge creation at any significant and transformative level. In fact, dialogues are quite often monologically organized (Linell, 2009). Furthermore, knowledge creation has been markedly answer-oriented and based on telling-interactions, that is, ‘saying’ what one knows as in “monological forms of reasoning” (Shotter, 1993, p. 62). Knowing involves interdependencies of sense-making, which by its very nature, demands a refined participation in knowledge creation, especially when differences can play a strong role in the creation of meaning. Such refined participation in knowing is enabled by dialogicality. Therefore, it is argued for a more acute attention to the dialogicality in knowing practices, one that actually takes it into account and enables the

understanding and conceiving of knowledge creation as dialogically organized and permeated by dialogicality, and not only by designating knowing as ‘dialogic’ or ‘dialogical’ because it carried out through dialogues or face-to-face interactions with others. To be carried out through dialogue or co-located face-to-face interactions is not sufficient. How such knowing-dialogue is understood, conceived, and carried out is central to create knowledge, especially if the aim is to harness the generative power of differences.

The contribution of the current article consists in extending and deepening the concept of dialogical knowledge creation in four main directions. First, it moves the understanding of the adjective ‘dialogical’ beyond its normative use – face-to-face interactions through dialogue and as ideal dialogue – and emphasizes the *epistemological and ontological framework underpinning it*, that is, the dialogism and dialogicality in knowing. Second, here the emphasis is on the *human relating that professionals need to engage in to create knowledge together* (‘self-other interdependence’), that is, their dialogicality in knowing, rather than simply related to how intelligent or competent they are as individuals. The dialogical knowledge creation competences are anchored in the *relating* amongst different human beings in time and space and in sociocultural practices, rather than in their characteristics and competences as individuals. “If knowledge arises in communicative interaction, then *what matters is the process of relating that individual professionals engage in*, not simply how clever or competent are as individuals” (Stacey, 2001, p. 224) (Emphasis added). The human relating competences that help crafting such dialogicality has been undertheorized in organization and knowledge creation studies. Third, the current study suggests some of the essential human relating *competences that help crafting the dialogicality in knowledge creation*. Fourth, the study *brings the differences in knowing to the fore and put them into dialogue*, allowing differences to exist and be part of the creation of knowledge, rather than take differences for granted or as problems, glossing over the complexities and the benefits involved in harnessing their generative potential. Given the above, the current study deepen and advance other approaches to knowledge creation which are named as ‘dialogic’ or ‘dialogical’, such as Tsoukas (2008, 2009).

The current article was divided in three main sections. Next section outlines how knowledge creation can be put at risk. Section 3 explains the dialogicality in knowing, and the following section suggests some of the dialogical knowledge creation competences that help crafting the dialogicality in knowing. Finally the main contributions are summarized.

2. HOW KNOWING WITH AND FROM THE DIFFERENCES CAN BE PUT IN RISK

Essentially, knowing with and from the differences can be put in risk when it is monologically understood and organized, which considerably impedes putting the differences *into* dialogue, being sensitive to others' different interpretations, and using such differences to enrich knowledge creation. Despite knowing-practices occur through dialogues (with others, with artefacts, with oneself, and with imagined others), they can be monologically conceived, understood and organized (Linell, 2009). In addition, knowledge creation has been markedly answer-oriented evidencing the deep attachment to the right answers – any answers – rather than the right questions. It has also been guided by mechanized asking, and by 'telling-interactions', that is, interactions that are focused on 'saying' what one knows as in "monological forms of reasoning" (Shotter, 1993, p. 62) that denies the existence, responsiveness, potential for action and interpreting, needs, background, and sense-makings of another, that is "deaf to the other's response" (Shotter, 1993, p. 62). Thus, the riskiest, but often present, characteristic of knowing-practices in organizational context is their monological rather than dialogical understanding and organization.

Monologically organized dialogues neglect the other-orientation, the construction of knowledge, and the different voices to be heard and be present in the constructions of meanings. Mono perspectivity and voicedness, and imposition of response (coerciveness) (Linell, 2009) are two of the dialogicality conditions that can display "more or less of monological or dialogical conception and sense-making" (Linell, 2009, pp. 167-168). "Several speakers may voice the same perspective, in extreme cases even imitating or ventriloquating each other. Such discourses are monologizing in some relevant senses" (Linell, 2009, p. 166). *When monologically organized, dialogues are not conducive to knowledge creation to any significant degree.* Even when knowledge is created through dialogue – the normative use of the term – individuals can be deaf to others, talking what they know without constructing with and building up on others' reactions, responses and participations in knowing, that is, the others may not be present in one's speech or response and thus, one only tells what s/he knows instead of responding and reconstructing meaning on the basis of others' participations in knowledge creation. Knowers and their participations in knowing, the most important elements of knowing (Polanyi, 1958, 1966, 1969) are then neglected.

According to Linell (2009, forthcoming), dialogicality can be analysed in five dimensions or conditions: (a) responsivity, (b) adressivity, (c) genre-belongingness, (d) *perspectivity* and voicedness (presence or absence of different perspectives and voices), and (e) *imposition of response, of a certain preferred response or way of thinking (coerciveness)* (imposition). The first three, (a), (b), and (c) are universal. All knowledge creation and communication practices are dialogical in relation to three conditions: (a) responsivity, (b) adressivity and (c) genre-belongingness (see details of these conditions

in Linell, 2009). However, *not all communicative interactions are necessarily dialogical if other key conditions of dialogicality are not also considered*. Knowledge creation and communication can be more or less monological or dialogical in relation to the two other fundamental properties of dialogicality, which constitute the differentiation of the current study from other approaches equally named as ‘dialogical/dialogic knowledge creation’: *(d) perspectivity and voicedness*, and *(e) imposition of response* (coerciveness) (Linell, 2009, p. 166-169). Thus, the latter two of the dialogicality conditions – (d) and (e) – can conceive more or less of monological or dialogical meaning creation. “It is of course often true that practices that are characterized by monoperspectivity and attempted imposition of response (d-e), are monologically organized as well” (Linell, 2009, p. 169). As explained above, regarding the last two conditions (d) and (e) dialogues can be monologically organized – e.g. marked by single perspective and imposition of response – and then, significantly put in risk or even impede the creation of knowledge. Thus, individuals may interact in a dialogue that is monological conceived if texts or discourses express only one perspective or interpretation on the topic or when “several speakers or writers express the same idea or perspective” (Linell, 2009, p. 168). When discourses or texts hold on to “several perspectives or voices, that is, what Bakhtin and others have called polyvocality or multi-voicedness. Bakhtin talks about a text as ‘dialogized’ if it allows for multiperspectivity and multivoicedness, using here the term ‘dialogization’ as referring to points (d) and (e)” (Linell, 2009, p. 168). Equally, regarding the ‘imposition of response’, a discursive practice may be monological and authoritarian “in the sense that it tries to impose on the addressee only one possible way of understanding and, above all, only one option of responding” (Linell, 2009, p. 168). Thus, even being carried out through face-to-face dialogues, knowing-practices can be monologically organized, jeopardizing knowing and the mobilization of differences that potentiate it.

