

Cycle de conférences du CRIS

## Using misunderstandings to understand language and social interaction

**Dr. Mark Dingemanse**

*Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics*

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There would be little adaptive value in a complex communication system like human language if there were no way to detect and correct problems. In this talk I present results from a large collaborative project on other-initiated repair (a.k.a. collaborative repair, requests for clarification, or grounding sequences). We compare conversation in 12 languages from 5 continents and find a robust system for the real-time resolution of frequent breakdowns in communication. We find that this system of other-initiated repair is commonly used, that its basic structure appears to be universal (sometimes down to phonetic shape, e.g., 'Huh?') and that its principles of usage reveal the fundamentally cooperative nature of human communication. The results provide a valuable point of comparison for the cross-species ethology of communication and reveal linguistic universals of a kind not described before.

*Une pause-café sera offerte à la suite de cette conférence.*