

Approaching classroom interaction dialogically

*To my inspiring children, Jennifer, Daniel, Joel and Isak
as well as to my ever-supportive wife, Karin*

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OLIVER-JOHN ST JOHN

Approaching classroom interaction dialogically
Studies of everyday encounters in a 'bilingual' secondary school

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Abstract

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This thesis approaches classroom interaction in association with Bakhtin and conversation analysis (CA). The four studies presented in this thesis seek to highlight different aspects of classroom interactional encounters between the students and teachers of a secondary school class. Through these studies, the thesis addresses the following challenges: How can analysts account for 'multilingual' communicative practices in a way which respects the views and orientations of the participants? How may dialogism be relevant for classroom interaction? How can we move beyond the representational (in)sufficiency of an oral language focus on (classroom) communication for analysis of human meaning-making practices?

The studies arise from ethnographic fieldwork at an independent secondary school with a 'bilingual' educational profile where data of everyday instructional life was generated through participant observation and video recordings. Methodologically, the studies have been enabled by Bakhtinian concepts and conversation analytic conventions *amplified* for analysis of the complex range of modalities composing classroom interaction.

Study 1 examines the way participants' use of two (or more) languages in a 'foreign' language classroom *throw light on each other* in processes of lexical orientation which challenge the privileging or the subordination of any one language in language learning. Study 2 demonstrates the consequences for understanding the participants' sense-making efforts of making representationally (in)visible integral aspects of their multimodal cooperations. Study 3 focuses on whole-class task instructions as interactionally complex by showing some of the mutual orientations through which teacher and students coordinate each other's stances and consequently craft instructions collaboratively. Study 4 examines the concept of *linguaging* critically in the light of Bakhtin's penetrating perception of the utterance and underscores that while we may be able to *language* when communicating, we are also *linguaged* communicators.

Keywords: classroom interaction, dialogism, conversation analysis, interillumination, addressivity, counter word, linguaging.

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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	11
1.1 Encountering the field.....	11
1.2 The research project.....	13
1.3 Thesis problematization, aims and overview.....	14
1.3.1 Thesis issues.....	15
<i>Accounting for multilingual communication practices</i>	15
<i>Relevance of dialogism for classroom interaction</i>	16
<i>Representational sufficiency for analysis of classroom interaction</i>	17
1.3.2 Thesis aims.....	17
1.3.3 Thesis overview.....	18
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	20
2.1 Approaches to interaction.....	21
2.1.1 Sociocultural theory – interaction as <i>(semiotic) mediation</i>	21
2.1.2 Dialogism – interaction as ‘ <i>other-orientation</i> ’.....	22
2.1.3 Microsociology – interaction as <i>interaction</i>	23
2.1.4 Bi-and multilingual studies – interaction as <i>condition</i>	24
2.2 Approaches to classroom interaction.....	26
2.2.1 Dialogic and classroom pedagogy.....	26
<i>Dialogue as pedagogic force</i>	27
<i>Dialogic models of classroom instruction</i>	28
2.2.2 Interaction in classroom research.....	29
<i>From teaching to learning</i>	29
<i>Interaction as one of ‘Either-Or’ research frameworks</i>	30
2.2.3 CA classroom research.....	32
<i>Mapping interaction – everyday life inside and outside classrooms</i>	32
<i>Affordances of CA treatment of classroom interaction</i>	33
2.3 Bakhtinian dialogism.....	35
2.3.1 Senses and scope of dialogue.....	36
<i>Dialogue described</i>	36
‘ <i>Dialogue</i> ’ as a generative construct.....	36
<i>Dialogism as a counter-theory to monologism</i>	37
2.3.2 Why Bakhtin?.....	38
2.3.3 Bakhtin and the logic of dialogue.....	39
<i>The logic of co-being</i>	39
<i>The logic of difference</i>	40
<i>The logic of heteroglossia</i>	41
2.3.4 Key Bakhtinian perceptions.....	42
<i>Language as dialogic interaction</i>	42

Language as utterance.....	42
Language as dialogized	43
<i>Authorship and addressivity</i>	45
<i>Counter word</i>	46
<i>Interillumination</i>	47
2.3.5 Studies of classroom interaction through a Bakhtinian lens	48
<i>Heteroglossia</i>	48
<i>Monologic and dialogic discourse</i>	49
<i>Social languages and speech genres</i>	49
<i>Voice and authoring</i>	50
3. RESEARCH CONTEXT.....	52
3.1 Interactional context	52
3.2 Classroom context	53
3.2.1 The classroom.....	53
3.2.2 The partner class.....	54
3.3 Institutional context.....	55
4. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK	57
4.1 Ethnography	57
4.1.1 Culture and fieldwork.....	57
4.1.2 Generating data	58
4.1.3 Recognizing reflexivity.....	60
4.2 Fieldwork and empirical material.....	61
4.2.1 Field notes.....	61
4.2.2 Miscellaneous school texts	62
4.2.3 Video recordings of lessons	62
4.3 Towards dialogic analysis of classroom interaction	64
4.3.1 Affinities between dialogism and CA	64
4.3.2 CA methodology	67
<i>CA principles in profile</i>	67
<i>CA procedures in profile</i>	69
<i>CA for multimodal analysis</i>	70
4.4 An amplified transcription system.....	71
5. OVERVIEW AND SYNTHESIS OF THE STUDIES.....	74
5.1 The four studies	74
5.1.1 Study 1.....	74
5.1.2 Study 2.....	76
5.1.3 Study 3.....	78
5.1.4 Study 4.....	80
5.2 Overarching conclusions	82

5.2.1 Addressing thesis aims	82
<i>Accounting for multilingual communication emically</i>	82
<i>How may dialogism be relevant to classroom interaction?</i>	83
Centripetal and centrifugal processes	83
Interillumination	84
(Dual) addressivity	84
<i>Representational sufficiency for analysis of classroom interaction</i>	85
5.2.2 Classroom dialogic action: Educational implications	86
<i>Riding tension</i>	86
<i>Bridging action</i>	87
<i>Framing freedom</i>	88
5.3 Future research prospects and epilogue	89
REFERENCES	92
APPENDIX	108
Appendix A: Breakdown of fieldwork visits.....	108
Appendix B: Video recordings of lessons	109
STUDIES I-IV.....	111

1. Introduction

1.1 Encountering the field

Straggles of young people converging into a steady flow just before 8 am on a weekday morning is a common sign that one is approaching a school. On this Wednesday morning, student appearances, as with many school students in Sweden today, say more about prevalent social fashions than school dress code. However, as students and staff meet on the threshold of *this* school day, their behaviour and speech perhaps suggest more to the uninitiated about the kind of community they belong to. Field notes¹ record some first glimpses of this specific school community:

My first impression on approaching the school at 7.57 was of students beginning to break into runs as they (presumably) realized what the time was and needed to be in their classroom by 8.00. Individuals and then groups of students spurred each other forward as they funnelled towards the main school building. *Rules obviously matter in this school.* As I entered the school, the headmaster stood immediately at the entrance and greeted each student coming through the doors. It seemed a very personal touch and I wondered how this practice affected the students as they were greeted with a smile and a cheery ‘Good morning’. The ‘head’ seemed to be modelling something important in this school – *effort to meet the students respectfully; to set a courteous and approachable tone.* The action also endorsed *English as an official social means of communication.*

In the main hallway, smartly-dressed teachers on their way to classrooms weave resolutely through the throngs attracting a moving cluster of students. The social engagement with the students is upbeat, positive and reflects a care to include. Students in the alcoves exchange personal belongings for books and classroom materials from their lockers as they move towards the start of the day’s schedule. Conversation is steady but secondary to the business of getting to the morning’s first lesson on time. Swedish prevails, but snatches of English and, now again, Arabic, Bengali, Hindi, Persian and Tigre texture talk like the rippled rhythms of moving water.

A newcomer’s eyes are drawn sooner or later to the posters and pictures that decorate the walls of the hallway; they herald academic excellence, professionalism, learning opportunities and international prospects among the messages. One picture frames a newspaper article and photo of the

¹ The citations in this section are taken from my field notes comprising on-the-spot entries in a notebook which were then, along with other recollected observations and impressions, summarized at the end of each fieldwork day (see chapter 4 for methodological focus).

school's recent award for the top national test results of a school in the region. Already in these first few everyday events of this new school day, a distinctiveness has been displayed – student-teacher respect, courteous conduct, a multilingual milieu, academic ambition as well as the dignity of inclusion. This school projects a distinctive code of manners, pedagogic creed and profiles its success.

A flight of stairs or two and a visitor is met by the tail end of a line of students, filing up outside their classroom and spilling over the landing; they buzz energetically.

The first everyday collective, institutional event is lining up outside the classroom and standing in a quiet and orderly fashion before being greeted by their teacher with a 'Good morning, Class...' or 'Godmorrón, Klass...' and then being allowed into the classroom of their first lesson. (I often found myself slipping into formation at the end of the line, straightening up my posture, taking my hands out of my pockets and fastening my attention on the teacher in preparation for an official greeting affirmation. It confirmed my right to be standing among members of this class).

As students cross the threshold of the classroom, the stream splays, splinters into disarray; what looks like random mingling is underscored by a strong sense of seating order and work station partners as field notes recount:

In Maths, a girl comes in late and, despite available 'free' seats, claims her usual place which was occupied by another classmate. There seem to be well-established seating conventions; everyone has his/her place or seat in the classroom, a pattern which pupils recognize and maintain. When teachers do periodically change seating arrangements, the vehement protest such directives are met with testifies to the significance of current classroom custom for the students.

At their desks, students stand behind the chairs. The next ritual is a semblance of silence which takes anything from five seconds to five minutes to achieve, but is a condition of the teacher's permission to sit down, at which point there is a deafening roar of chairs scraping and body subsidence. Protocol continues with attendance:

The first event of most lessons is the taking of the register. Given that more of this class' teachers have English-speaking backgrounds, this practice was often conducted 'in English' and so class members were used to hearing their names pronounced in English, profiling their 'English' personas and possible identity prospects. This regular and 'first thing' checking of student attendance underlined the obligatory nature of the lesson as an institutional

event and the authority of the teacher as an arm of the administration's regulative system.

School life does not escape the ceremonious. By the time the first lesson of the day gets underway, school regulations have compressed conduct, values have been reconfirmed, roles redelineated, classroom practices reenacted – the day has been indelibly reframed institutionally. A first week of field work triggered notes about the *school or classroom as an institution*:

Teaching-learning procedures are also governed by institutional expectations, norms and routines. Examples: classroom as teacher fronted; a show of hands and teacher nomination determine the pattern of participation; noise tolerance levels (in this school, seem to be very low); listening to one another, contributions one at a time; attendance taking; greeting and leave taking routines, etc. The pupils are definitely being schooled to do school; they are learning the institutional practices of the school community and participating in an institutionalizing process. Institutional norms of pedagogy too? What are the institutional norms of bilingual practice?

School life comprises a repertoire of recurrent routines, norms and practices that are among the most formidable forces patterning behaviour in the classroom; they are themselves component parts of school life which graft classrooms into a wider system institutionally, centripetally. However, this grafting is not simply the function of a central organization. Students are not merely passengers but *participants* in the life of this school community. Routine in this international school context is achieved, performed, reenacted, by successive choices among a number of alternative courses of action made in the moment-by-moment interaction between its community members (Schegloff, 1986).

1.2 The research project

The studies in this thesis arise from ethnographic observations and fieldwork at an international school in Sweden. This school was one of several Swedish secondary schools in which ethnographic research was conducted by members of a project, LISA 21², in order to analyze and compare the

² The project is supported by the Swedish Research Council (Bagga-Gupta, 2012a) and is based at the Communication, Culture and Diversity, CCD, research group (www.oru.se/HumES/CCD) at Örebro University, Sweden. LISA-21 is an abbreviation for 'Languages and Identities in School Arenas at the beginning of the 21st century'. It has focused on plurilingualism, identity work and learning in culturally-diverse, institutionalized, educational settings. Since 2006, the project has launched a series of ethnographic studies of the communication practices among students and teachers at different secondary schools in Sweden including analysis of policy since the 1960s (Bagga-Gupta, 2012b).

naturally occurring communication actions in these different learning environments. These schools have been chosen by leaders within their own national bodies and structures because of their ‘good practice’ status and all offer the opportunity to study plurilingual practices in teaching-learning situations. The fieldwork sites are secondary schools, specifically pupils and teachers in grades 7 to 9, since this age range was identified as an under-researched stratum of school life. It is also at these levels that it becomes possible to study the communicative practices of teachers and pupils in environments where they are using different language varieties for classroom communication.

The project’s studies assume a sociocultural perspective and, since they focus on communicatively oriented practices in situ, are also informed by classroom interaction studies and an ethnographically inspired methodology. In order to piece together a picture of the pupils’ everyday school lives and routines, the studies have involved shadowing classes through their daily schedules during periods of fieldwork spread out at intervals over the course of the academic year. Video and audio recording of lesson activity as well as field notes were the primary methods used to generate data. Thus the approach combines ethnographic fieldwork and micro analysis of classroom interaction recorded on video.

The school associated with this doctoral thesis is an independent secondary school flagging a bilingual educational profile. All curricular subjects at this school are taught mainly in either Swedish or English. The task of fieldwork at this school was to observe, record and report the *classroom situated interaction practices* co-constructed by members of the target class and their teachers. By *practices*, I mean the routine, familiar forms of social behaviour that follow a precedent set by repeated “doings” so that they have acquired a significance as an identifiable, accountable, *particular* kind of activity (see Garfinkel, 1967; Hanks, 1996).

1.3 Thesis problematization, aims and overview

This thesis attempts to address three main problems which give rise to three overarching aims. First the problems and then the aims are outlined in the following subsections. An overview of the thesis ends the introduction chapter.

1.3.1 Thesis issues

Accounting for multilingual communication practices

The first problem is how to describe and analyse multilingual communication practices in a way which does *emic* justice to such language deployment. There are different ways to describe and classify the adjacency of languages in the service of actual people's situated efforts to achieve meaningful expression and mutual understanding with others. As an example, consider the following sequence from a seventh-grade gym session:

Extract 1 (T = Teacher)

- 01 T: *om du kommer efter nio* (.) *så får man en* late and that's the rule (.)
if you arrive after nine *you get a*
- 02 T: *så är det* (.) I promise you
that's how it is

The second part of the teacher's first utterance (line 1) might be described as *metaphorical code-switching* (Blom & Gumperz, 1972). In referring to a rule, the teacher switches to the institutional discourse of the English-speaking school administration to identify with and invoke the authority of this regulative system. This functional scheme casts the use of English within the teacher's first utterance (line1) as well as her third utterance (line 2) as *code-switches* which add weight to her warning.