In addition, there has been an increase of complex knowing-interactions in knowledge-intensive organizations (Johnson et al., 2005), and an urgent need to improve the participation of knowers in these knowing-interactions by making them more prepared for what they do, i.e. interacting to create knowledge (Beardsley et al., 2006). The concern with the quality of professionals’ participations in knowing is then, central to its contributiveness. In addition, it can be seen that organizations have increasingly embraced collaboration with a global combination of expertise to improve and speed up knowledge creation. Such scenario aggravates the current concerns with the human relating in knowing with and from the differences.

Importantly, in creating knowledge with different experts, participants may loose the unique opportunity to benefit from their different experiences because participants may not be sufficiently skilful to emerge the singularities of experts’ experiences and harness such differences to enrich their

knowledge creation. This requires *a refined sensitivity to perceive hidden and subtle connections that can emerge from different experts' experiences and narratives*. Participants need to be able see through the apparent confusion of different thinking and colliding interpretations that characterize knowledge creation with diverse professionals. They need to be able to grasp relevant aspects and connections in the noisy encounters with different experiences, to see multiple possibilities arising from such different experiences, narratives, and incomplete or ambiguous meanings, and to sense hidden meanings in the invisible, inarticulate, or unconscious knowledge underlying experts' narratives. Therefore, knowing with and from the differences requires a refined participation in it, which enables using the potential of differences in favour of a rich and insightful knowing.

3. DIALOGICAL KNOWING

Knowing was defined and studied by the seminal work of Polanyi (1958, 1966, 1968, 1969; Polanyi & Prosch, 1975). His foundational theory clearly and emphatically focused on the practice of knowing or knowledge creation, rather than on the product of this practice, i.e. knowledge. Knowledge was understood as an aspect of knowing, as it is considered in the present study. Essentially, Polanyi (1958, 1966, 1968, 1969) defined *tacit knowing as creation of meaning*, as a combination of acts of meaning creation or integrations of particulars, terms, or clues. These clues are integrated to the meaning they point to, or to the whole they contribute for. Polanyi defined meaning as the “intelligible coherence” (Polanyi, 1975, p. 54), given by the pattern that particulars or subsidiaries jointly generate (Polanyi, 1958, p. 57). Individuals attend from the clues (parts or particulars) to the meaning or whole (coherences, coherent whole of an entity, pattern), involving mental and bodily integrations. It is these integrations between clues and the meaning they contribute for that is referred to as *acts of meaning creation or knowing*. The creation of meaning is a sociomaterial and discursive practice, that entirely depends on the knower, it involves the knowers' wholeness (not only mind), including body senses, emotions, sensible knowledge, intuition, it is situated and emergent, and involves communicative interactions with persons and artefacts, sustained by traditions, sociocultural practices or traditions (Polanyi, 1958, 1966, 1968, 1969; Polanyi & Prosch, 1975; Gherardi, 2000, 2001, 2006, 2009, 2011, 2013; Gherardi & Strati, 2012; Tsoukas, 1996, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2009, 2011; Linell, 2009, 2015; Souto, 2010, 2013c).

Knowledge creation has often been approached through cognitive and structural perspectives^v (see Souto, 2013c), which have been increasingly and widely criticized (Cook & Brown, 1999; Stacey,

2000, 2001; Empson, 2001; Nicolini et al., 2003; Patriotta, 2003; Gherardi, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012; Cunliffe, 2002, 2003; Chia & Holt, 2008; Linell, 2009; Molander, 2009; Khun & Porter, 2011; Tsoukas, 1996, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2009, 2011; Souto, 2010, 2013a, 2013c). Such perspectives reflect a functionalist and representational orientation to knowledge and is marked by a strong detachment from human action and interpretation, an undeniable distance from practice, glossing over core aspects of knowledge creation such as its relational, embodied, contextual and situational aspects, and its intersubjectivity^{vi}, which are underpinned by monologicistic assumptions and monological interactions, where the transmission or transfer model of knowledge communication (sense-receiver or the conduit metaphor), and an information processing model of cognition are used. In the current study a practice-based and dialogical approach to knowledge and knowing – epistemology of practice and dialogism – are adopted, naturally reflecting a dialogic model of knowledge communication in opposition of the above one. Thus, in general terms, knowledge is communicatively and socially created by knowers in multidirectional face-to-face interactions in time and space, as meaning creation with others and institutionalized practices (Polanyi, 1958, 1966, 1968, 1969; Polanyi & Prosch, 1975; Tsoukas, 1996, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2009; Gherardi, 2000, 2001, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012; Stacey, 2000, 2001; Dervin, 2003/1991; Dervin & Frenette, 2003/2001; Dervin & Foreman-Wernet, 2003; Dervin, 2008; Souto, 2010, 2012b, 2013b, 2014). All the above characteristics of knowing are part of the point of departure for understanding knowing with different experts as dialogical practices.

Drawing on Dervin's Sense-Making Methodology (SMM) (field of Communications). SMM^{vii}, *sense-making*^{viii} is *conceptualized as situated communicative practices* (Dervin & Frenette, 2003/2001, p. 239): knowing is one of these practices, i.e. one way of making sense. The making and unmaking of sense are the continuous interpretive actions made by sense-makers in time and space that involve the whole individual, his/her body, mind, feelings, intuition, personal history, memories, and also the institutionalized practices or traditions to which one is part of. Sense-making is considered as a communicative activity, it is “*most usefully conceptualized as situated communicative practices, internal (e.g. thinking and remembering) and external (e.g. asking and objecting)*” (Dervin & Frenette, 2003/2001, p. 239) (Emphasis in the original).

The use of a practice-based epistemology allows incorporating the understanding of the ongoing creative and interpretive actions in which knowledge is enlivened, needed, communicated, used, and enacted. Such actions are social, situated, ephemeral, personal, and emergent, and it involves the whole individual (mind, body and emotions) – knowing and knowledge are not limited to cognitive and mind aspects. Importantly, a practice perspective brings a “non rational-cognitive view of

knowledge” (Corradi et al., 2010), through which the focus turns to the knowing-in-practice, to the creation of knowledge in work practices, that is, working and knowing are not separated, it is in practice that individuals create knowledge and in which this knowledge is enacted, communicated, and used for such creation.

3.1 Dialogicality in Knowing

The dialogicality in knowing practices is grounded on the *dialogism epistemology* (Marková, 2003; Marková et al., 2007; Linell, 2009, 2014, 2015, forthcoming). Dialogicality entails axiomatic assumptions for conceiving dialogues dialogically rather than monologically, such as the *interdependencies of participants’ sense-makings*, and *communicative constructions of knowledge* from different and several perspectives or voices in which there is *no imposition of response, opening for a varied range of and opposing responses, and deviant ideas* (Linell, 2009). When a dialogue is dialogically understood and organized “a *dialogical utterance is non-imposing, it tries to open up for a wide range of responses*, leaving the addressee to choose more or less freely his understanding or responsive action, and perhaps to introduce his or her own alien, deviant ideas or opposing voices” (Linell, 2009, p. 168) (Emphasis added).

