



***Workshop:
Communication and ICT in Healthcare: Theory and Practice***

**Contextualization, ICT and mutual understanding: possible roles of
communication complexity**

Dov Te'eni¹

Abstract

Contextualization (grounding) is an important communication strategy that adds explanatory and situational information to a core message in order to make communication more effective. Contextualization is particularly important in communication characterized by high communication complexity, e.g., communication between partners employing different terminologies such as doctors and patients. However, there may be certain conditions in which contextualization is not productive or even detrimental in generating poorer mutual understanding.

ICT can support contextualization in several forms, some of which are slowly becoming popular, e.g., hyperlinks to relevant information. This raises the question whether ICT should always support contextualization or should limit such support only to certain conditions such as high communication complexity.

This presentation discusses contextualization and the way ICT can support it. It also reports on an experiment in which ICT was shown to support contextualization in conditions of *a priori* low and high complexity, and demonstrates how contextualization supported by ICT can diminish rather than enhance mutual understanding in situations of low communication complexity. The presentation concludes with possible applications of communication complexity in adaptive communication support systems.

¹ Tel-Aviv University, Israel