Alternatively, some sociolinguists distinguish between *intrasentential* and *intersentential* language change, referring to the former phenomenon as 'code-mixing' and reserving the concept of code-switching for the latter (Muysken, 2000; Poplack, 1980). On this basis, the use of English in line 1 is code-mixing whereas the second utterance of line 2 counts as code-switching.

A further way of categorizing language adjacency conduct is afforded by the distinction between *borrowing* and *code-switching* (Grosjean, 1982, 1992). In the extract, a "late" is an institutionally established term which has no simple or straightforward Swedish equivalent. As such the term may well be integrated into the discourse of everyday school life to such an extent that its use passes unnoticed. With no alternative expression for "late" readily available, the term becomes a case of language borrowing, leaving the remainder of the utterance – "and that's the rule" – as code-switching (see Gafaranga, 2007; Woolard, 2004).

A commitment to recognizing an emic view as well as the semiotic scope of communication has led some researchers to decouple the notion of *code* from that of *language* (Alvarez-Cáccamo, 1998). Although the speaker, in Extract 1, is mixing languages, she may, on this occasion, not be orienting to them as separate units. If the two languages are operating as a single code, then describing her verbal performance as code-switching misrepresents the way she views her way of talking. Researchers with this persuasion have described bilingual language deployment as, for example, ‘fused lects’ (Auer, 1999), ‘mixed vernaculars’ (Bachus, 1999), ‘bilingual medium’ (Gafaranga, 2000) and ‘chaining’ (Bagga-Gupta, 2002).

These various distinctions reflect some of the formidable problems of describing (and, by implication, analysing) what gets glossed as bi- and multilingual speech especially with respect to the communicators’ views of their communicative conduct.

Relevance of dialogism for classroom interaction

However theoretically fertile dialogism may be, its value for analyzing classroom interaction is far from self-evident. The problem is this: dialogism and the school classroom might be regarded as *fundamentally incompatible*; there appears to be a prevailing dissonance between them.

A cursory glance at literature in the fields of dialogue (e.g. Gadamer, 2004; Maranhão, 1990; Linell, 1998) and classroom interaction (e.g. Sahlström, 1999, 2008; Seedhouse, 2004; van Lier, 1996) beams up different logics or circulating discourses (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) pertaining largely to each arena. In tune with the postmodern ethos, ‘nonteleological’ conceptions of dialogue have challenged and overshadowed absolutist views of dialogue (Burbules, 1993). Such conceptions orient to knowledge as always plural, processual and open-ended (Alexander, 2008). Truth can only be conceived as inhering in the responsive risks and riches of continuing communicative engagement. Consonant with a divergent view of knowledge, dialogism maintains a position of holding various outcomes as valid and worthy of consideration.

Life in classrooms seems to be marching to the beat of a different drum (Jackson, 1990). In stark contrast to exploratory, constructivist, conceptions of dialogue, the overriding business of classrooms deals with knowledge of a teleological, testable, kind which routinely orients to a single correct answer or converges on a specific epistemic point (Burbules, 1993). If this were not so, curricular goal-related grading and assessment would not be such a central part of a teacher’s responsibility (Lindström, Lindberg & Pettersson, 2014). Schools have become highly goal and results oriented, upheld by systems in which student achievement is dichotomized

into more or less successful or unsuccessful performance (see Biesta, 2004, 2006; Wahlström, 2009). Such an educational emphasis reflects a prevailing logic of identifying and approving predetermined propositions or conclusions; it might be argued that the classroom projects a relatively authoritative take on truth.

The apparent differences in epistemology and aim make the question “*How may dialogism be relevant to classroom interaction?*” particularly insistent.

Representational sufficiency for analysis of classroom interaction

There are a number of problems pertaining to representing data for scientific analysis. One of these – the third problem that this thesis seeks to address – relates to the adequacy of representational aperture on the data for making scientifically credible claims about the classroom. In view of the pervading scientific requirement for evidence which substantiates study findings, it is commonplace practice in social scientific qualitative study to construct transcripts and other kinds of representational forms of data as a rationale for analytic claims. Within this venture, a major problem is attached to transcription which privileges oral language at the expense of other semiotic resources (Duranti, 1997; Scollon & Scollon, 2009).

When telephone conversations are the target events being investigated, such a focus makes good sense (Schegloff, 1986). However, when attention turns to the dynamics of everyday interaction, then an exclusive focus on oral language in representational means can become a serious bias (Bagga-Gupta, 2012b). Attending only to the features of talk in a transcript risks masking, *making invisible*, the very orientations and relevancies that much emic analysis of classroom communication practices aspires to make explicit.

1.3.2 Thesis aims

In counterpoint with these key problems, the thesis *aims* to:

- 1) Describe and analyse instances of routine classroom communication practices accomplished by members of a 7th and 8th grade class and their teachers at a secondary school in Sweden with a ‘bilingual’ educational language policy.
- 2) Explore the relevance of a dialogic lens, operationalized through micro-analytic procedures, for understanding the classroom interaction practices in focus.

- 3) Develop and exploit the analytic mediation of an amplified transcription system designed to make visible aspects of everyday mundane communication in the classroom.

The specific aims of the four studies in this thesis are subordinate to these central aims. Their foci, arising out of fieldwork orientations and data viewing, are all attempts to highlight different but concordant features composing participants' socio-interactional reality (Schegloff, 1997). The studies all seek to illuminate specific aspects of classroom interaction, such as bilingual language deployment and giving instructions, with a dialogic perspective afforded by Bakhtinian concepts. Methodologically, the studies have been conducted with the aid of conversation analytic conventions *amplified* to make multimodal analysis possible.

Studying classroom interaction has involved first and foremost ethnographic fieldwork, generating interactional data, micro-analyzing and representing classroom interactions. Studying classroom interaction *through a dialogic lens* has involved exploring some of the logic of dialogue as well as considering some applications of dialogism to the classroom. The challenge of trying to operationalize certain dialogic concepts analytically has entailed representing classroom interaction via transcription and discussing issues that this very process reveals. It is the task of Part 1 in this volume to *elaborate some 'dimensions' comprising these spheres of involvement and to elucidate how they might be brought into relation.*

1.3.3 Thesis overview

In this introduction three problems have been identified that set the thesis agenda and aims. Chapter 2 builds the theoretical framework for the thesis studies which is founded on several approaches to the study of human interaction. It also focuses on some of the ways an interactionist perspective has informed approaches to classroom research. As a third dimension, the framework features Bakhtinian dialogism as a rationale for the studies and orientation to some of Bakhtin's key perceptions. In chapter 3, the research site is viewed and reported in three ways which bring the interactional, classroom and institutional contexts into focus. Chapter 4 – the methodological framework – begins with an account of ethnographic research as a way of introducing the fieldwork and empirical material underpinning the studies. Methodologically, the thesis harnesses dialogism with conversation analytic procedures. Consequently, chapter 4 also outlines affinities between these two positions and profiles conversation analysis (CA) methodology. A final section explains the amplified transcription system used in the studies. In the final chapter of the thesis (chapter 5), the

four studies are summarized and overarching conclusions are drawn which bear educational implications. Part 1 ends with some pointers towards future research prospects and an epilogue.

2. Theoretical Framework.

Of all the ‘turns’ and undertakings over the past century in studies of human action, perhaps the most pervasive and prevalent is a major interactionist multidisciplinary³ movement. Underlying an interactionist paradigm in studies of social action is a theoretical reorientation from the individual subject to interaction *between* individuals. This significant shift helps explain the surge of interest in classroom interaction. It has also impacted studies of bi- and multilingual practices (Bagga-Gupta, 2012c). This chapter offers, in condensed form, first some theoretical background and rationale for a turn of interest from purely cognitivist and monologic accounts of human cognition and communication toward socially-centred and context-sensitive understandings of human action. Interactionism has been generated by a number of theoretical sources and the selection of theoretical orientations included in section 2.1 is far from exhaustive. However, in order to construct a theoretical framework, the procedural idea is this: first, in broad strokes, to sketch the theoretical coordinates which have guided an approach to this thesis and then, in the subsequent chapters, to fill in further details of those orientations which have been most formative of the studies.

The sections comprising 2.2 of this chapter move on to outline three ways an interactionist perspective has informed focus in classroom research. The first (2.2.1) foregrounds dialogue as a pedagogic force within educational thinking and practice. The second (2.2.2) highlights the central place interaction has come to occupy in research into classroom pedagogy and learning. A third section (2.2.3) surveys the contribution of CA to classroom research in terms of how classroom interaction may be mapped against everyday conversation outside classrooms and the affordances of CA for treating classroom interaction.

The final part of this chapter (2.3) orients to Bakhtinian dialogism and some of his central ideas. A rationale is offered for choosing Bakhtin as useful to the thesis and his influence on the field of education is illustrated with references to some studies which adopt a Bakhtinian perspective for analysis of classroom discourse.

³ See Hult (2010) for discussion on the distinctions between inter-, multi-, and transdisciplinary research.

2.1 Approaches to interaction

Four theoretical traditions or orientations are beamed up as background to an interactionist perspective which is central to this thesis. These are sociocultural theory, dialogism, microsociology and the field of bi-and multi-lingual studies.

2.1.1 Sociocultural theory – interaction *as (semiotic) mediation*

Vygotsky's highly influential thinking has been instrumental in turning focus onto social interaction between people for he viewed interpersonal communication and contact as forming and transforming the very quality of consciousness. His formulation of the "general genetic law of cultural development" stresses *interpersonal processes* as primary to intrapersonal ones and runs as follows:

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, *between* people (*interpsychological*), and then *inside* the child (*intrapsychological*) [...] All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

Sociocultural theory thus accounts for psychological processes as mediated by human social action and therefore views mind as social in origin and nature (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1998). Consequently, learning from a sociocultural perspective is understood as actualized in and through interaction with others by means of technical and semiotic resources in a particular socio-historic environment (Säljö, 2005). Social interaction is therefore both *mediated* and *mediating*. With the affordances of language, the semiotic significance of embodied actions and artifacts such as hearing aids, glasses and digital media, we are able, *enabled*, to interact in multiple ways. At the same time, socialization processes become internalized, thinking is quickened and proficiency in certain practices or skills develops in and through the formative forces of social contact and collaboration.

A social practice theory of learning (Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991) focuses on situated, distributed, learning and has fuelled research endeavour into various contexts of learning activity and apprenticeship (Chaiklin & Lave, 1996). This approach posits processes of learning and socialization as integral, inseparable and inevitable aspects of social practice; that is, as the way such engagement changes patterns and levels of participation in social practices and contexts. If "learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 35), then studying interactional practices and engagement in the classroom

should bring investigators face to face with the dynamics of learning and socialization.⁴ Indeed, it would seem that a social practice theory of learning supplies a principled rationale for treating learning in the classroom as changed participation in interaction (Melander & Sahlström, 2010); by implication, learning can be illuminated by *analysing interaction*.

2.1.2 Dialogism – interaction as ‘other-orientation’

Dialogism represents a radical shift from cognitivist, monologic theories which separate cognition and communication as two distinct processes. For example, Shannon and Weaver’s (1949) *information theory of communication* and *the information processing theory of cognition and the mind* start with cognition in their accounts of communication.⁵ Monologic theories elevate the individual mind as organizing centre of cognition as well as the individual speaker as sole author of his or her utterances and their meanings (Linell, 2009; Vološinov, 1973).

In contrast to cognitivist models of communication, dialogists assume that “there is an interdependence between the *agent* and his or her *socio-historical environment*” (Markovà, 1990, p. 2). Because of the mutual interrelations between organism and environment (Mead, 1934) *cognition and communication are enmeshed irrevocably*; when we *think* we are *communicating* either with ourselves or interpersonally and when we *communicate* we are *acting deliberately, intelligently* (Linell, 1998). For the phenomenologist Schutz (1967), pragmatists like Mead (1964) and dialogists like Bakhtin (1986) and Vološinov (1973), our experience and knowledge of self is realized through orienting to others and their perspectives in the social world. Farr (1990) affirms that the “interactions *between* individuals are generally of greater significance than the actions of individuals” (p. 25).

Dialogism, as a present-day discipline, has its roots in the German expressivism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Markovà, 1990). For scholars such as Humboldt, language and speech as living phenomena derive from and develop *through* social interaction and communication (ibid.). Bakhtin (1981, 1986) and Vološinov (1973) built on and beyond this tradition; they rejected a philosophy of communication centred on the speaker-subject and emphasized the precedence of the socio-historical over the individual (Maranhão, 1990). It is the socio-historical context of verbal

⁴ This is also the case in virtual classroom settings. See, for instance, ongoing research in other CCD research group projects – CINCLE and DIMUL (e.g. Gynne & Bagga-Gupta, 2013; Messina Dahlberg & Bagga-Gupta, 2013, in press).

⁵ See Linell (1998) for commentary on both these models.

interaction – intersected by differently orientated socio-ideological interests – that makes meaning and understanding it both *problematic and possible*. Meaning is cast, contested *and yet grasped* generatively in the fleeting alignments of successive communicative counter moves. In a climate of ideological struggle, responding to others and anticipating answers from them create the ground of sense-making. This is *dialogic ground*, shared by both addresser and addressee who *co-determine* the meaning of language and cooperate in interpreting it. “Meaning”, reasons Vološinov (1973), “is the *effect of interaction between speaker and listener*” (p. 102-3). Thus, human sense-making is not subjective in nature, but *strictly social*. Accordingly, Linell (2009) argues that dialogism “must regard interactions, activities and situations as primary” (p. 15). This insistence is one of several commonalities underlying the symbiosis between a sociocultural theory and dialogism (see Linell, 1998).

2.1.3 Microsociology – interaction *as interaction*

Interaction as an eminently worthy site of study has been championed by microsociologists such as Erving Goffman, Harold Garfinkel and Harvey Sacks. There are, of course, major distinctions between the views of these pioneer thinkers, but also much that draws them into scientific fellowship and justifies their association.⁶ In this section, a few of these shared views of social interaction are pointed out.