Dialogicality (more ontological) refers to the essential interdependencies of sense-making and the “sense-making ability or potential in persons who make sense with or in relation to others” (Linell, 2014, p. 32). “Human beings possess ‘dialogicality’, by which I mean the ability to make sense of themselves and the world together with others” (Linell, 2015, p. 2). Dialogicality is a central characteristic of human sense-making (Linell, 2009) and its meaning is beyond the normative use of the adjective ‘dialogic’ or ‘dialogical’. “‘Dialogicality’ designates the ability of making sense and meaning with others and in cultural traditions (accommodating to, falling back on or opposing to their norms), and ‘dialogism’ refers to meta-theory that makes the assumption of dialogicality as deeply rooted in the human mind” (Linell, forthcoming, p. 5). The dialogicality in knowledge creation is also defined by the knowing-activity being dialogically understood, organized and carried out. “Dialogicality is an attribute of human sense-making, that is, the dynamic processes, *actions* and practices in which meanings are *contextually* constituted in the *interactions* of human being with others and environments. So dialogicality is primarily inherent in these interactions and interrelations” (Linell, 2009, pp. 30-31) (Emphasis in the original). To dialogically understand, organize, and carry

out knowledge creation multiperspectives or voices and the non-imposition of responses and ways of thinking are mostly necessary (Linell, 2009) (explained further).

Dialogism or ‘extended dialogism’ is a more abstract, epistemological and metatheoretical framework related to human sense-making (Linell, 2009). “Terms like dialogism, dialogical theories and dialogue theories are used by many scholars of different persuasions, in many and sometimes mutually confusing ways” (Linell, 2015, p. 2). Dialogism refers to assuming that human beings possess ‘dialogicality’, it “takes dialogicality systematically into consideration” (Linell, 2009, p. 7). Dialogism is “a general (meta-) theoretical framework for how we – in different capacities and at different levels: as ordinary human beings and as researchers – acquire knowledge about the world and ascribe meaning to the world” (Linell, 2009, p. 7). For a thorough distinction between dialogism and normative dialogue theories see Linell (2009, 2015, forthcoming).

Importantly, dialogical knowing is considerably different from coordinating one’s action with other’s, one’s speech with other’s; it is rather a common construction of meaning or knowledge, in which the speech, talk or participation of an individual is present in the speech, talk or participation of another, a common rythming and movement (Taylor, 1997; Linell, 2009).

Given the above, it is important to highlight that the terms ‘dialogic’, ‘dialogical’, and ‘dialogue’ have often been limitedly understood in concrete and empirical sense as face-to-face interactions through talk, verbal interaction with turn-takings, and as ‘ideal dialogues’ that is some kind of high-quality interaction (Linell, 2009) (for a thorough distinction amongst concepts, their uses and implications see Linell, 2009, 2015, forthcoming). In the current article, the concept of ‘dialogue’ refers to “any kind of human sense-making, semiotic practice, action, interaction, thinking or communication, as long as these phenomena are dialogically (or dialogistically) understood” (Linell, 2009, pp. 5-6). In this sense, dialogues may not be dialogical or dialogistic; in fact, they are often monologicistic (Linell, 2009). Moreover, ‘dialogical’ knowing have been approached through a rationalist view of ‘ideal dialogue’ which glosses over phenomena like power, domination, aggression, struggles for social recognition, non-disclosure, conflicting ideas and interests, opposition, misunderstandings, fragmentation of knowledge and participations, silences, vagueness, ambiguities and negotiations of meanings, all of which are extensively present in practice (Linell, 2009; Phillips, 2011; Phillips et al., 2013). Here, an epistemological and ontological framework is adopted to reflexively approach and explain the dialogicality in knowing. The meaning of ‘dialogical’ and dialogicality are directly connected to dialogism, a meta-theory. Importantly, the perspective of dialogue and dialogical are not the rationalist view of ‘ideal dialogue’ but the one de-romanticized

perspective in which dialogue is permeated of inherent differences, ambiguities, misunderstandings, colliding interpretations, and tensions.

Equally worth noting the fact of knowledge being created through face-to-face dialogues does not mean that such knowing is dialogical; dialogues can be monologically or dialogically conceived and understood. The dialogicality in conceiving a knowledge creation through dialogues is grounded on the *dialogism epistemology* or the ‘extended dialogism’ (Linell, 2009, 2014, 2015, forthcoming). Dialogism or the ‘extended dialogism’ (Linell, 2015, forthcoming) “assumes that human beings possess ‘dialogicality’” (Linell, 2015, p. 2). “Only human beings have dialogicality” (Linell, 2014, p. 87).

Dialogical knowledge creation on the basis of different knowledges is part of the ‘dialogic turn’ across diverse fields of social sciences (Phillips, 2011). “Common to all the fields of social practice in the dialogic turn is a *retreat, at least rhetorically, from the idea of communication as one-way flow – that is, knowledge transmission, diffusion, dissemination or transfer – from experts to less knowledgeable target groups*. Instead, a conception of *communication as processes of dialogue* is embraced in which the different participants *co-produce knowledge collaboratively on the basis of different knowledge forms that they bring into play* when they meet and collaborate” (Phillips et al., 2013a, p. 2) (Emphasis added). This conception is rooted on the fact that knowledge creation and knowledge communication are intrinsically interconnected and interdependent meaning creation acts; “the production and communication of knowledge are *intertwined* processes since it is in communication processes that the (co-) production of knowledge takes place” (Phillips, 2011, p. 9; Phillips et al., 2013a, p. 2). Both are considered as meaning creation acts. Polanyi’s structure of tacit knowing (Polanyi, 1958, 1969; Polanyi & Prosch, 1975) involves two interdependent acts of meaning creation: knowing or knowledge creation acts and knowledge communication acts (for details see Polanyi, 1969; Souto, 2010, 2013b; Souto & Hammarén, 2015).

Dialogicality entails axiomatic assumptions for conceiving knowing-dialogues dialogically rather than monologically. Based on the dialogism epistemology or the ‘extended dialogism’ (Linell, 2009, 2015, forthcoming), some of dialogicality axiomatic assumptions – also named as dialogical principals – include the following (: (a) the self-other interdependencies or the interdependencies of participants’ sense-makings, (b) the tensionality, (c) the situation-transcending aspects, namely, the double-dialogicality, (d) situated sense-making is accomplished in embodied practices and sensory perception, (e) includes situated sense-making without obvious languaging, as in solitary practices or internal dialogues (e.g. in writing, reading alone), and (f) the communicative constructions of knowledge from different and several perspectives or voices in which there is no imposition of

response. Underlying knowledge creation or knowing, dialogicality is axiomatically related to the principle of *communicative construction of knowledge*, a “question of intersubjective co-construction with the help of others and artifacts” (Linell, 2009, p. 19).