Goffman (1981, 1983) pioneered this approach and put the study of social interaction *as interaction*, in its own right, on the sociological map. Ethnomethodology (EM) was established by Garfinkel, and conversation analysis (CA) launched by Sacks. EM and CA are cognate sociological approaches which, since the 1960s, have spearheaded progress in the *empirically-based* study of human action and reinforced the *sociological credibility* of microanalysis (Levinson, 1983; van Dijk, 1997; Watson, 1992).

Goffman (1983) identifies social interaction as “that which uniquely transpires in social situations, that is, environments in which two or more individuals are physically in one another’s response presence” (p. 2). He claims that social interaction bears an *intrinsic and exquisite order*. His warrant for singling out the interaction order as an eminent social phenomenon is “that the contained elements fit together more closely than

⁶ For the relationship between Goffman, ethnomethodology (EM) and conversation analysis (CA), see Heritage (1984), Sidnell (2010), Watson (1992) and Weeks (1995). Linking Goffman’s observations with the foci of EM and CA is not to suggest that these positions are identical. Sidnell (2010), for example, mentions a number of important differences between Goffman and CA, documented in Goffman’s (1976) critique of CA and Schegloff’s (1988) reply.

with elements beyond the order” (p. 2). On this primordial account, interaction merits recognition and *microanalysis* “as a substantive domain in its own right” (ibid).

Both EM and CA pursue analytical descriptions, explications, of the mundane micro-moves and methods by which people do social life with the conviction that there is an innate, discoverable, social order or pattern to their conduct. Perhaps the most fundamental finding, turned analytic assumption, of CA is that natural talk possesses a precision, a relatedness, indeed that it comprises *a set of organizations*, which belie its reputation as sloppy and chaotic (Schegloff, 1989).

This interaction order is brought about and sustained in time and space “from below” (Goffman, 1983, p. 6). That is, the interaction order is the work, the accomplishment, of those it benefits and makes vulnerable rather than the expression of macro social structures impinging on micro-events. In explaining people’s behaviour on the ground as determined by social rules and roles outside and above ongoing human activity, functionalist analysis makes puppets out of participants (Weeks, 1995).

Both EM and CA are centrally concerned with “the locally accomplished and situated character of social order” (Hester & Francis, 2000). “One of our most insistent and recurrent findings” writes Schegloff (1987) “is the so-called local character of the organization of interaction (that is, its turn-by-turn, sequence-by-sequence, episode-sensitive character)” (p. 209). This bottom-up approach reflects a *decentralized or distributed view of human action* (Sidnell, 2010).

Thus one broad commitment Goffman, Garkinkel and Sacks share is to reclaim ordinary people’s active agency and elevate the competencies which enable them cooperatively to produce and sustain their collective understanding of the social activity they are engaged in. Whether the emphasis is on a ‘reciprocally sustained communion of involvement’, ‘practical reasoning’ or the ‘machinery of interaction’, they all turned the spotlight onto the *interactants* as the leading lights on the stage of human action. They all pursued analytical insight into the participants’ *own locally produced, interactional accomplishments* as the primordial site of sociality (Schegloff, 1986).

2.1.4 Bi-and multilingual studies – interaction *as condition*

Bi-and multilingual studies have not traditionally been associated with an interactionist perspective (Bagga-Gupta, 1995, 2012c). Cromdal (2000) notes that the vast majority of studies into bilingualism and second language learning have focused investigation on the human mind, that is, on intra-individual mental processes. In seeking to understand the language

behaviour of bi- and multilingual communities, some sociolinguists “attend to the linguistic or social identity of the addressee, others to the setting in which an interaction takes place or the topic under discussion” (Woolard, 2004, p. 73). Another predominant strand of bilingual research takes a grammatical perspective highlighting the linguistic systems that regulate the way, indeed, make sensible, the way different languages are manipulated and combined in bilingual utterances (Gafaranga, 2007).

All these approaches have been the target of challenges and criticism for failing to accommodate certain language alternation phenomena and therefore as misrepresenting aspects or practices of bilingual conduct which researchers with alternative perspectives have identified as significant. There are at least three ‘*mono*’ critiques. Mentalist approaches are rationalized by a *monologic* assumption that cognitive processes and capacities govern and adequately account for communicative production (Linell, 1998, 2009). This assumption leaves little room for examining the social and contextual dimension of communicative competence. Cognitively oriented studies and some sociolinguistic research have been criticized for operating out of a *monolingual* ideology (Cromdal, 2000; Gafaranga, 2007). Treating the dominant language of a bilingual community as the norm has introduced a bias into the way bilingual practices are assessed and described (e.g. Grosjean, 1992). Linguistic system-oriented research into language alternation has been challenged for its *monolithic* view of the nature of language, that is, for treating languages as discrete, impervious, entities (Bagga-Gupta, Hasnain & Mohan, 2013; Backus, 1999).

Approaches to describing and understanding bi-and multilingualism which gain their bearings from the speakers’ interaction have emerged more recently. Interactionist approaches seek emic perspectives and ground participants’ language choices in their interactional work. An analytic effort to do justice to participant views is reflected in a distinction made between the notion of ‘language’ and that of ‘code’. Alvarez-Cáccamo (1998) distinguishes between ‘communicative code’ (which may be a non-verbal mode) and ‘linguistic variety’. Gafaranga distinguishes between ‘language’ and ‘medium’. In the final analysis, these distinctions are rationalized by observations that participants who mix two languages may be orienting to the fusion as a single code or medium (Auer, 1999). Mixed varieties may operate as the basic vernaculars of some bilingual communities (Backus, 1999). Describing the juxtaposition of languages by speakers-in-interaction as code-switching is not appropriate when, from their point of view, they are not *alternating* between languages but *adhering* to the conventions of their bilingual code.

Making the immediate interaction the focus of analysis also implies an analytic attempt to align with participant orientation as well as to deal with the complexity of several norms intersecting each encounter. Gafaranga (2007) emphasizes the overall order of an interactional episode or conversation as setting the bilingual or monolingual medium. Auer (1988, 1995, 1998), inspired by CA, homes in on the detailed, turn-by-turn, sequencing of talk as prompting and sustaining the current relevancy of a particular language choice act. For Auer, bilingualism becomes bilingual action as a function of the locally-managed, sequential achievement of interactional order. Rather than viewing communicative exchanges as the realization of *prior* language choices, these positions make the participants' situated interaction the *indigenous condition* of their bilingual practices.

2.2 Approaches to classroom interaction

Theoretical claims that cognition is rooted in communication, that knowledge is somehow intimately connected to social action have informed views of what pedagogic conditions should be created in the classroom to best promote certain kinds of learning. However, the theorizing and research outlined in the previous section is not specifically educational research and gaining its bearings on education and the classroom is no straightforward matter for educational researchers and day-to-day practitioners. According to John Dewey (1929a) “[n]o conclusion of scientific research can be converted into an immediate rule of educational art” (p. 9).

This part, again in condensed form, provides some orientation to ways in which the theoretical coordinates outlined in 2.1 have informed research into classroom interaction. First (2.2.1), the impact of dialogue on classroom pedagogy is considered by pointing to a long-standing dialogic movement in education and identifying a number of instructional models which represent dialogic projects. Then, section 2.2.2 attests to the prevalence of ‘interaction’ in classroom research, indicated by the shift of focus from teaching to learning and an inclusion of an interactionist approach as one of ‘either-or’ paradigms in research frameworks of human learning.

2.2.1 Dialogic and classroom pedagogy

The introduction (1.3) describes the problematic relationship between divergent, emergent dialogic views of knowledge and the convergent, terminal learning logic routinely followed in school classrooms. Yet dialogue, particularly Bakhtin’s understanding of it, has had a significant impact, over the last four decades, on theorizing and learning in the classroom and beyond (Renshaw, 2004). This section addresses the question of how dialogism relates to classroom learning and teaching by first, foregrounding

how dialogue has impacted education and second, by surveying broadly a number of dialogic models specified for classroom instruction in which Bakhtin is one of several influences among, for example, Vygotsky and Bruner.

Dialogue as pedagogic force

Despite the appearance of dissonance between dialogism and school learning logic, when we glance at the history of learning and schooling, we see that dialogue has been a formidable pedagogic force. Dialogic concerns with pedagogy, meaning making and understanding constitute a paradigm which has repeatedly challenged and, to various degrees, offered alternative priorities and practices to mainstream classroom agendas. From the times of Socrates to the present day, dialogue has been an instrument of educational *reform*. The Socratic dialogic method of posing questions and allowing students to find their own way to answers has been revered as a pedagogical model, informing the practices of many educators (Haroutunian-Gordan, 1989). Socrates pictured his role as *midwife* who provides competent and engaged assistance to the delivery of consistent reasoning and new understanding that students must themselves bear. In this role, the teacher assumes the position of dialogic partner in a theatre of reflective inquiry.

Paulo Freire (1970; Shor & Freire, 1987) has exploited the ethos of dialogue as a central motif in his efforts to transform education into an equitable, symmetrical and liberating project. Here, dialogue serves to explore alternative understandings through a process of shared inquiry to bring about political awareness and social change.

Bakhtin only briefly considers dialogism in a pedagogical context, but when he does (e.g. Bakhtin, 1984), the emphasis is on the barrenness of *monologic* forms of teaching in which teacher-pupil asymmetrical relations and the teacher's authoritative 'final' word blocks "the genuine interaction of consciousness" (p. 81). The implication is that dialogic interaction marked by open-endedness and recognition of the impossibility of any word being final invites active response and promises greater depths of understanding (Skidmore, 2000). Bakhtin's polar contrast between *monologic* and *dialogic discourse* has inspired a number of pedagogical approaches and specifications for instruction in the classroom (see Skidmore, 2006 and Section 2.3.5).

The notion of dialogue or at least of conducting talk *with students* rather than *at them*, has, since Socrates, commanded a cherished place in the pedagogic repertoires of many practitioners. Such ideals have often been marginalized by gravitation towards a process of pushing students through a system in which curricular goals and results are at a premium and teach-

ing time and resources are reduced by the many other responsibilities teachers need to manage.

At the same time, when dialogue has been applied to instruction, adaptation has proved inevitable. Specifying dialogue for the classroom has involved the need to hold in irreducible tension a goal- and teacher-directed dimension with the resistant and ‘tangent’ contributions of the novice. “Such tension” notes Renshaw “suggests that working dialogically to instruct will always remain an art, a situated engagement between people, never simply a procedural technique” (2004, p. 7).

As a result of variegated views of dialogue and pedagogic innovation, dialogical approaches have proved sufficiently robust and relevant to support a *dialogic stream* in education identified by such labels as *reciprocal teaching* (Palincsar, 1986), *dialogical pedagogy* (Skidmore, 2000) and *dialogic teaching* (Alexander, 2008).

Dialogic models of classroom instruction

Dialogic activity, since the 1970s, has been recommended and introduced into the classrooms of compulsory education under a number of different guises. These dialogic projects offer explicit proposals of how the educative benefits of dialogic engagement through talk may be harnessed. The following paragraphs briefly describe some of their characteristics and their contributions to promoting the *dialogic quality* of classroom interaction.

*Scaffolding*⁷ refers to the form of temporary adult assistance, geared to the limits of a child’s competence, which enables him or her to carry out a task or achieve a goal which would not be possible unaided (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976). Since its application to classroom interaction, scaffolding has become closely associated with Vygotsky’s (1978, 1986) *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) (Cazden, 1979) and also with *dialogue* (Burbules, 1993; Palincsar, 1986).

Cooperative learning is fostered by the kind of group work in which responsibility for a task or project is evenly distributed among group members who each carry out their part of the whole as a *joint venture* (Cohen 1994; Tornberg, 2009). Problems are more successfully solved among cooperating, communicating, negotiating group members than when pupils work on their own in whole class scenarios.

Mercer (2000) claims that *exploratory talk* encourages children to engage in *co-reasoning* and *interthinking* as a resource for extending their *cognitive ‘reach’*. Classroom investigation into ‘exploratory talk’ is inspired

⁷ For an extensive overview of the evolution of ‘scaffolding’ and critical analysis of the metaphor, see Stone (1998).

by Vygotsky and Bakhtin whose insights have been influential in redefining cognitive development *as a dialogue* rather than an individual process.

Informed by several theories of dialogue and framed by Vygotsky's idea of a ZPD, *reciprocal teaching* involves a highly interactive process in which the teacher first models a set of strategies for comprehending a text and then gradually encourages the student to take responsibility for carrying out the strategies in the leading role (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). The reciprocal method *re-specifies scaffolding more dialogically* by promoting teacher-student collaboration "in which participants take turns assuming the role of teacher" (Palincsar, 1986, p. 77-78).

Dialogic inquiry is rationalized by the argument that "education should be conducted as a dialogue about matters that are of interest and concern to the participants" (Wells, 1999, p. xi). Wells envisages the classroom as a "community of inquiry" where any member has the potential to assist and instruct as a 'teacher'. Dialogic inquiry is characterized by the conceptualization of learning as transformation on diverse fronts rather than progress toward a single, predetermined end or telos and a focus on a teacher role which retains leadership responsibility while providing dialogic partnership (Wells, 1999).

Dialogic teaching as formulated by Alexander (2008) is a distinctive pedagogical approach which seeks to strengthen and capitalize on the power of talk in teaching and learning across the entire curriculum. Alexander argues that research evidence on language, cognition, learning and pedagogy converges on the notion of 'dialogic teaching' which, in a nutshell, is *collective, reciprocal, supportive, cumulative and purposeful*. In order to move towards more equal communicative rights between teacher and taught, dialogic teaching encourages pupils to test evidence and explore ideas critically as a basis for gaining knowledge and understanding. On the teacher side, the value of attentiveness to students' voices is reflected in the admonition to treat "students' contributions, and especially their answers to the teacher's questions, as stages in an ongoing cognitive quest rather than as terminal points" (p. 35).

2.2.2 Interaction in classroom research

From teaching to learning

The focus of classroom-based research in Europe and America since the early 1970s has undergone an overriding terminological shift encapsulated in the phrase 'from teaching to learning' (Biesta, 2004; Sahlström, 2008; Wahlström, 2009). In other words, a shift of focus from teacher or curriculum-centred teaching practices to learner or learner needs-centred teaching

objectives and strategies. “Teaching has” notes Biesta (2004) “become redefined as supporting or facilitating learning, just as education is now often described as the provision of learning opportunities or learning experiences” (p. 71). This shift is reflected, for example, in an emphasis on ‘individualized learning’, ‘lifelong learning’, ‘pupil initiative’, ‘entrepreneurship’ which has been formative to the guidance provided by the current Swedish national curricula for compulsory and upper secondary schools (Skolverket, 2011).