For the current study, the focus is specifically given to two of the above defining dimensions of dialogicality because they are considered as key to harness the power of differences. These elements are (a) *the self-other interdependencies, the interdependencies of participants’ sense-makings, sensitiveness to others or other-orientation*, and (b) *the tensionality* (Figure 1). Both are interdependent and intertwined elements of dialogicality, and they are intrinsically and strongly related to the process of harnessing the generative and transformative power of differences in knowledge creation.

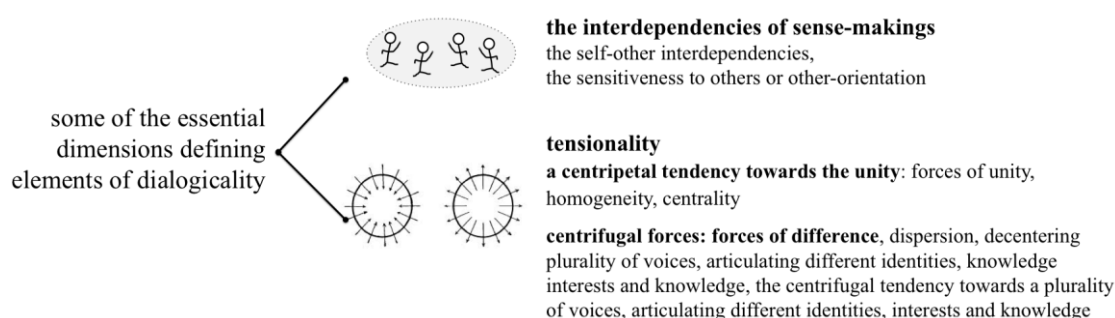


Figure 1 : The dimensions of dialogicality in knowledge creation that are under focus

The *self-other interdependencies or the sensitiveness to others* (Holquist, 1990; Linell 2009, 2015, forthcoming) stresses out that individuals’ actions are interdependent with “what others have done, are doing, and could be expected to do in the future” (Linell, 2009, p. 13). Dialogical knowing-activities “involve interdependencies that cannot be reduced to outer cause-effect relations” (Linell, 2009, p. 15). It is related to a participant in a knowing-activity “attending to the other’s responsivity and potential for action” (Linell, 2009, p. 165) and having other’s actions, speech, reactions and responses in his/her actions, speech, reactions and responses. In this sense, Bakhtin explained that *responsivity and anticipation* are part of dialogical interactions (Linell, 2009). According to Linell (2009, p. 355) “other-orientation is a key concept, perhaps the key notion, in dialogism. In talk-in-interaction, the individual responds to another and his or her prior actions or utterances, addresses the other and anticipates possible next actions from him or her”. In dialogical knowing an individual is aware of the other, rather than being an observer or onlooker, and each one is accepted as a unique individual (Johannesen, 1971). The *essential movement in dialogical knowing* is one “seeing the other”, is “turning toward, outgoing to, and reaching for the other” (Johannesen, 1971, p. 375)

(Emphasis added). Worth noting that the self-other interdependencies does not deny or marginalize the existence and importance of personal agency (Linell, 2009), “most versions of dialogism recognise that individual people are active sense-makers; people have some agency, even though this is constrained by, among several other circumstances, the interdependence with others in interactivities” (Linell, 2015, p. 5).

Tensionality is “the sense that the whole each essayed is centrally marked by both a complementary and a contradictory quality that renders it inherently fluid and dynamic”, that is Bakhtin’s well known centripetal and centrifugal forces (Stewart et al., 2004, p. 27). As explained by Bakhtin (1981, p. 272), dialogue is filled by centripetal forces – i.e. forces of unity, homogeneity, centrality – and by centrifugal forces – i.e. forces of difference, dispersion, decentering. Dialogical knowing is understood as a “relational meaning-making, functioning in terms of an interplay of multiple – and often contradictory and opposing – voices in which there is a tension between centrifugal and centripetal tendencies towards, respectively, difference and unity”. Participants remain in “the tension between standing one’s ground and being profoundly open to the other” (Pearce & Pearce, 2005, p. 55)” (as cited in Phillips, 2011, p. 51). The approach to dialogical knowledge creation considers the tensions at play in participants’ dialogue, and the focus of attention is on “the ways in which a tension is played out between a centripetal tendency towards the unity”, and “the centrifugal tendency towards a plurality of voices, articulating different identities, knowledge interests and knowledge forms” (Phillips, 2011, p. 155). Thus, *dialogical knowing is simultaneously unity and difference*, a tension between centrifugal and centripetal forces. As previously stressed, knowledge creation with and from the differences is marked by tensions between such forces towards unity and plurality (Phillips, 2011, 2012), by diversity, redundancy, and misunderstandings (Stacey, 2000, 2001; Fonseca 2002), ambiguity, abstractedness, and by multiple and contrasting interpretations (Verganti, 2009).

Given some of the defining elements of dialogicality explained above, dialogical knowledge creation requires dialogicality and thereby, the appropriate use of dialogical competences, those that mostly *enable crafting and refining individuals’ dialogicality, facilitating to them to harness the power of differences and tensions*. Using the concept of dialogical knowledge creation does not necessarily mean that all knowledge creation with and from the differences should be dialogical or that all participants must have dialogicality. To “‘dialogism’ and ‘dialogicality’ should not be assigned any metaphysical or idealistic features, as, for example, along the lines of a normative sense of ‘ideal dialogue’” (Linell, 2009, p. 11). It simply implies that the understanding of knowledge creation with different others naturally requires a dialogical approach if the aim is to communicatively construct

knowledge together with and from the differences, which is strongly different from coordinating or negotiating actions in the knowing-activity. Here, the aim of strengthening dialogicality in knowledge creation is to facilitate harnessing the natural differences that are naturally present in it, and mostly in knowledge creation with considerable different experts and from their different experiencesⁱⁱ. Dialogicality is a critical sense-making ability that can help bridging the above differences, tensions and colliding interpretations and putting them into dialogue rather than ignoring or considering them as obstacles. There has been a serious de-skilling in collaborating with differences (Sennett, 2012), and dialogicality and the competences for dialogical knowledge creation are proposed here aiming at contributing also to reduce such de-skilling.

4. THE DIALOGICAL KNOWLEDGE CREATION COMPETENCES

Due to words limitations, the current article will concentrate the discussion on some of the main *dialogical knowledge creation competences* – *all of them are intertwined and interdependent* – five of those that help crafting dialogicality in knowledge creation with and from the differences: *dialogical listening, heedful interrelating, mutuality, the sense-making sensitivity and innovation skills, and the not-knowing stance*. Other dialogical knowing competences can be found in Souto (2010, 2012b, 2013b, 2014).