John Dewey must be acknowledged as one powerful source of inspiration for this pedagogic shift from teacher to *learner action*. Dewey’s philosophy of *action* collapses the Cartesian duality of mind and matter to claim a fundamental connection between the acquisition of knowledge and personal action (Biesta & Burbules, 2003). Instead of departing from the old centre of ‘mind’, Dewey (1929b), like his contemporary Vygotsky (1978), made the new centre “indefinite interactions” (p. 232). Knowledge, claimed Dewey, lives first at *a level of action* – in our doings, our exertions, our explorations – before existing at the level of mind, via symbolic means, such as language. Knowledge acquisition is not primarily a construction of the mind, but is actualized in the transactions between people and their environments, natural and social (Biesta & Burbules, 2003).

Dewey’s ideas have contributed significantly to a growing recognition that teaching cannot cause or command learning because learning, at the end of the day, is in the hands of the learner who must become interested and actively involved in his or her own learning processes (Bruner, 1996; Ellis, 1993; van Lier, 1996). Such basic convictions and concerns have spawned subsequent areas of educational research and foci, such as learner talk (Mercer, 2000), learning styles (Dunn & Dunn, 1992), learner strategies (Wenden, 1991), learner motivation (Dörnyei, 2001) and learner autonomy (Holec, 1987). Responsibility for and influence over a learner’s own learning progress remains a core educational focus in Swedish schools.⁸

Interaction as one of ‘Either-Or’ research frameworks

A shift of perspective from what teachers do onto what learners do with others to learn has galvanized considerable interest among classroom researchers in teacher-learner and learner-learner interaction. The status ‘interaction’ commands in classroom study is reflected in the tendency among educational researchers to dichotomize an interactionist approach

⁸ See section 2.3 ‘Responsibility and influence of students’ in the ‘Curriculum for the upper secondary school’, Skolverket (2011).

against an opposing paradigm so that an interactionist position stands as one of an ‘either-or’ overview of a field in the learning sciences.

Sfard (1998) has noted that education research is guided by two central metaphors – the *acquisition* metaphor and the *participation* metaphor. The language of acquisition prompts thoughts about “the human mind as a container to be filled with certain materials and about the learner as becoming an owner of these materials” (p. 5). The *participation* metaphor, she observes, has attracted different terms which suggest that “the learner should be viewed as a person interested in participation in certain kinds of activities”; it signals that “learning should be viewed as a process of becoming a part of a greater whole” (p. 6).

Within second language acquisition (SLA) research, the *cognitive-social* debate, polarizing cognitivist and interactionist perspectives on learning, has been particularly high-profile (see Lafford, 2007). An article by Firth and Wagner (1997), representing the ‘social’ side of the debate rekindled discussion in which interaction in formal and noninstructional settings featured prominently. Among other issues, Firth and Wagner (1997) proposed that researchers working in reconceptualized socially and emically based SLA framework would be:

better able to understand and explicate how language is used *as it is being acquired through interaction*, and used resourcefully, contingently and contextually. Language is not only a cognitive phenomenon, the product of the individual’s brain; it is also fundamentally a social phenomenon, acquired and used interactively, in a variety of contexts for myriad practical purposes (p. 296).

Interaction in learning has also been pitched against *transmission* (e.g. Melander & Sahlström, 2010). The term *transmission* is associated to cognitivist, monologic, accounts of communication which put mind before *praxis*. *Interaction*, on the other hand, is associated to positions which propose, as Bruner (1996) puts it, “that mind is an extension of the hands and tools that you use and of the jobs to which you apply them” (p. 151). *Transmission* has also been linked to pedagogies “based on a view of knowledge as given, propositional and fixed” (Alexander, 2008, p. 32). Teaching as *transmission* is thrown into relief by teaching which relies on open, inquiry-oriented interaction and dialogue for securing knowledge and understanding (ibid).

The general tenor of reviews over these dichotomized positions is that we need to ‘live with’ both cognitivist and interactionist accounts of communication and learning. However, these ‘either-or’ profiles indicate the degree to which ‘interaction’, and with it, allied concepts such as ‘partici-

pation', 'social', 'context' and 'situated', have become central, pervasive, pieces in frameworks for research into learning. These pieces characterize a CA mentality.

2.2.3 CA classroom research

The classroom is a language-saturated institutional site which has attracted CA (Watson, 1992). CA has been instrumental in mapping differences between discourse inside and outside classrooms. In addition, CA data-sensitive methodology has also afforded alternative, more nuanced understandings of what is occurring *naturally* in classrooms than static coding analytic approaches have allowed (Levinson, 1983). These two 'services' direct the focus of this section.

Mapping interaction – everyday life inside and outside classrooms

A CA approach to analysis of talk-in-classroom interaction treats the findings and insights from investigation into naturally occurring conversation as an analytic benchmark and orientation for the study of classroom discourse (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Macbeth, 2004). A general claim arising from classroom discourse studies is that “[d]iscourse in lessons and discourse in everyday life have many features in common” (Mehan, 1985, p. 125). For example, as “[t]alk is the overwhelming medium of social interaction” (Hester & Francis, 2000) so “[t]alk in interaction is the prevailing form of instructional activity” (Lerner, 1995). Classroom discourse, like the speech events of everyday social intercourse, has a sequential organization in which speakers take turns one-at-a-time with a minimum of overlap (McHoul, 1978). Members of the classroom use a variety of conversational mechanisms with regard to the management of turn-taking. For example, teachers and students may use blocking tactics such as speeding up their talk or vowel stretching in words to retain their hold on speaker rights.⁹

Classroom interaction also reveals several characteristics which are significantly different from everyday discourse. Turns at talk in the classroom are frequently orchestrated by teachers who may call on students by name in moments of interactional pause or select a student from a throng of candidate contributors; teachers then reclaim speaker rights after a student contribution or at any other point of discursive activity (McHoul, 1978; Mehan, 1979). Use of writing in the classroom is also a significant part of classroom interaction.¹⁰ However, writing-in-interaction is commonly sub-

⁹ See Study 3, Part 2.

¹⁰ See Studies 2 and 4, Part 2.

ordinated to the dominant use of oral language in the analysis of classroom (and other institutional) communication (Bagga-Gupta, 1995, 2012b).

While everyday discourse commonly reveals a sequential organization of two turns (*adjacency pairs*), it has been claimed that classroom discourse in instructional phases is typically composed of a *three-turn sequence* (see Macbeth, 2004; Mehan, 1985; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). A three-part pattern is set up by the educational practice of asking questions whose answers are already known – so-called *display or text questions* – which then positions teachers to evaluate student responses in a following third move. This way of organizing instructional procedures in classrooms then comprises a sequence of (teacher) Initiation, (student) Reply, followed by (teacher) Evaluation (IRE) and “it delivers the last word, and sequence closure, to the teacher” (Macbeth, 2004, p. 704).

If ‘repair’ is used to refer to the work of correcting inaccurate opinions or false propositions about the world, then a major difference emerges between repair patterns in everyday conversations and repair practices in the classroom. Whereas in conversation, other-initiated repair is dispreferred and relatively rare (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977), in the classroom, it occurs frequently in teacher correction conduct (McHoul, 1990).

Affordances of CA treatment of classroom interaction

While not geared to recommending pedagogic specifications, CA, with fine-grained analyses, has consistently sought sensitivity to the intricacies of (classroom) talk-in-interaction (ten Have, 2007). For example, Lerner (1995) has shown that opportunities for participation in instructional activities are shaped, to a large extent, by the sequential organization of instruction-related interaction. More particularly, Lerner’s study explicates the way teacher and student turn design shapes the actions accomplished in their turns and provides differing opportunities for subsequent participation in classroom tasks.

On this theme, Sahlström (1999) has investigated the implications of the organization of participation in classroom interaction for constituting equity in Swedish comprehensive schools. He argues that the organization for the distribution of turns in classrooms support differences in opportunity for participation rather than equity. His CA-based analyses demonstrate that, contrary to ‘progressive’ educational aspirations, of all the plenary interaction formats, it is the teacher-controlled turn-allocation device of hand-raising that constituted the most equity in the classroom.

CA has contributed to showing up the serious limitations of IRE as a frame for analysing classroom discourse. Seedhouse (2004) shows that what via discourse analysis was represented as “a rigid, plodding, lockstep

IRF/IRE cycle sequence in which everything is planned and predictable” (p. 62), can be shown, when treated by CA, to be “a very complex, fluid, and dynamic piece of interaction” (p. 60). Although instances of IRE, indeed extended series of IRE sequences¹¹ do configure some instructional activity, a more pervasive and reliable principle, revealed by CA, is that participant moves are *contingent on the contributions of the other interactants* and accomplished *collaboratively* (Lerner, 1995; Mori, 2002, 2004; Schegloff, 1989).¹² Ironically, perhaps one of the greatest services rendered by IRE-focused research, which CA has helped invigorate, has been to spotlight the infinite variability and unpredictability which is *the most reliable hallmark of classroom interaction* (e.g. Lee, 2007; van Lier, 1996).

The application of CA to classroom study has raised the issue of how CA research can address the needs and burning questions of education (Mori, 2002). In ‘pure CA’¹³ work, the concept of *learning* is treated warily but is latent in the ‘interactional competences’ by which participants coordinate their fluid and finely-adjusted engagements (Hellermann, 2008). Traditionally, a CA view of understanding has focused on the turn-by-turn obligation participants bear to “display to each other, in a turn’s talk, their understanding of other turns’ talk” (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974, p. 728). These linked, publically displayed, and continuously updated understandings serve to sustain intersubjectivity (Heritage, 1984; Schegloff, 1992). Participants *do understanding* (Moerman & Sacks, 1988) as they *do thinking* (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1986) and analyzing the interactional work involved in co-accomplishing such things is as solid and reliable a handle social scientists can gain on the amorphous realm of cognitive activity.

In counter stance to the above, recent CA studies of classroom interaction, especially within SLA, reflect a growing assumption that CA principles and practices can be fruitfully adopted to generate empirically rigorous micro research into instruction-related classroom learning (Hall, 2004; Hellerman, 2008; Markee & Kasper, 2004; Melander & Sahlström,

¹¹ See Mehan (1985), McHoul (1990) and Wells (1993).

¹² See Studies 1-4, Part 2.

¹³ ten Have (2007) uses the term “pure CA” to refer to CA research “motivated by the wish to discover basic and general aspects of sociality” in contrast to “applied CA” denoting CA study of institutional interaction which aims to “discover how those interactions were organized *as* institutional interactions” (p. 174).

2010)¹⁴. Analysts of classroom discourse adopting the CA organization of repair to explicate instructional correction practices have repeatedly treated understanding as having a propositional or informational character rather than as a local-interactive mechanism geared to achieving discursive coherence (e.g. McHoul, 1990; Seedhouse, 2004).¹⁵ A ‘CA for learning’ stance foregrounds the crucial question of how ‘understanding’ in terms of grasping a current interactant’s meaning is related to ‘understanding’ in terms of grasping or mastering the meanings of instructional matter; that is, how *intersubjectivity* relates to *pedagogic purposes and practices*.

2.3 Bakhtinian dialogism

Recently, the inspiration and interpretative value of dialogical insights have been recognized as a ‘dialogical turn’ (Linell, 2009; Soler-Gallert, 2004) taken by researchers from a range of disciplines in the human sciences. An orientation toward dialogical theories has been precipitated by a surge of contemporary interest in sociocultural theories as an alternative to prevalent cognitive approaches to analyzing human action (Renshaw, 2004; Säljö, 2005; see also section 2.1). Analytic access and alignment to both sociocultural and dialogical perspectives have been mediated by scholars such as Wertsch (1985, 1991, 1998) who have done much to introduce soviet writers such as Bakhtin, Vološinov and Vygotsky to research communities in the Global North.

The aim of the following section (2.3.1) is to unpack some senses of ‘dialogue’ as a starting point to understanding the term and considering its scope. I then give reasons for my choice of Bakhtian dialogism as the primary paradigm for this thesis (2.3.2). Section 2.3.3 introduces some of the logic of Bakhtin’s vision of dialogue and section 2.3.4 describes some integral Bakhtinian concepts which have proved relevant in the studies of this thesis. Finally, 2.3.5 illustrates the way some Bakhtinian concepts have been used as a lens for classroom research.

¹⁴ Both Heap (1997) and Mori (2002) emphasize the importance of adhering to both the spirit of ‘pure CA’ and the educational commitment of applied CA, indeed of exploring the tension as *productive*, for offering credible and meaningful contributions to the field via CA. Other analysts, such as Rampton, Roberts, Leung and Harris (2002) remain skeptical about the adequacy of CA to understand (language) *learning* as opposed to language *use* (see Ellis, 2008).

¹⁵ See Macbeth (2004) and Hall (2007) for critical responses to such analysis.

2.3.1 Senses and scope of dialogue

Dialogue described

Dialogue is commonly understood as conversation or discussion, as having to do with two people talking to each other (Burbules, 1993; Holquist, 2002). Two people engaged in dialogue implicate two discourses, two ideas, two points of view in constructive communicative contact (Morgan & Cain, 2000). However, Crapanzano (1990) points out that, rather than standing for ‘two’, *dia-* in the Greek word *dialogos* is a preposition that means ‘through’, ‘between’ and ‘across’; *dia* therefore signifies more than simply ‘two persons’ and expresses the principle idea of *spanning* or *connecting* (Burbules, 1993). The root *logos* comes from *legein*, ‘to speak’ (Crapanzano, 1990); it has a range of meanings including ‘word’ or ‘speech’ as well as ‘thought’, ‘reason’ and ‘judgement’ (Burbules, 1993). Crapanzano (1990) sums up the etymological values of *dialogos*:

a dialogue is a speech across, between, through two people. It is a passing through and a going apart. There is both a transformational dimension to dialogue and an oppositional one – an agonistic one. It is a relationship of considerable tension (p. 276).

The ‘two’ and ‘through’ interpretations are not mutually exclusive; the first is inferred by the second. Given that acts of language presuppose a communicating being and are *oriented toward an ‘other’* (Vološinov, 1973), dialogue as *in and through language* (Linell, 2009) assumes the active participation of addresser and addressee in dialogue even when the conversation is with oneself. More specifically, dialogue is that which is made manifest by and through two or more *participants-operating-with-language* in an “irreducible tension” (Wertsch, 1998, p. 25-30). These interpretations, together, bring out the *actual* and *actualizing* qualities of dialogue, the *situated conversational interface* as well as the *broader current of communication* which instances of verbal interaction connect and contribute to.