(a) Dialogical Listening

Listening and the perception of being listened are core preconditions for dialogicality. However, they are the most difficult and complex competence to be developed in organizational settings. Interdependent and integrated with other dialogical competences for knowledge creation and communication (Souto, 2012a, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b, in press), e.g. dissensus sensibility (Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2010), listening is fundamental for participating in knowing based on the interdependencies of sense-makings and using the differences and tensions to favour and enrich the use of different experts' experiences.

Dialogical listening encompasses not only listening to the different and 'concrete' other, but also listening to one's internal dialogues, listening to situation-transcending aspects and practices. The latter is related to the traditions and sociocultural practices to which one belongs, that is, to listen to the non-manifest aspects of situated verbal interaction or of the discourse itself, such as institutionalized practices, norms and rules, and the sociocultural practices, sociohistorical aspects and position in the surrounding organization and society (Linell, 2009, 2015, forthcoming). Listening to internal

dialogues, which are also situation-transcending, is related to the consideration of silent auto-dialogues or internal, intraindividual dialogue (Linell, 2015, forthcoming) during the knowledge creation, including internal dialogue in solitary activities or solo thinking, those without any obvious languaging (Linell, forthcoming).

Listening is approached here with a relational view, which “emphasize[s] listening’s pivotal role in enacting relationships to others” (Jacobs & Coghlan, 2005, p. 120) and its “pivotal role in our orientation towards other” (p. 121). The focus is on listening’s role in enacting relationship, and in shaping dialogicality in knowledge creation with different experts. Findings of a fieldwork developed by Jacobs and Coghlan (2005, p. 133) showed that a lack of listening actually impeded opportunities for social learning and impacted on community members’ opportunities to become competent members of a community. A phenomenological perspective provides two pivotal, interrelated elements of listening, “by *acknowledging the other in her or his difference*, listening enables (i) the constitution of a relational basis, and (ii) the intersubjective generation of new meaning between speaker and listener... In this respect, phenomenological philosophy points to *two pivotal, interrelated aspects of listening, namely, its relational and generative potential*” (Jacobs & Coghlan, 2005, pp. 122-123) (Emphasis added). Both elements of a dialogical listening competence are crucial for crafting dialogicality in knowledge creation with and from the differences: its relational and generative potential form the foundation for a high quality process of relating and consequently, they smooth the complexities in harnessing the differences when creating knowledge.

Listening is *not a passive practice, but rather, a highly engaged, responsive and relational one*, that requires one’s full and genuine presence; listening is an element of relating to others and it “constitutes the relational basis and thereby prepares the ground for intersubjective meaning generation” (Jacobs & Coghlan, 2005, p. 122). Phillips (2011) emphasized that listening plays a core role in the creation of dialogue because it is the *preconditioning of becoming aware of the other’s position*, and therefore, a requirement for dialogicality. Such awareness is critical for crafting a responsive and engaged interaction that facilitates sensing the differences, be aware of them, and harness their generative power in knowledge creation. “Listening as a discursive practice contributes to constituting a relation between speaker and listener and thereby *facilitates processes of intersubjective generation of meaning*. In conclusion and in acknowledging listening’s relational and generative potential, we suggest listening as a condition for the possibility of social learning” (Jacobs & Coghlan, 2005, p. 123) (Emphasis added).

Dialogical knowledge creation phenomenon brings an opportunity and a demand for participants to be responsible and care for their speaking, listening and their engagement in dialoguing

with another, especially in dialoguing to construct knowledge with others who are considerably different from them, and to create knowledge from their different experiences. The power of dialogical listening lies “in people *speaking and listening as creators, rather than as reporters*. What one says brings things, ideas, and relations into existence, rather than reports on them as if they were somehow ‘out there’ on their own” (Ford, 1999, p. 483) (Emphasis added).

There is a tendency of listening only toward the content and not enough to the other who is speaking, and individuals want to understand before they have actually listened (Zimmerman, 1991). As emphasized by Zimmerman (1991, p. 36) “the quality of a conversation depends in large measure on what takes place in the person to whom words are directed”. Sometimes, the fact that one is “simply not speaking does not necessarily means that s/he is really listening” (Zimmerman, 1991, p. 36). Jacobs and Coghlan (2005, p. 116) highlighted that most approaches in knowledge creation in organizational context “*privilege speech over listening*” (Emphasis added). When listening, individuals “hear what the other person is actually saying and that they leave themselves open to being influenced by the other’s words. Genuine listening requires that we pay close attention to the other’s words and meaning rather than, as so often happens, thinking about and planning our own response while the other is still speaking” (Gordon, 2011, p. 217).

Insightfully defined by Ford (1999, p. 484) “listening is more than hearing, and *includes all the ways in which people become aware and conscious of, or present to the world*” (Emphasis added). Listening was defined by the International Listening Association as “the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages” (An ILA^{ix} Definition of Listening, 1995, as cited in Wolvin, 2010, p. 9) (Emphasis added). According to Gordon (2011), for Martin Buber, one of the key philosophers of dialogue and influential thinker in the Dialogic Communication Theory, listening “implies that people be *actively and deeply engaged*; it does not require all listeners heed the same message” (Gordon, 2011, p. 215). Gordon (2011) explained that for Buber, “*listening is much more about being present to the other than about displaying some proficiency or following a set of techniques*. According to this view, deep listening, in Buber’s account, is not really a skill that can be displayed or modelled but rather *a mode of existence toward others*” (p. 218). Buber implied that listening encloses two key conditions: (a) it requires that individuals be attentive to the other’s words, and (b) it involves a kind of attentiveness that is active, not passive, the one who listens experiences the speech of the other (Gordon, 2011, p. 215). According to Cissna and Anderson’s (Cissna & Anderson, 1998) for Buber, listening is a “turning toward”, an attitude of inclusion (Cissna & Anderson, 1998, p. 87). Additionally, Krishnamurti (1998, p. 3) explained that “one listens and therefore learns, only in a state of attention, a state of silence, in which

this whole background [our ideas, prejudices, background, inclinations, or impulses] is in abeyance, is quiet; then it seems to me, it is possible to communicate”.