‘Dialogue’ as a generative construct

Accounts of different types and interpretations of dialogue¹⁶ index that the scope of its senses is wide. For example, Linell (2009) distinguishes three senses in which dialogue is understood. The first is dialogue in a concrete, empirical sense, that is, the (face-to-face or online) interaction in and through talk and writing that by and large characterizes everyday social

¹⁶ For further typologies and understandings of ‘dialogue’, see Burbules (1993), Maranhão (1990), Marková and Foppa (1990), Morgan and Cain (2000) and van der Linden and Renshaw (2004).

encounters between two or more individuals. The second is dialogue in a normative sense involving a special kind of practice that meets certain standards of conduct such as mutual respect and equal opportunities for participants to contribute to the process. The third kind is dialogue in an abstract sense which refers to “*any* kind of human sense-making, semiotic practice, action, interaction, thinking or communication, as long as these phenomena are ‘dialogically’ [...] understood” (p. 5-6). By implication, this broad interpretation of dialogue, *dialogism*, as all human sense-making comprehends the first sense – dialogue as concrete interaction – so that *empirical substantiation* is a possible claim for the approach.

‘Dialogue’ then is a fertile and *generative* construct (Renshaw, 2004). As theory, dialogue has proved flexible enough to frame and focus the agendas of researchers from a range of disciplines with different assumptions about and attitudes to, for example, language, knowledge and orientation to one’s partner(s) in dialogue. Dialogical theory is a dynamic and decisive interpretative force in education (Lyle, 2008), language and literacy (Ball & Warshauer Freedman, 2004), (Hermans, 2002) as well as second language acquisition research (Swain & Deters, 2007) among other disciplines.

Dialogism as a counter-theory to monologism

What coalesces these different conceptualizations of dialogue into a distinctive movement is a common counter stance to *monologism*¹⁷ (Linell, 2009). The English prefix *mono* in monologism means ‘alone’, ‘single’ or ‘one’ (Crapanzano, 1990). Accordingly, monologism, as an epistemology, locates the source of human consciousness and meaning within the single individual. It models communication as the project of transferring already formed individual meanings in fixed codes which can be carried via a neutral means, intact, from one person to another. Cognition and the production of meaning are therefore *presupposed* by communication. Language, as a code, is conceived as a ready-made, normative, stable system of signs.

It is important to stress that as a counter-theory to monologism, dialogism does not imply a rejection of individual expressive intention or the relatively static, systematic, side of language. Dialogism as an antidote to monologism amounts to a claim that these elements, on their own, cannot account for the complexity of human action, communication and sense-making. *Rather*, human action, language and consciousness can only be

¹⁷ For description and explication of the theories and assumptions of monologism, see Daelemans and Maranhão (1990), Linell (1998, 2009), Marková (1990) and Vološinov (1973).

treated and explained adequately within a framework which comprehends *dialogic interactions* between individuals and their sociocultural sphere of development; between the systematic and situated, performative aspects of language; between the single utterance and others forming the continuous generative flow of verbal and written communication.

Dialogic relations bring us back to the key idea expressed by *dialogos* of *connecting* different kinds of phenomena that *interanimate* each other. Dialogism “starts with *wholes* rather than with *parts of wholes*” (Marková, 1990, p. 14). Among other dialogic interdependencies, dialogism approaches individuals and all their capacities on the basis of the social (Maranhão, 1990; Vološinov, 1973), assumes the notion of ‘self’ and ‘other’ as mutually constitutive (Bakhtin, 1981; Linell, 2009) and includes both convergent and the divergent tendencies as fundamental to the production of meaning and the attainment of understanding (Burbules, 1993; Bakhtin, 1986).

2.3.2 Why Bakhtin?

The aim of this section is to address the question as to why Bakhtin’s brand of dialogue¹⁸ has been deemed to be more useful to this thesis than other advocates of dialogue. Three reasons are offered for ‘Why Bakhtin?’

First, Bakhtin offers a highly distinctive perception of language and concepts with which to view verbal and visual interaction. Bakhtin’s brand of dialogism has a universal, existential span (Holquist, 2002), but his notion of *utterance*, language cast communicatively in response to previous utterances, grounds his philosophy of language in *practice*. In short, Bakhtin’s emphasis on appropriating words for actualizing meanings and responding as a condition to understanding them moves the concern of dialogue from rhetorical art or a particular kind of practice to the *dialogic nature of everyday speech*. It is *this* arena, where people interact and thereby make sense to each other, that is of interest to this thesis.

¹⁸ For discussion on the issue of authorship of texts associated to three Soviet thinkers, Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975), Pavel Nikolaevich Medvedev (1891-1938) and Valentin Nikolaevich Vološinov (1884/5-1936), see Clark and Holquist (1984), Moraes (1996), Morris (1994), Morson and Emerson (1989) and Wertsch (1991). Following Moraes (1996) and Wertsch (1991), I credit Vološinov as author of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*; at the same time, I assume that the voices of Bakhtin and Vološinov, while not speaking in unison, resonate with such sympathy as to justify including both within *Bakhtinian dialogism*.

Second, Bakhtin stands out as a central influence on educationalists' recognition of dialogue as a relevant lens for furthering an understanding of instructional and learning processes. In a review of dialogic teaching, Lyle (2008) traces discussion around the introduction of dialogic practices back to Bakhtin and asserts: "it is in the work of Bakhtin that dialogic engagement as a concept has re-emerged" (p. 224). "Bakhtin located the core of thinking in dialogic speech occurring between oneself and another" (Renshaw, 2004, p. 4). Thus, the *dialogic* quality of classroom relations and *talk* (rather than simply oratory and argumentation) has held particular pedagogic promise in places where activity is directed toward developing conceptual understanding and *learning to think*.

Third, there are a sufficient number of affinities between Bakhtin's brand of dialogism and CA to make the project of exploring their theoretical and methodological partnership feasible. Several similarities are mentioned in chapter 4 on methodology (section 4.3.1). Generally, Bakhtin's 'real-life', observational, analytic orientation is in line with CA's empirical imperative.¹⁹

2.3.3 Bakhtin and the logic of dialogue

Bakhtin's dialogism is a synthesis of an interdependent set of convictions, logics, which animated and mastered his thinking. Bakhtin's meditations on *dialogue* throughout his life must be considered analytically primary in his work because, as Wertsch (1991) maintains, his other ideas such as *utterance*, *voice* and *addressivity*, can be appreciated only in the light cast by his logic of dialogue. Several fundamental assumptions have been identified by scholars such as Holquist (2002) and Linell (2009) as contributing to this logic and, in this section, three of these axioms are outlined: the logic of co-being, the logic of difference and the logic of heteroglossia.

The logic of co-being

The dialogic axiom that *nothing is in itself* underlies an insistence that human beings, action, consciousness and other natural phenomena are essentially brought into existence relationally, *dialogically* (Holquist, 2002). Existence, from this premise, is based, not on an individual's cognition or on any other unitary system or single primordial force, but on "the event of co-being" (ibid. p. 41). Such interconnectedness rejects the idea of individuals as *autonomous* that is, able to act, communicate and think by

¹⁹ For more detailed elaboration on empirical methods with reference to dialogism and other interactionist approaches, see Linell (1998, 2009).

and for themselves (Linell, 2009). For Bakhtin, ‘self’ is not single nor self-sufficient but a *relation* (Holquist, 2002).

What is the import of this logic for language? That language deployment is enveloped in a larger dialogue. The logic of co-being assumes dialogical exchanges active at all levels of life from sensitivities between processes in the natural world to the sense-making between people engaged in interaction. Such dialogic activity precipitates a ceaseless generation, recreation, of meaning with reference to other meanings. Language – verbal and written – as a means of furthering dialogue is thus seen as one of many expressive forms by which the web of co-being is dialogically spun.²⁰ More specifically, these dialogic dimensions imply that an *utterance* is never simply *of itself* but is brought about collectively.

The logic of difference

The relationism implicit in a dialogical conception of co-being brings into focus a collateral axiom – the logic of dialogue is to *hold human difference together* in productive proximity. Holquist (2002) notes that “dialogue is ultimately a differential relation” (p. 40). Encounters between people occur up against or through interfaces made by the mutuality of differences. Communication is routinely an attempt to orient towards, to align to, (an)other(s) intersubjectively despite differences in background, circumstances, point of view and way with words. Bakhtin (1981) describes an orientation toward the listener in terms that invoke otherness and resistance: the speaker “breaks through the alien conceptual horizon of the listener, constructs his own utterance on alien territory, against his, the listener’s, apperceptive background” (p. 282).

This logic comprehends more than the difficulty of achieving mutual understanding. The juxtaposition of difference is a generative condition in human nature and life. In dialogism, there is no consciousness without *otherness* (Holquist, 2002). Human perception is set off by *contrast*. Things become visible, noticeable, against *the perspective of something else*; figure is thrown into relief by its *ground*. For Bakhtin, the reorientation involved in making connections between different, even contradictory, points of view is the very dynamic that animates creative, novel meaning (Morris, 1994). Language plays a crucial role in creating shared human territory (Vološinov, 1973).

²⁰ See Study 2, Part 2.

The logic of heteroglossia

Heteroglossia – “the social diversity of speech types” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 263) – is a conception of language as ideologically saturated and constantly undergoing a process of historical becoming; it is born out of Bakhtin’s study of poetic and social discourse and his utter rejection of monologic accounts of language life. Monologic philosophies of language, linguistics and stylistics treated all linguistic and stylistic phenomena in terms of two basic concepts: “on the one hand, the system of a *unitary language*, and on the other the *individual* speaking in this language” (ibid. p. 269). Bakhtin’s analysis discloses the content of these concepts as the theoretical expression of the *centripetal forces* of language – “*the forces that serve to unify and centralize the verbal-ideological world*” (ibid. p. 270; emphasis in original). A unitary language gravitates towards linguistic ‘correctness’ and the preservation of officially recognized language; it seeks to suppress the realities of heteroglossia.

However, the socio-ideological development of language will not be tamed by monoglossic moulding. To Bakhtin, it is evident that language stratification is a *constant* in linguistic life. In opposition to centripetal forces, *centrifugal forces* serve processes of decentralization and disunification. These tendencies counter any abstract system of linguistic-ideological norms so that language in its evolutionary trajectory is being driven relentlessly towards the perimeters of social life where it stratifies into a multitude of generic linguistic varieties. Heteroglossia is the social environment in which these languages jostle, cross-pollinate and evolve to become living, dynamic and fleeting. Thus the Bakhtinian logic of dialogue is infused with his vision of language varieties caught up in a super strife between *centripetal* and *centrifugal* impulses.

This broad socio-ideological battle is played out locally in every individual utterance. This is the site where the centripetal and centrifugal forces most tangibly engage; where the requirements of linguistic systematicity and the range of ways in which language has been exploited for meaning in diverse contexts are worked out in unique situated performance (Wertsch, 1991). Far from wearing down the currency of language, this ideological tension sustains an expressive, semantic open-endedness. Despite centralizing, unifying forces acting on language and its status as “half someone else’s” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293), the word can be made ‘one’s own’. It is by virtue of oppositional tendencies and contradictions in language life, opening up a field of myriad responses, that an individual speaker champions language with his or her own world view and expressive intention. Heteroglossia is the matrix of conditions that insures the capability of language to be exploited communicatively by individuals so that, at any particular

time, in any particular place, it “is able to reveal every newer *ways to mean*” (ibid. p. 346).

2.3.4 Key Bakhtinian perceptions

Language as dialogic interaction

With his dialogism rooted in sociocultural thinking (Säljö, 2005; Wertsch, 1991), Bakhtin, like Vygotsky, viewed language as a social phenomenon with the primary purpose to facilitate communication between people and a potency to mediate consciousness semiotically (Vološinov, 1973). However, as translanguist and discourse analyst (see Sherzer, 1987; Wertsch, 1991), his main interest lies in explaining the way lay and literary language is dialogized, and thereby charged, to fulfill its meaning and consciousness mediating roles.

As rubric for Bakhtin’s view of language, the phrase *dialogic interaction*²¹ is more comprehensive than verbal interaction (Vološinov, 1973) for it represents the two main interrelated planes integral to his analysis. Bakhtin emphasizes the concrete, historical, moment of social engagement as well as its active participation in broader ideological struggle and social dialogue (Morris, 1994).

This section first zooms in on the *utterance* as site of actualizing meaning and then zooms out to consider the communicative relations that hold utterances in tension and energize their sense-making capacity. Like figure and ground, these two aspects are integrated: utterances are *dialogized* and heteroglossia, the environment in which they are charged, evolves through *utterances*.

Language as utterance

Against prevailing trends of thought in linguistics, Bakhtin perceives language not as an abstract, self-contained system of normative forms, but as the actualized meaning of such forms realized in specific utterances between communicating beings in historical moments of interaction (Morris, 1994). Bakhtin (1981, 1986) repeatedly qualifies ‘language’, ‘discourse’ ‘conversation’ and ‘interaction’ with the adjective ‘living’ to underscore that it is only in the dynamic and directed deployment of speech utterance that linguistic forms *become language*. Having conducted an investigation into the real nature of language with reference to formalist and structuralist linguistic outlooks, Vološinov (1973) concludes:

²¹ Bakhtin uses this term, for example, in his essay ‘Discourse in the Novel’.

The actual reality of language-speech is not the abstract system of linguistic forms, not the isolated monologic utterance, and not the psychophysiological act of its implementation, but the social event of verbal interaction implemented in an utterance or utterances.

Thus, verbal interaction is the basic reality of language (p. 94; emphasis in original).

This conclusion resounds in Bakhtin's insistence on recognizing the utterance as "the real unit of speech communication" (1986, p. 71) and his interest in analyzing language as situated action rather than in studying language abstracted from the throes of communication. "For speech" Bakhtin asserts, "can exist in reality only in the form of concrete utterances of individual speaking people, speech subjects. Speech is always cast in the form of an utterance belonging to a particular speaking subject, and outside this form it cannot exist" (ibid.). Language therefore must be incarnated, embodied, if it is to exist as meaningful action listened to and spoken.

The term *linguaging* has been suggested by both sociolinguists (e.g. García, 2010) and dialogists (e.g. Linell, 2009) to capture the action-oriented status of language as situated communicated meaning between interacting persons. For example, Linell (2009) argues that a "dialogic theory of language must assign primacy to action" and with *linguaging* referring to "linguistic actions and activities in actual communication and thinking", the term is "more dialogically attuned than 'language use' (p. 274).

Language as dialogized

Bakhtin (1981) highlights two communicative relations that language, when deployed, is caught up in and thereby becomes *dialogized*. One is a retrospective orientation to what others have done and are doing for "[t]he word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it" (p. 279). The other is a prospective orientation that makes all utterances contingent on imminent fitting counteraction for "every word is directed toward an *answer* and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates" (p. 280). Human discourse cannot divorce itself from this dialogic inter-orientation for the roles played by speaker and listener are fundamentally *responsive* to a surrounding web of social dialogue and *response-seeking* for dialogic inclusion. By virtue of this responsive partnership, verbal communication between persons enter into relations with preceding utterances and those being projected, for any utterance is "a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances" (1986, p. 69).

That an utterance is always formed in retrospective response means that it:

cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. After all, the utterance arises out of this dialogue as a continuation of it and as a rejoinder to it – it does not approach the object from the sidelines (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 276-7).

For Bakhtin, all utterances are dialogic because they are *multivoiced*. As participative in social interaction within a world of ideological understanding, speakers *assimilate* – more or less creatively – others' words. "Our speech [...] is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of 'our-own-ness'" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 89). Discourse is the hybrid production of dialogic activity which is shot through not only with the expressions of others, but the overtones of the ideological climate it takes shape in. For meditational and meaning-making purposes, we borrow language, multi-hand, and reweave it with other semiotic elements into new textures of significance. Indeed, it is through appropriating the voices of others that we find our own.

That utterances are also prospectively oriented means that they are deployed to provoke response; in other words, they are fashioned to be meaningful and understood. For Bakhtin (1981):

discourse [...] is oriented toward an understanding that is "responsive" [...]. Responsive understanding is a fundamental force, one that participates in the formulation of discourse (p. 280).

A prospective dialogic orientation is geared to engage others in further dialogue, to set up their participation in social intelligibility. This kind of stance gives an utterance the propensity to sustain multiple possible ways to encounter and answer it. Its thrust is divergent rather than convergent.

Language as *dialogic interaction* implies that neither language nor individuals in themselves have a monopoly on meaning making in human encounters. Language when it *means* must be appropriated by a subject with expressive intention and addressed to another. However, it is the ideologically agitated and creative milieu which mediates the capacity to produce inimitable meanings in situated language deployment. Just as efforts to make sense of others frame our perception of self (Bakhtin, 1981; Mead, 1934), we are dependent on other participants, authors, voices, to *mean* and *understand*.

Authorship and addressivity

For Bakhtin (1986), the constitutive features of an utterance is that it “has both an author [...] and an addressee” (p. 95). Authorship involves *appropriating the word* that is, wrestling other people’s words into communicative submission and making them ‘one’s own’. At the same time, addressivity entails an *orientation to someone* without which “the utterance does not and cannot exist” (ibid. p. 99). Authorship and addressivity are inseparable; *to express is to address* (Holquist, 2002) and it is these qualities of speech, of writing, that convert linguistic forms into communication and bring language to life.

Utterances as authored and addressed are themselves cast communicatively in responsive and response-seeking action (Bakhtin, 1986). To express an intention in an utterance is to respond to a previous utterance, either immediate or distal, and to anticipate response from the addressee. These responsive dynamics key single utterances into a “chain of speech communication” making them fundamentally co-authored and oriented to a range of recipients (ibid. p. 91). From a dialogic perspective, it is in *achieving a response* that communicative means turn into *meanings* and recognition transforms into *understanding* (Bakhtin, 1981).

The dialogic implication of the *necessary* link between expression and addressivity are brought out by Vološinov (1973) and Bakhtin (1986) in their critiques of the monologic thinking pervading nineteenth-century linguistics and individual subjectivism in particular. Individual subjectivism envisages an utterance as a purely individual act, the outward objectification of an inner expressible, experiential element which has taken shape in the realm of a speaker’s consciousness.

Vološinov rejects this dualistic perception of expression on two counts. He argues first, that “*expression organizes experience*” rather than merely channelling it to the outside and, second, that it is always “*oriented toward an addressee*” (p. 85; emphases in original). The first, as Hanks (1996) comments, amounts to “a rejection of any attempt to reduce the utterance to a mere spin-off of some more basic level of human experience or engagement in the world. Utterance is a form of engagement, and it produces experience as much as it reports about it” (p. 143). The second – *addressivity* – elucidates that speakers’ experiences derive from their orientation to other people and from their assimilation of other’s words (ibid; Bakhtin 1986). Thus speakers’ experiences, formed and developed in continuous interaction with others and their utterances, are not subjective but *social experiences*. Vološinov (1973) is adamant that:

word is a two-sided act. It is determined equally by *whose* word it is and *for whom* it is meant. As word, it is precisely *the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee* (p. 86; emphasis in original).

Consonant with Vološinov, Bakhtin (1986) denounces the tendency of nineteenth century linguists to separate the speaker from listener in speech communication as a distortion of live speech. He points to the way speakers shape their utterances to engage listeners in response and to the actively responsive stance others take in seeking to understand incoming speech. Such communicative interdependence means that *no* utterance is “adequate to its object (i.e., the content of the uttered thought) and to the person who is pronouncing the utterance” (p. 67).

These arguments – the utterance as *co-determined*, as obtaining between speakers – strike at the heart of monologic understandings of human experience and communication. In monologic models of communication, meaning is first formed or formulated cognitively and then, with the aid of a passive means of communication, is conveyed from the ‘sender’ to a ‘receiving’ party (see Linell, 1998, 2009).

Counter word

The notion of *counter word* brings into sharper focus the Bakhtinian insight into understanding as fundamentally responsive and catalytic in ongoing dialogue. In military field operations or the sport of fencing, to counter an enemy offensive or opponent’s thrust is to take answering, contrary action.

To understand another person’s utterance means to orient oneself with respect to it, to find the proper place for it in the corresponding context. For each word of the utterance that we are in process of understanding, we, as it were, lay down a set of our own answering words (Vološinov, 1973, p. 102).

In my view, Vološinov is asserting that grasping another person’s utterance is not simply a *condition* for responding to it, but *comes fundamentally to fruition* in and through the action of returning a coherent response to what has (just) been encountered. Because language is a medium for understanding, it is in *responsively repositioning* ourselves in relation to another’s words and *formulating an actual rejoinder* that we make sense of their meanings. Response and understanding interpenetrate each other for “a generative process can be grasped only with the aid of another generative process” (ibid). This perception of understanding as *brought about responsively* diverges sharply from a monologic view that understanding an utter-

ance is a cognitive pre-condition of replying to it. Bakhtin (1981) describes the dialogic counter claim as follows:

To some extent, primacy belongs to the response, as the activating principle: it creates the ground for understanding, it prepares the ground for an active and engaged understanding. Understanding comes to fruition only in the response (p. 282).

At the same time, a responsive utterance, one which generates understanding of a previous utterance, bears an anticipation of the kind of forthcoming answer it will in turn provoke. The retrospective and prospective orientations of any utterance, critical to the mediation of understanding, are invoked by a Bakhtinian insistence that meaning and interpreting it come about only in the interanimation between two or more voices in generative engagement. Rather than the exclusive domain of an individual mental capacity, understanding is quickened as participants key into a collective, communicative current of intelligibility. These dynamics underlie the claim that “[a]ny true understanding is dialogic in nature. Understanding is to utterance as one line of a dialogue is to the next. Understanding strives to match the speaker’s words with a *counter word*” (Vološinov, 1973, p. 102).

Interillumination

Interillumination is a conceptual specification of the axiom that perception is a function of difference and contrast. The term is used by Bakhtin (1981) to refer to the interpretive, elucidative force or effect languages brought into contact exert on each other. “Languages” asserts Bakhtin, “throw light on each other: one language can, after all, see itself only in the light of another language” (p. 12). Holquist (1981b) describes ‘interillumination’ as “the major relativizing force in de-privileging languages” (p. 430) that explodes the myth of any language that presumes to be absolute, externally authoritative and insular. Under such conditions, discursive ‘novelness’ is artistically achievable.

Bakhtin (1981) conceives of a process of *interillumination* in an actively polyglot world as having an irreversible transformative effect on linguistic phenomena:

Words and language began to have a different feel to them; objectively they ceased to be what they had once been. Under these conditions of external and internal interillumination, each given language – even if its linguistic composition (phonetics, vocabulary, morphology, etc.) were to remain absolutely unchanged – is, as it were, reborn, becoming qualitatively a different thing for the consciousness that creates in it (p. 12).

Bakhtin's arguments imply two further characterizations. First, the prefix of *interillumination* implies that the illuminative process is reciprocal. Any change in consciousness of one language by virtue of the light shed by another necessarily entails a change in the way aspects of the 'illuminator' language is conceived.

Second, the sheer dependency of perception on relations of difference and Bakhtin's insistence on the dialogic orientation of all discourse make it clear that the process of *interillumination* is active between linguistic expression at all levels of discursive diversity:

amid others' utterances inside a *single* language [...], amid other "social languages" within a single *national* language and finally amid different national languages within the same *culture*, that is, the same socio-ideological conceptual horizon (ibid, p. 275).

Interillumination or interanimation (Holquist, 1981b) is the condition of heteroglossia through which words and language take on novel meanings and values. "The period of national languages, coexisting but closed and deaf to each other" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 12) has been superseded by the new era of heteroglossia in which "languages do not *exclude* each other, but rather intersect with each other in many different ways" (ibid. p. 291). As specific points of view on the world, all social languages of heteroglossia "may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically" (ibid. p. 292).

These aspects of Bakhtin's innovative and challenging perceptions have proved interpretively robust for the studies of Part 2. They relate to a considerable number of studies that have adopted Bakhtinian concepts productively to study the nature of classroom discourse.

2.3.5 Studies of classroom interaction through a Bakhtinian lens

As suggested earlier, Bakhtin's influence has been extensive in forming a distinctive stream of educational research devoted to harnessing the dynamics of dialogue for teaching and learning in the classroom. The aim of this section is to give an impression of Bakhtinian-informed classroom research by illustrating how some Bakhtinian theoretical contrasts and constructs have enriched analysis of classroom discourse data.

Heteroglossia

Bakhtin's central notion of *heteroglossia* has proved analytically fruitful for research into discourse occurring in, for example, bilingual education (Busch, 2010; Moraes, 1996), science education (Mäkitalo, Jakobsson & Säljö, 2009) and multi-ethnic classrooms (De Haan, 2005). Busch's (2010)

study uses *heteroglossia* to valorize the *heteroglossic*, linguistically diverse, practices of a South African school and to foreground a speaker-centred approach to school language policy.

Monologic and dialogic discourse

Several classroom studies have explored the significance of the Bakhtinian contrast between *monologic and dialogic discourse* for understanding the language of classroom instruction. Inspired by Bakhtin's distinction, Nystrand, Gamoran, Kachur and Prendergast's (1997) investigation into classroom discourse rests on the 'bottom line' instructional assumption that "the quality of student learning is closely linked to the quality of classroom talk" (p. 29). Nystrand et al. found that the prevalent discourse norm in patterns of eighth- and ninth-grade classroom discourse was monologic, geared to the transmission of teacher's expert knowledge. 'Dialogically-organized instruction' treated students' creative contributions in the classroom as *indispensable* to the production of their own knowledge. Nystrand concludes that dialogic instruction is of greater significance in stimulating student thinking and improving learning outcomes.

Skidmore (2000) draws on Bakhtin's (1981) distinction between *authoritative discourse* (orthodox, contextually impervious, unchallengeable) and *internally persuasive discourse* (semantically open, context-sensitive, creative). The study highlights the educative benefits of decentralized teacher stances and open-ended kinds of question and activity because they increase opportunity for pupils to engage constructively in the discussion. Rationalizing the value of mobilizing pupils in formulating and defending their own point of view is Bakhtin's (1984) affirmation:

Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born *between people* collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction (p. 110).

Social languages and speech genres

Bakhtin's concept of social languages has enabled researchers to understand how identity is fashioned through appropriating different language forms, how meanings are nuanced, enriched, and how official and unofficial scripts are bridged in the classroom (Renshaw, 2004). For example, Ballenger (1997) shows the way diverse social languages and identity positions among bilingual participants in Science lessons can enter into *dialogic interanimation* during scientific argumentation to aid sense-making.

Wertsch (1991) demonstrates the value of analyzing classroom interaction in terms of the *speech genre of formal instruction*. This lens clarifies the major differences between the ways pupils and teachers describe objects

and events in instructional encounters. It also provides an analytic handle on how pupils appropriate scientific concepts and align to the particular speech genres and registers of school subject discourses which mediate conceptual perspectives.

Voice and authoring

The insights of Bakhtin and Vološinov into utterances as sites where *voices* enter into dialogic relationships reveal that communication practices inside and outside classrooms entail handling meaning as a *multivoiced*, volatile, phenomenon.²² Maybin (1994) shows the way children in primary school invoke in their speech the voices of others – teachers, other adults, their classmates, textbooks, popular song, etc. – which carry particular kinds of power, values and connotations. Maybin summarizes:

One of the ways in which children construct personhood, and build up the contextual layers in their talk, is through the reporting and taking on of other people's voices. The articulation of different conversational layers, the cross-cutting dialogues and the references out to other contexts and longer term themes all serve to create a particularly rich resource for negotiating and constructing meaning (p. 148).

De Haan (2005) draws on Bakhtin's concept of *authoring* as a central lens to focus on how students in a multi-ethnic Dutch school resist what is 'official' in the classroom and how they discursively create their own versions of 'school'. *Authoring* school involves pupils creating and using seemingly countervailing, alternative, scripts and behaviours as a way of grasping the authoritative, official, discourse. Thus, far from simply reflecting the disruptive behaviour of students intent on undermining school authority, this study suggests that some deviant student stances must be recognized as students' unofficial struggle to relate to school.