In creating knowledge with different experts, appropriate listening has an essential role because it enables participants to immerse themselves in experts’ experiences and narratives, creating openness to be with them and to be genuinely present, permeable to, and engaged in such creative and communicative practice. *Listening and the perception of being listened* are central competences to craft dialogicality in knowledge creation with and from the differences. Conjointly they contribute for dialogicality in the ongoing and complex process of relating that individuals engage in knowledge creation. Similarly to other dialogical knowledge creation competences, it is not simply a question of how clever or competent participants are in listening as individuals, but rather, *how competent they are in listening and generating the perception of being listened when interacting and relating to the different other*. Listening and the perception of being listened are critical pre-conditions of dialogicality in knowledge creation and communication, as the power of differences and tensions need to be used as positive forces. One can be highly competent in listening, but it would be unworthy if the *other does not perceive as being listened*, especially if it is a different experience or perspective. “The overall nature and quality of listening can be affected by the person’s attitude/approach toward the other person or persons involved in any situation” (Floyd, 2010, p. 127). *No matter how competent an individual is in listening, little may be accomplished if s(he) is not perceived by the other as listening* (Daly, 1975). Listening and the perception of being listened are essential to the knowledge creation with different experts because they facilitate the construction of reflexive communication of knowledge (Kikoski & Kikoski, 1999), helping harnessing the generative potential of differences. When individuals perceive that they have not been listened to, the interaction may become unresponsive, stagnated, constrained, unclear, with unmet needs, shallow, and monological.

In the above context, *dialogical listening* also includes the consideration of those dialogical characteristics explained by Johannesen’s theory of dialogical communication (Johannesen, 1971) “as they relate specifically to listening” (Floyd, 2010, p. 130). Floyd (2010) highlighted the following characteristics of dialogical listening: authenticity, inclusion, confirmation, presentness, spirit of mutual equality, and a supportive climate (Floyd, 2010, pp. 130-132) (see details in Souto, 2013a).

Despite the clear significance of listening and the perception of being listened for dialogicality in creating knowledge with and from the differences, they confer a challenge to participants, considering that dialogues and dialogical skills have been one of the most neglected processes in organizations (Von Krogh et al., 2000; Kikoski & Kikoski, 2004), often ending up in the background of managerial discussions about knowledge (Von Krogh et al., 2000), “the most underutilized asset of

Information Era organizations” (Kikoski & Kikoski, 2004, p. 145), and “what management theorists least study” (Kikoski & Kikoski, 2004, p. xii). Additionally, dialogical competences that enable knowledge creation have not been adequately taught in schools or addressed and discussed in management training (Kikoski & Kikoski, 2004).

(b) The Not-Knowing Stance

The creation of knowledge has often been marked by a discomfort in not-knowing, a natural feeling amongst different experts. Such discomfort can block participants if they feel it from a negative perspective. It can inhibit their actions towards discovery and creativity, and impoverish the potential insightfulness of creating knowledge with and from differences. “... Sometimes the conditioned hunt for answers represents *a desperate attachment to ‘knowing’ and a simultaneous avoidance of any anxiety associated with not knowing, or even appearing not to know*” (Goldberg, 1998, p. 4) (Emphasis added). Not-knowing is an essential stance for discovery, especially if the aim is to identify together new and not-yet thought connections that can lead to knowledge creation at a significant level. The not-knowing stance is essential to craft dialogicality and to harness the differences and tensions that are natural in creating knowledge. It makes it easier to attune to other’s uniqueness and sense-making in a way that opens space to aspects of their experiences that would not emerge if participants impose positions before listening to the other. A not-knowing stance increases the permeability to the other reactions, responses and surprises, even those contradictory and different ones.

In a not-knowing stance the individual takes the *non-expert position of not knowing*. It is related to *tolerating uncertainty*, and “*not being certain about what one thinks and knows*” (Kikoski & Kikoski, 2004, p. 149) (Emphasis added). A not-knowing stance is about suspending ready-made opinions, conclusions before actually listening to the other, preconceptions, ideas, inclinations, fragmented judgments, and impulses to immediate closure. It is almost an inner silence that helps one to communicatively enliven others’ different experiences and create knowledge, attending both to the narrative and to discovery. A not-knowing stance *encourages others to talk and “voice their thoughts”*, and it fosters an exploratory approach to interactions with the aim of being a learner and a ‘not-knower’ (Kikoski & Kikoski, 2004, p. 149). By adopting a not-knowing stance in knowledge creation with and from the differences, individuals can move beyond the usual tendency to grab too quickly for answers, tangible outcomes, and to the safety of what is known to them. Such stance can help participants to perceive subtle connections and multiple possibilities that can emerge from the different experiences, from the open-ended and ambiguous narratives, from the apparent confusion and

uncertainty that naturally characterize the interactive creation of knowledge, namely the knowing-sensitivity (explained further).

Regarding the above stance, knowledge creation practices can be intersected with the artistic practices in which not-knowing plays a generative role and its value is recognized “less as the preliminary state (of ignorance) preceding knowledge, but as a field of desirable indeterminacy within which work” (Cocker, 2013, p. 127). A series of practices for actively generating the conditions of not-knowing was explained by Cocker (2013). Within some artistic practices, rather than “waiting for the auspicious moment of not-knowing to arrive... it is possible to witness the use of tactical approaches or methods to produce the conditions of uncertainty, disorientation or indeterminacy” (Cocker, 2013, p. 127). In such artistic practices, she explained how the practice of “engaging with the unknown” “often need to be actively courted, conjured or produced”^x. The following practices were indicated by Cocker (2013) for generating not-knowing, and they can be related to the theme of the current work: (a) to be led astray, getting lost, misdirection, (b) fall from what is known in which the loss of power and control and passivity are transformed into a productive force, (c) deconstruction, undoing, or unravelling, recombination in a different way, “a move towards the incomprehensible wild” (p. 130). By adopting a not-knowing stance, participants facilitate the emergence of differences as a natural part of knowing. A not-knowing stance is central in dialogicality and in helping individuals to perceive differences and to use them as contributions to the creation of knowledge.

Particularly insightful to the not-knowing stance is Yanow and Tsoukas’ phenomenological perspective on reflective practices (Yanow & Tsoukas, 2009, p. 1359). Such perspective revealed fundamental characteristics of such practice that are directly connected to the knowing-sensitivity and to the dialogicality in knowing – as knowing is a reflective practice. In knowing, reflective practitioners remain *permeable*, adopting an attitude of inquiry rather than determining answers based solely on positional authority. This is a characteristic that is essential to dialogically organized knowing because it helps the exploration of diverse possibilities of interpretation and meaning creation on the basis of others’ different practical knowledge. Such permeability or openness also requires *making one’s thinking transparent* – the permeable self – which entails *setting aside one’s ego, as one may not have all the knowledge (or answers) necessary to comprehend a situation*, that is, reflecting and knowing rest on a learned capacity to raise questions, including of oneself, more than on an ability to provide answers. The permeability of self in knowing implies *attention and responsiveness to unfolding processes*, including recognizing surprises.