I began this chapter by describing a major theoretical reorientation from the individual subject to *interaction between individuals*. Theories which foreground interaction have shifted educational attention away from the practices of the teacher to the activities of the students. That is, they have inspired various classroom pedagogic models and specifications in efforts to engage learners more personally and actively. As I have tried to show, a formidable pedagogic force in interactionist approaches to the classroom is

²² Hirst and Renshaw (2004) and Kaartinen and Kumpulainen (2004) illustrate studies which adopt 'voice' to shed light on the dialogic, polyphonic, nature of classroom interaction in a second language classroom and science classrooms respectively.

the tenacious conviction that *dialogue* is an essential *tool for learning*. Moreover, there is substantial research evidence that dialogic modes of interaction influence students' educative experience in pedagogically positive ways (Alexander, 2008; Lyle, 2008; Skidmore, 2006).

Different patterns of interaction afford different kinds of opportunity for students to appropriate language, to explore and think through ideas and issues related to subject matter. The services of CA have, more recently, been enlisted to help explicate the way opportunities for participation and participants' processes of orientation are contingent on the organization of the other interactants' turns and expressions. Within interactionist and dialogic pedagogic approaches, Bakhtin's influence has been critical. His ideas and vision have been an inspiration for educationists devoted to making the principles of *dialogic teaching* work for the benefit of students and teachers. His perspective and concepts have enabled researchers to gain penetrating insights into what is going on discursively, interactionally, among students and teachers in the various arenas where they have created research contexts and empirical material. It is to the research context of this thesis that I now turn.

3. Research context

The previous chapter gathers together several theoretical orientations to (classroom) interaction as coordinates for an approach to the research context which is the focus of this chapter. Context has widely been treated as a problem (Lave, 1996) and in need of explication (see, for example, Duranti & Goodwin, 1992). The sharp distinction between context and activity has been challenged as problematic by, among others, phenomenologists (e.g. Schutz, 1967) and social constructionists (e.g. Giddens, 1984). I view the context of social action as having both a *contingent* and an *emergent* character; that is, human behaviour is both *sensitive to* a surround while *configuring* its contours.

For conversation analysts, the relevant context of social action is the natural environment of language use, namely *talk-in-interaction* (Schegloff, 1989). A Bakhtinian view of context is broader and comprehends situated instances of communication. Vološinov (1973) contextualizes verbal interaction as follows:

Any utterance, no matter how weighty and complete in and of itself, is only a moment in the continuous process of verbal communication. But that continuous verbal communication is, in turn, itself only a moment in the continuous, all-inclusive, generative process of a given social collective. [...] Verbal communication can never be understood and explained outside of this connection with a concrete situation (p. 95; emphasis in original).

This description foregrounds the multileveled complexity and the generative tension between, on one side, constraining and homogenizing contextual features and, on the other side, creative and heterogenic tendencies played out in (classroom) interaction. This conceptualization provides a precedent for viewing and reporting the research context in three ways. The account begins with situated interaction as the contextual nucleus for the research project, then moves outwards to focus on the partner class and classroom as context and then draws in the institutional dimension as a third level of context. Each contextual contour illustrates context as *contingent* and *emergent* process.

3.1 Interactional context

Conversation analysts regard the “turn-by-turn unfolding of talk-in-interaction” as the primordial context, the critical site of analysis (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 146). In a target event, with regard to which any number of contextual characterizations or categories *might* be relevant, it is what the *participants orient to as relevant and focal* that should define what contextual features deserve analytic attention (Goodwin, 2000;

Schegloff, 1997). This is because the participants’ “grasp of the setting supplies the basis for each next increment of their conduct, either further confirming and constituting a setting along certain lines or moving to re-shape it” (Schegloff, 1992, p. 196). Thus conversation analysts assume that “the significance of any speaker’s communicative action is doubly contextual in being *context-shaped* and *context-renewing*” (Heritage, 1984, p. 242; see also section 4.3.2).

3.2 Classroom context

3.2.1 The classroom

The classroom as structural, physical, surround is one dimension of context which impinges on interaction occurring within it. Desks and chairs arranged in rows (see Figure 1) mean that students spend a large amount of lesson time sitting behind a desk with a classmate, packed close, in one location of the room. When moving from one part of the classroom to another, participants need to navigate a roundabout route via aisles and passageways around the edges. A sitting position shapes interaction by, for example, making only the top half of a communicator’s body available for expressing meaning and displaying understanding. Sitting facing one direction also means that certain class members are more easily ‘turned to’ than others so that a student’s scope of addressivity is affected (see Bagga-Gupta, 2000).

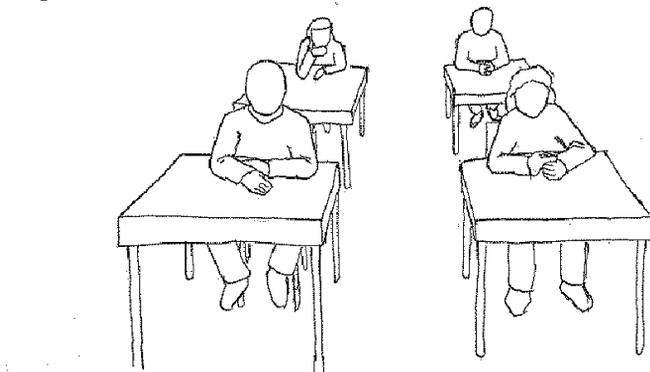


Figure 1. Classroom as context

The classroom also frames various phases of pedagogic activity which in turn tend to texture the organization of interaction. Interactional features and frameworks correlate to whole-class, individual work, pair work and group work arrangements. The pedagogic purpose of particular lesson

phases is reflexively related to the prevalence of certain organizational patterns of interaction (Seedhouse, 2004). For example, in additional language classrooms, when communicative fluency is the pedagogic focus of an activity, a teacher's corrective feedback strategies tend to be covert, less intrusive, and the contours of classroom interaction may range across the room rather than centre around the teacher.

3.2.2 The partner class

Much of my ethnographic fieldwork involved shadowing an eighth-grade class through sequences of their daily school life (see also section 1.1). As the partner class relocated from classroom through corridors to classroom, downstairs to library, etc. this student constellation may be seen as not only recontextualizing, renewing, its activity, but *as its own moving active context* (Lave, 1996; see Figure 2). Identities are not only situated; they are also *transportable* (Gobo, 2008).

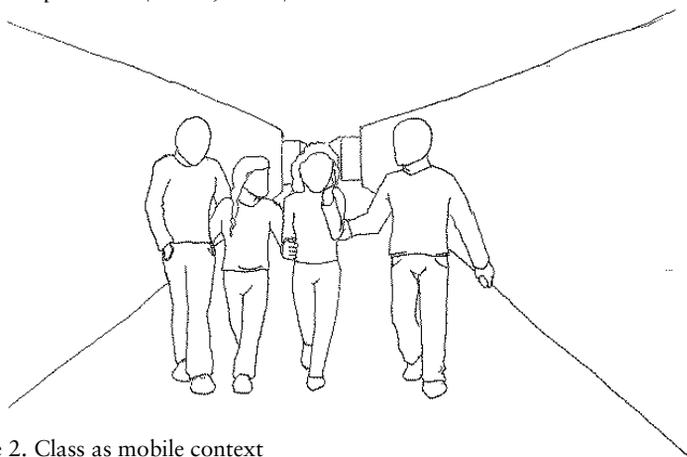


Figure 2. Class as mobile context

Though made up of distinctive individual selves, the partner class had built a corporate identity describable by others and themselves. The following is from an entry in my field notes:

This eighth-year class brims with character, creative energy and spunk. After what can only be described as a disorderly and taxing Maths lesson, on the day before the spring *sportlov*²³, the teacher described the class' behaviour as *effervescent*. Even as loud and on the unruly side, this teacher put a positive 'spin' on their behaviour. I think he meant that despite the truculent and turbulent edges of this lesson, there was *still* a good-natured ring, a certain

²³ Swedish: week-long sports holiday in February.

productivity-linked legitimacy, even a shimmering rather than a simmering quality to their behaviour, like popping out of convention in a glossy magazine.

This class is renowned in the school as ‘good, even a great class’ to teach, by which is meant, generally hard-working, responsive, considerate, positive and full of colourful characters. Like many secondary school classes, this class features three or four class ‘characters’ whose mouths are big, but no more menacing than the moment of exhibitionism (which prompts them). Most of its members seem quite uninhibited, eager to perform whenever the chance arises, but generally willing to ‘listen’ to reason, observe routines and follow a cooperative instinct. In short, they see the point of doing school, but refuse to let school cramp their style and they attend a school which encourages exactly this kind of stance so long as style and disrespect (or social offence) do not become blurred.

Class cultures are transportable. As this partner class moved in and out of various situations, picking up, deploying, dropping, etc. different resources to accomplish their interactions, its members coordinated a *generative mobile participant framework*.

3.3 Institutional context

The research site of this study is an ‘international’ secondary school (grades 6-9) set in the suburbs of a Swedish city. It is a *fristående skola* – literally ‘freestanding’ school – with a ‘bilingual education’ profile (see section 1.2). As such, it is required to follow the national curriculum but may offer an independent profile-oriented education, subject to the approval and oversight of the National Agency for Education. This status also entitles the school to funding via the national voucher system paid by the local municipality for every pupil enrolled at the school. This means that the school’s independent status and educational stance is both sanctioned and subsidized nationally.

The most public face of the school’s distinctiveness is the promotion of ‘bilingualism’ which entails the use of English and Swedish across the school’s curriculum. In principle, approximately half of the subjects are taught mainly in English and the other half taught mainly in Swedish. This language policy is implemented by teachers and among students with diverse ethnic and language backgrounds. Including English-speaking varieties, over thirty different so-called home language backgrounds, such as Arabic, Persian, Tigre, Turkish and Urdu are represented within the school. Although, for the majority of students whose parents have migrated to Sweden, Swedish may be the language they are most competent in and comfortable with, they speak other language varieties at home or a mixture

of home varieties and Swedish. Learning English and another modern language such as French or Spanish at school is therefore to add a third and fourth or possible fifth language to their communicative repertoires.

Institutional features such as profile, language policy and multilingual composition, are carried into classroom contexts and underlie the diverse blends of local uniqueness and institutional commonality interweaving instances of classroom communication. At the same time, it is through distinctive ways of talking, writing and other embodied practices that the institutional context is reconstituted recurrently (Watson, 1992; see section 1.1).

Context as determined by the dimensions of the setting and the dynamics of participant activity is reflected in the methodological production of *analysable data* for this thesis. Data of the actual occurrences under study are not simply detected in the context but generated *as part of* the context. These methodological processes and the issues they raise are the foci of the following chapter.

4. Methodological framework

Data for this thesis derives from ethnographic fieldwork, viewed through Bakhtinian concepts and treated with conversation analytic techniques. In pursuit of what people actually do in the throes of encountering and creating their social realities, *direct observation* in the field becomes necessary. One of the values of direct observation of a setting is the opportunity to move beyond the reported perceptions of others – what people *say* they do – to direct perceptions (also selective) of the way people actually handle their affairs and manage their interactions with others (Patton, 2002).

This chapter begins by focusing on ethnography as a way of introducing the fieldwork and empirical material on which the studies build. The following sections set forth the approach adopted by the studies to analysing classroom data dialogically by claiming affinities between Bakhtinian dialogism and CA as a basis for methodological partnership and then by profiling CA principles and procedures. A final section explains the amplified transcription system which has operationalized Bakhtinian study of classroom interaction in this thesis.

4.1 Ethnography

Ethnography “is the earliest distinct tradition of qualitative inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p. 81). Ethnography emerged in association with nineteenth-century Western anthropology in which an ‘ethnography’ referred to a descriptive account of a target community or culture, often non-literate peoples in remote settings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Such enterprise involved travelling to these settings and carrying out, often extensive, fieldwork among the target people. Despite the variable and contested meaning of the term, the twin dimensions of *cultural interpretation* and *field-oriented activity* gives ethnography distinction as a major approach within social research today (Wolcott, 1999).

4.1.1 Culture and fieldwork

The foundational ethnographic question is “What is the culture of this group of people?” (Patton, 2002). Culture is core. Whether the cultural setting is ‘backyard’ or remote, institutional or industrial, face-to-face or virtual, what makes the approach distinctly *ethnographic* is whether the findings are interpreted and applied from a *cultural perspective* (ibid.). Ethnography pictures (‘graph’) a people (‘ethno’), that is, it is devoted to describing, studying, the lifeway of a particular people or cultural group. Wolcott (1999) emphasizes this mission by distinguishing between *borrowing ethnographic techniques* (‘a way of looking’) and *doing ethnography*

(‘a way of *seeing*’). His point is that ethnographic techniques can be made use of by a range of researchers with any number of theoretical orientations and agendas. However, doing ethnography assumes a culturally-centred purpose which not only makes observation strategic but affords and integrates penetrating perceptions of the target group. A way of seeing recognizes that culture is not simply something to be observed for people belong to groups, not to cultures (Goodenough, 1981). Rather, culture as shared ways of doing things, is something ethnographers *attribute* to the people they study.

While fieldwork may be broken down into techniques, the ethos of ‘going into the field’ for direct personal contact with people on their own territories in order to understand a culture faithfully remains at the heart of ethnographic tradition. Fieldwork credits ethnography as naturalistic study; it subscribes to the view “that, as far as possible, the social world should be studied in its ‘natural’ state, undisturbed by the researcher” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 7). Naturalistic commitments include an attitude of *respect* towards the nature of the social world under study, a *sensitivity* to the way the target people view and talk about their world and a *fidelity* in treating the phenomena of investigation (ibid.). Congruently, ethnographers are exhorted to attend carefully to context. An adherence to context “opens the way for the ethnographer to present human social behaviour as *more*, rather than as *less*, complex, to keep explanations from becoming simplistic or reductionist” (Wolcott, 1999, p. 79).

In line with a respectful approach, ethnographers’ orientation in the field is *exploratory* (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Ethnographic data generation is a relatively open-ended process, characterized by emergent design flexibility and inductive analysis (see Patton, 2002).

4.1.2 Generating data

With regard to how data about the context is generated, ethnographers put special emphasis on *participant observation*. This technique furnishes first-hand experience of the target people’s daily activities by *participating* with them in what they are doing and *observing* what is going on (Agar, 2008). Participant observation mirrors the tension between the twin needs for *involvement* and *detachment* (Powdermaker, 1966). On one hand, it is the *outsider* perspective which endows the uninitiated ethnographer with powers of perception. Contrast makes what is ‘familiar’ salient. On the other hand, gaining observational proximity requires participating as a member of the community under study, coming close and, to some degree, becoming friend. However, this contact needs to be tempered by recurrent with-

drawals to retain the ‘*stranger eyes*’ which excite insight into what is distinctive and radical in the sociocultural events.