(c) Mutuality

Dialogical moments are ephemeral experiences of *profound mutual awareness of the other person*, they temporarily occur when participants experience a high degree of mutuality, which is *a deep awareness of the uniqueness of others* (Black, 2008). “This means that, temporally, dialogue is encountered in brief moments of contact when two (or more) people experience a *high degree* of what Buber and Rogers call *mutuality*” (Black, 2008, p. 98) (Emphasis added). Mutuality “emphasizes an *awareness of the uniqueness of others*. . . . It presumes a respect for others that includes confirmation and the willingness *not to impose one’s beliefs or standards, but does not presume power parity*” (Hammond et al., 2003, p. 141) (Emphasis added). Dialogical interactions are characterized by incomplete degree of mutuality, even when the interactions are permeated by diversity and inequality (Cissna & Anderson, 1998, p. 70). Cissna and Anderson (1998, p. 76) explained that Buber considered mutuality as occurring in dialogues in which participants “happen” to another, even in brief moments; mutuality happenings are “fleeting”. “The conceptualization of *dialogic moments recognizes that although extended periods of full mutuality are unlikely in situations where status inequalities are very clear, the potential still exists for moments of mutuality*. Momentary dialogic experiences can occur in such settings and, when they do, *can create profound meaning* for the people involved” (Black, 2008, p. 99) (Emphasis added).

Based on Martin Buber’s dialogic ideas, Cissna and Anderson (1998, p. 69) explained that “mutuality should not be confused with equality – *no relationship exhibits complete equality*. At any moment, one person or another is always, for example, somewhat more knowing or more vulnerable or more powerful, perhaps as a result of roles” (Emphasis added). They highlighted that mutuality includes a “*turning to the other and experiencing the relationship*, as much as possible, as it is experienced by the other” (Cissna & Anderson, 1998, p. 69) (Emphasis added). Mutuality is essential for dialogicality in knowing as it deepens the connections amongst participants, helping sensing and harnessing the differences in knowledge creation and helps constructing genuine and deep engagement, full presence and attention, and a deep connection with the other, which are all critical aspects considering the complexities in creating knowledge with and from the differences.

Mutuality helps increasing the awareness of the other and of the uniqueness of his/her experience, inhibiting an imposition of pre-packed concepts and ideas, that is inhibiting the knowing-interaction to be monologically organized with the imposition of responses, perspectives, and ways of thinking. The heart of mutuality is not in one or another’s intelligence, but in a conjoint and intersected ability and personal availability of becoming aware of the uniqueness of others, and turning to them. It is in the intersection of all the dialogical participants in knowledge creation acting with mutuality

rather than on the competence in doing it as an individual. The essence of mutuality and its power for dialogicality and dialogical knowledge creation with and from the differences resides and emerge in mutual and integrated actions towards enlivening such mutuality, rather than isolated and fragmented intentions for such. By reaching a significant degree of mutuality in knowing it becomes naturally easy to refine a sensibility to the different experiences and narratives and to handle the natural plurality-unity tensions that characterize the knowledge creation conversations.

(d) The knowing-sensitivity

Knowing-sensitivity is related to participants' competence to perceive and understand hidden meanings, structures, connections, and situation-transcending practices in the different experiences that are communicated by the different experts. It is a fine-grained and sophisticated sensitivity to subtle, hesitant, and hidden details of experts' different experiences and narratives. Knowing-sensitivity is an ability of seeing through the apparent confusion of naturally noisy knowing-interactions – full of differences and tensions – and perceiving with others new realities and possibilities.

To perceive and create unique connections in knowing with different ones it is necessary to suspend the often and some times obsessive orientation to closure, to conclusions, to solutions, and to generate a 'product' from the activity. It means to be open to openness, and comfortable with ambiguity, vagueness, and incompleteness, aspects that are commonly and naturally present in knowledge creation. This also demand a not-knowing stance (explained previously) and to have an "ability to hold in abeyance our need for premature closure and to see multiple possibilities developing in an open-ended situation" (Chia, 2004, p. 35). Such sensitivity and permeability to openness and varied answers, solutions, interpretations, possibilities and alternatives are central to dialogicality and to enable the differences to play a role and contribute to the insightfulness of knowledge creation.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

In the current article, four of the competences that craft the dialogicality in knowledge creation with and from the differences – different experts, different experiences – were explained. Taken together, they represent a significant first-step towards developing a more nuanced understanding of creating knowledge with different experts and from their different practical experiences, with a significant sensitivity to the dialogicality in such creative practice, which is needed to harness the generative power of the differences and natural tensions.

The conceptual findings suggest the complexities of human relating that are involved in creating knowledge with and from the differences and critical epistemological and ontological dimensions of being dialogical. To be dialogical in knowing is far beyond interacting through face-to-face dialogues, talk-in-interaction, turn-taking by participants, or the concept of ‘ideal dialogues’. Such dialogues can be monologically understood and organized blocking knowing to any significant degree. A condition for knowing is dialogicality, especially if considerable differences are present in the knowing-activity. Dialogicality is what enables the communicative creation of knowledge and the use of differences as positive and dynamic forces in knowing. Otherwise, the interaction is just a coordination of utterances or a fragmented imposition of independent perspectives and voices. Thus, acute attention to dialogicality, as an essence of human relating and sense-making, brings to the discussion two critical aspects that are often taken-for-granted or ignored, but that are strongly connected to the contributiveness of knowledge creation: the independencies of sense-makings and the tensionality.

The main contribution of the current study is the understanding of the dialogicality and the human relating competences that help crafting it in knowledge creation with and from the differences. Differences in knowing can be generative and transformative, but they need to be understood and handled as such, otherwise they can undermine knowledge creation. Some of the dialogical competences that craft dialogicality and enable harnessing the generative and transformative power of differences were explained, providing insights for a more nuanced understanding and design of knowledge creation practices. The theoretical contributions were mainly made in two directions. First by shedding some light on the epistemological and ontological aspects of dialogism and dialogicality and intersecting them with knowledge creation with different experts and from their different experiences. Second, the theoretical intersection of approaches from different fields (Communications and Tacit Knowing Theory), which can generate unique insights for understanding and conceiving knowing dialogically.

The current study furthered the understanding of *dialogical* knowing with and from the differences beyond the narrow perspective that is based on face-to-face dialogues, the normative use of the concept, which is often used and characteristic of mainstream approaches to knowledge and knowing. The adopted approach to dialogical knowing anchored in dialogicality and dialogism also enabled to move beyond the frequent emphasis on interacting with different individuals and the lack of understanding of the primary and foundational aspects of human relating that underpin and condition the contributiveness of knowledge creation with different experts. By being closer to the human relating dynamics in knowledge creation, it was possible to provide deeper insights related to the

epistemological and ontological groundings of dialogical knowing, rather than to be narrowed by ameliorative and fragmented techniques or methods for interacting. The current theoretical insights can inform practitioners in crafting dialogical knowledge creation activities that harness the generative and transformative power of differences by centring their attention to the dialogicality in human relating and their competences. Further deepening of the current approach and empirical studies are under development in Brazilian innovative organizations.

The proposed acute attention to the dialogicality in knowledge creation with and from the differences reflects a significant concern with refining knowledge creation practices with the ways in which professionals engage with others and differences and participate in such practices, rather than being focused on how competent and knowledgeable they are as individuals. The current study also sheds some light on the understanding of how knowers may perform their knowing journeys through more responsive and innovative ways, potentiating their sense-making by incorporating essential ‘dialogical knowledge creation competences’ as the heart of their knowing-activities design. From this approach, professionals’ participations in knowing practices and their skilling to create knowledge with and from the differences need to become significantly more sensitive and aware of the interdependencies of sense-making.

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CRIAR CONHECIMENTO COM E A PARTIR DAS DIFERENÇAS: A NECESSIDADE DE DIALOGICIDADE E DE COMPETÊNCIAS DIALÓGICAS

RESUMO

O principal objetivo desse artigo conceitual é o de contribuir para a teorização da criação de conhecimento tácito (*knowing* ou *tacit knowing*), por meio da investigação de sua condição primária, fundamental e subjacente: dialogicidade (*dialogicality*). Com base no dialogismo – uma estrutura epistemológica e ontológica – e da epistemologia da prática, os principais conceitos e abordagens foram intersectados para explicar com profundidade a dialogicidade na criação de conhecimento e as competências para criar e refinar a mesma. Como a ênfase na criação de conhecimento em ambientes organizacionais tem sido frequentemente sobre a necessidade de interagir com outros profissionais para se criar conhecimento – quanto mais, melhor – o presente estudo centraliza sua atenção no aspecto qualitativo de tal criação de conhecimento. Tem havido uma considerável redução no nível das habilidades que são requeridas para se criar conhecimento com diferentes profissionais e a partir de

suas diferentes experiências, e a dialogicidade é crítica para ajudar a aproveitar o poder gerador e transformador de tais diferenças na criação de conhecimento. Além disso, a teorização da criação ‘dialogica’ de conhecimento tem sido baseada principalmente em abordagens cognitivas e estruturais ao conhecimento e sua criação, e em modelos de transmissão para a comunicação do conhecimento. A criação ‘dialogica’ de conhecimento tem sido limitadamente entendida em sentido concreto e empírico, como a criação de conhecimento por meio de interações face-a-face por meio de conversação, interações verbais com contribuições alternadas e “diálogos ideais”. No presente estudo, argumenta-se a necessidade de ir além da ideia de criar-conhecimento-por-meio-de-diálogo para criar-conhecimento-por-meio-de-dialogicidade. Alega-se que não é qualquer diálogo que possibilita criar conhecimento, especialmente que não é qualquer diálogo que possibilita criar conhecimento com diferentes profissionais e a partir de suas diferentes experiências; é necessário que o diálogo seja dialogicamente concebido, organizado e compreendido para que a criação de conhecimento aconteça, dialogicidade é uma condição central. Com base na epistemologia do dialogismo, a dialogicidade na criação de conhecimento é explicada e quatro competências dialógicas que ajudam a construí-la e refiná-la são sugeridas. O estudo amplia e aprofunda a compreensão e o papel da dialogicidade na criação de conhecimento com e a partir das diferenças, analisando sua base epistemológica, meta-teórica, e ontológica e propondo suas competências formativas.

Palavras-chave: Criação de conhecimento; Criação de conhecimento tácito; Dialogismo; Dialogicidade; Dialógico; Dialógica; Comunicação de conhecimento tácito; Diferenças.

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ⁱ The terms ‘knowledge creation’, ‘knowing’ and ‘tacit knowing’ are synonyms and used interchangeably. Their conceptualizations are based on Michael Polanyi’s Tacit Knowing Theory.

ⁱⁱ For example, Barilla interacted with another group of experts: “a winemaker, a professor with expertise in designing restaurants and ‘happy hour’ experiences, some entrepreneurs in modern catering services, a semiologist, a sociologist with expertise in food and the history of food culture, a vice-president of the cultural organization Slow Food, a chef who has been doing research on molecular gastronomy, and a food critic” (Verganti, 2009, p. 143). Artemide cooperated with Luca Ronconi, a known theatre director that is famous for experiments in stage design (Verganti, 2009, p. 150). Alessi interacted with eleven architects in a research project that aimed to explore new possible meanings (product symbolic and emotional meaning) and to bring the language of postmodern architecture to industrial products – kitchenware.

ⁱⁱⁱ The concept of competence adopted by the current research was drew on a social and interpretative approach to the topic, which emphasizes the interactive actions in which knowledge, experiences, and perceptions of the object of action are shared (Hansson, 1998). Sandberg (2000, 2009) explained that competence is not a set of attributes, but a way of being, the meaning workers make of their work, it is the ways of making sense or experiencing their work that constitute human competence.

^{iv} According to Linell (2009, 2015, forthcoming), the terms ‘dialogism’, ‘dialogical theories’, ‘dialogue’, and ‘dialogue theories’ have been used by many scholars of different traditions disciplines, with some convergences but also divergences, and “in many and sometimes mutually confusing ways” (Linell, 2015, p. 2). For more details on differences between the terms and their uses see Linell (2009, 2015, forthcoming).

^v The current research does not share the dominant emphases of the mainstream literature on knowledge and knowledge creation: the cognitive and structural perspectives (see Patriotta, 2003; Gherardi, 2003; Stacey, 2000, 2001; Souto, in press), which are based on a sender-receiver or transmission model, that consider knowledge as a cognitive entity that is possessed by actors, and that reflect a representational orientation (Kuhn and Porter, 2011). In contrast, the current study is grounded on a communication model rather than on a transmission model to study tacit knowledge creation and communication. The communicative models consider that knowledge is communicatively constructed by knower in two-way and multidirectional face-to-face interactions, in dialogue (Dervin, 2010/2007; Phillips, 2011).

^{vi} “Intersubjectivity is a multi-faceted phenomenon, and a multi-ambiguous term. It is not a specific, easily

localisable phenomenon, nor a precise descriptive notion. Therefore, one may wish to talk about

intersubjectivities and interactivities in the plural (Linell, 2013e)” (Linell, 2014, p. 47).

^{vii} Brenda Dervin’s Sense-Making Methodology (SMM) aims to “study and design communication communicatively and ultimately to improve communicating – to change systems and procedures” (Dervin, 2008, p. 3) (for more details see Souto, 2010). SMM is a mature, consistent, and empirically validated set of metatheoretical assumptions and research methods that enable the study of human meaning creation practices on a situational perspective, i.e. the sense-making phenomena.

^{viii} The use of the terms ‘sense-making’ and ‘Sense-Making’ in the current research are specifically and solely related to its conceptualizations and uses in Brenda Dervin’s Sense-Making Methodology (SMM). The terms ‘sense-making’, ‘sensemaking’ and ‘sense making’ have been used in other contexts and studies by Karl Weick, David Snowden, Gary Klein, and Daniel M. Russel, but the use of the terms in the current research are specifically and solely related to its conceptualizations and uses in Dervin’s SMM.

^{ix} International Listening Association

^x <http://not-yet-there.blogspot.se/2013/01/publication-on-not-knowing.html>