It is for researchers to recognize that *participant observation* spans various levels of researcher participation which relate proportionally to different levels of observer detachment (cf. Gobo, 2008). When researchers emphasize one dimension above the other, what is important is to maintain and manifest a reasoned consciousness of the implications of doing so. As Wolcott (1999) asserts, participant–observer tension is sharpest for those who insist that that only a fully detached observer is able to provide valid and credible reports of human social behaviour.

Agar (2008) describes *field notes* as “the record of an ethnographer’s observations, conversations, interpretations, and suggestions for future information to be gathered” (p. 161). There are considerable problems attached to recording experience in a notebook. One is simply the initial problem of not knowing what is significant to record. Another is the amount of time it takes to note down an incident in ratio to the time it took for the incidence to occur. Yet another is the fallibility of human memory. In view of these difficulties, it is vital to narrow the focus of what should be observed, attended to, so that note taking becomes topically selective and strategic. It is also in an ethnographer’s own interest to write up notes at the earliest opportunity.

While the *video camera* is one instrument which can “refine and expand the areas of accurate observation” (Mead, 1973), it also changes the research process from study conception to publication. The affordances, for example, of ‘capturing’ culture on camera, of repeated viewings, of being able to share data with others as a way of enriching or checking analyses, are all accompanied by formidable challenges. With catching details of actual events on video comes the issue of how the presence of the camera intrudes on and *changes* the naturally occurring phenomena of interest (Barron, 2007). With the advantage of *action replays* and close viewing comes the question of where to draw the line between *too little* and *too much* viewing (Goldman, 2007). With the potential illumination of others’ views and comments on the data comes the problem of how to respond to the various (sometimes conflicting) interpretations and ideas suggested by research colleagues and participants (ibid.). Indeed, the power of video to mediate the visual exploration of human interaction entails the need to manage – reflectively and practically – a cluster of considerations including perspectivity, technical, ethical and representational challenges (Goldman, Pea, Barron & Derry, 2007; see also section 4.2.3).

In comparison to participant observation, interview strategies and document analysis are fundamentally different ways of knowing. By asking

about what is going on, researchers intervene overtly in the course of events with their own agendas. Examining archival materials and documents involves focusing on data produced previously by others about people and activity in a setting. Whatever emphasis is placed on various field-work techniques, personal experience through participant observation tends to be the primary ground for the analysis and interpretation of data. Wolcott (1999) reminds us that ultimately everything we know comes to us by virtue of the human capacity for observation, through what we *see* and *hear*.²⁴

4.1.3 Recognizing reflexivity

Naturalistic research based on direct observation and personal experience relies on the researcher as the primary research instrument and raises the issue of reflexivity. One type of reflexivity refers to the way that researchers' sociocultural backgrounds, their values, outlooks and self-perceptions are evident in their research interests, data production and findings (Heath & Street, 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Wolcott (1999) is unequivocal on the theme of trying to achieve objectivity. While purpose makes observation performable and guides interpretative work, it also means that ethnographic description is never 'pure' but partial for "A way of seeing is, indeed, always a way of not seeing" (Burke, quoted in Wolcott, 1999, p. 70).

It should also be noted that reflexivity is inherent in all social research for all serious research is purposeful (Patton, 2002) and can never transcend the human limitations of those who conduct it. Aspects such as personal characteristics and standpoints rooting researchers to the social world (and targeted as troublesome) are part and parcel of the very means which enable interpretations of it. This 'bondage' to personal bearings and point of view, however, does not undermine a researcher's commitment to realism or imply that research data and representations cannot portray social phenomena (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Rather, reflexivity calls for a *recognition* of the researcher's orientations in the process of creating data and representations of them; analysts need to be aware of the way their own epistemological bearings, research purposes and methods organize their experience of data. Reflexivity counsels an approach that treats the researcher's participation as necessarily active in the research process, as *part of the data*, rather than as incriminating fingerprints on the research findings.

²⁴ This is not to suggest that seeing and hearing are neutral activities or capacities which are always available to researchers.

4.2 Fieldwork and empirical material

The data for this thesis come from phases of ethnographic fieldwork at the target school which spanned approximately fourteen months. Fieldwork weeks or shorter visits were spread at intervals over three terms with a total of fifty-one days on site²⁵. During fieldwork, the main method of generating data was direct experience through participant observation. My stance was generally inclined towards the ‘onlooker’ observer (see Patton, 2002) but such a role did not imply a totally detached observer. As an ethnographer, I reasoned that to be able to tread through the participants’ territory without my presence creating resentment or ‘cramping their style’ is all about building trustful relationships. I engaged with the participants personally to become *accepted* rather than *endured*. Sometimes, I was ‘dragged in’ as participant (e.g. when the class played a team game or the teacher asked me an English language question) and on such occasions, I counted it a privilege to have gained participant trust rather than a blow to the possibility of impartial perceptions.

My main fieldwork task was to ‘shadow’, to stay close to, the partner class as it steered its way through parts of its lifeday. I fitted myself into their lines as they waited to be ‘let into’ a classroom, to their seating arrangements in the classroom and to their ‘walks’ between classrooms. The data gathered and generated during periods of fieldwork fall into three types: field notes, miscellaneous school texts (organizational documents and lesson-based materials) and video recordings of the partner class’ lessons. The sections below deal with each of these in greater detail.

4.2.1 Field notes

For fieldwork observations inside and outside the classroom, I carried an A5 spiral notebook in which I described, in snatches of spontaneous text, the day’s events, incidents and impressions as well as thoughts that arose from these experiences. Field notes, as I sat observing to one side or at the back of the classroom, were not regulated by parameters other than the sociocultural experience and the observational faculties and field of the observer. I jotted down anything I felt might be relevant to or illustrative of the communicative practices and instructional procedures I witnessed. These notes were rough and required some structure.

At the end of each day, usually at a café directly after leaving school, I tried to extrapolate a summary of the day’s events which struck me as salient and usually typed up this text on my laptop during the evening of the

²⁵ See Appendix A for a detailed breakdown of the dates, number and length of fieldwork visits.

same day at the youth hostel where I stayed. The rewrite process gave me the chance to expand on my frequently fragmentary notes so a coherent ‘point’ or motif was developed in the reconstruction. This practice produced a record of what I considered to be the ‘main learning experiences’ of the day. The themes and thoughts constituting these day-summaries do not follow any immediately recognizable pattern or educational order, inspired as they were by the kaleidoscopic, ‘fits and starts’ of an seventh and eighth grade school schedule.

4.2.2 Miscellaneous school texts

These texts include school organizational documents and some classroom related materials. Organizational documents include profile information from the schools’ homepage, year 7 and 8 school syllabuses and some student forms. Classroom based materials include lesson handouts and copies of textbook pages which were considered necessary for understanding the learning activity of a lesson. The collection is fragmentary due to several factors including a shortage of handout material in the classroom and the various reasons why teachers were not able to respond to my requests.

4.2.3 Video recordings of lessons

I spent seven days with the partner class, shadowing them through their school schedule, before, during my third fieldwork visit, I began video documentation in the classroom. My basic rationale for this was to soften the intrusion of cameras into the classroom, to defuse suspicion and tension this may cause, by first trying to build rapport and trust with members of the class and teachers. I did not video document *every* lesson on the class’ schedule. The communication practices of some lessons did not lend themselves to being ‘caught’ on camera (e.g. gym), some involved extralinguistic noise levels making it simply impossible to hear and record what the students were saying to each other (e.g. Craft, year 8) and some lay outside my research ethical perimeters because they involved the participation of students from other classes not covered by parental permission to film their school activity.²⁶

The time it took me, on my own, to set up and dismantle cameras as well as to assemble the equipment for rapid transportation between classrooms meant that I simply could not ‘cover’ all the lessons on the class’ schedule that lay in tight succession. At the same time, research interest and purpose as these emerged played a role in decisions about what to prioritize when I had to. These two factors led to the decision, after the

²⁶ See Appendix B for details of the video recordings of lessons.

first few fieldwork visits, to stop video recording those lessons featuring an almost exclusive use of one language (e.g. Swedish and social studies).

When I video recorded, I always (with one exception) used two cameras set up at opposite corners of the classroom or lesson location (e.g. library, assembly hall). Figure 3 shows a sketch of a typical camera setup scenario: Camera 1 was directed at the students; camera 2 was directed towards the front of the classroom, the whiteboard, where the teacher usually operated.²⁷

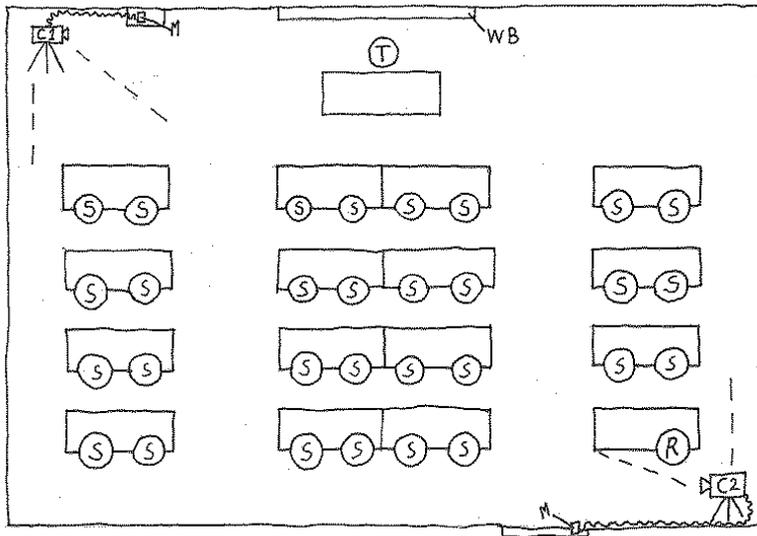


Figure 3. Classroom camera setup

Using the medium of video as a single researcher in the classroom introduced a number of technical and methodological considerations to manage. These included where to place the cameras, the disadvantages of ‘minding’ the cameras, whether to man or stay clear of them as well as the traumas of technical difficulties. To illustrate some of the sensitivities of these considerations, two short entries follow taken from field notes of my first experience of filming:

What have I learned so far about video recording in the classroom?

The ‘pros and cons’ of manning two cameras on one’s own. The camera ‘field’ certainly didn’t embrace the entire classroom, but I could only really

²⁷ T = Teacher; S = Student; M = Microphone; WB = Whiteboard; C1 = Camera 1; C2 = Camera 2.

'man' one camera without causing a lot of movement. This meant that one of the cameras was basically set to cover the central area of the classroom and left to roll. This obviously has its disadvantages, but standing behind the cameras also has its negative side. Standing behind a camera (and perhaps panning round, etc.) tended to attract attention to its presence and distract students more. Leaving the camera unmanned, increased the prospect of it sinking into the background [...] and generally seemed less like to cause inhibition.

Perspective and perception

I felt, in one way, much less in touch with what was going on in the classroom since I was either having to attend to the manning of the cameras or viewing the scene through the camera lens. It was strange. When I did sit down away from the two cameras, the ideas and thoughts simply didn't flow in the same way as when I sat following and focusing on the events unfolding before me without needing to attend to the cameras or concerns that surround them. I was able to observe without distraction and 'saw' different things.

Having focused in this section (4.2) on the empirical material generated during my fieldwork at the project school, the following section turns to the way the data has been approached and treated.

4.3 Towards dialogic analysis of classroom interaction

This thesis harnesses dialogism and a CA-based methodology. This section first offers a rationale for this methodological partnership which amounts to highlighting some *affinities* between dialogism and CA as a basis for grounding dialogic concepts in the business of classroom interaction. Then, some central conversation analytic principles and procedures are introduced by way of explaining the way the data has been approached and analysed. The final part of this outline describes a more recent development within CA which seeks to meet the challenge of multimodal analysis.

4.3.1 Affinities between dialogism and CA

CA has held empirical appeal for researchers representing many different disciplines and fields of study (Heritage, 1984; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998) who have adopted its principles and practices without necessarily abandoning their theoretical persuasions. Accordingly, CA has been approached via and grafted into a number of theoretically established positions which include ethnography (e.g. Moerman, 1988), sociocultural theory (e.g. Mondada & Pekarek Doehler, 2004), discursive psychology (e.g. Edwards, 1997) and feminist language research (e.g. Weatherall, 2002).

With language in focus, dialogism and CA have a common border, making them potentially productive partners. Parallels may be noted between Bakhtin's (1986) perception of *social order* in human speech and Sack's (1984, 1992) ground premise that in the details of actual conversation there is *overwhelming order*. In reaction to linguists like Saussure who regarded *parole* – everyday language use – as a random phenomenon beyond the pale of scientific investigation, “Bakhtin was able to identify and study the organizing principles of concrete speech communication” (Wertsch, 1991, p. 58). In the face of similar attitudes among contemporary linguists and sociologists, Sacks set out to challenge and demolish the prevailing assumption that everyday talk, because it is degenerate and disjointed “is not sufficiently orderly to bear formal description” (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984, p. 17). Sacks (1984) insists that actual talk is systematically and sequentially organized; that it is “subjectable to formal description” (p. 21).

Closely related, is Bakhtin's and CA's shared interest in *situated, grounded language action*. Bakhtin's (1986) recognition of the *utterance* as the real unit of speech communication in analyzing discourse lays extensive groundwork and insight for the development of further approaches to discourse analysis, not least, CA. His view of language, when it *means*, is actual people talking to each other in a particular place and at a particular time (Holquist, 1981a). In accord, Vološinov (1973) concludes that “verbal interaction is the reality of language” (p. 94). This *grounded* view of language foreshadows CA's conviction that talk-in-interaction is “furnished internally with its own constitutive sense, with ‘its own terms’, with a defensible sense of its own reality” (Schegloff, 1997, p. 171).

There are several other aspects of affinity between Bakhtinian dialogism and CA such as the creative, constitutive capacity of language, the co-determined nature of speech communication and interest in the orientation of utterances towards addressees/recipients. All the above parallels have *methodological implications* entailing accord between Bakhtinian dialogism and CA with regard to how verbal interaction should be studied. Like Saussure, Bakhtin insisted that language should be studied from the point of view of those actually *speaking* it and in specific moments of communicative engagement (Holquist, 2002). This matches CA's emphasis on emic analysis. Bakhtin's view that language can only be sensibly and seriously studied in its situated communicative realization predates CA's exclusive focus on naturally occurring interaction. Bakhtin (1981) justifies his analytic focus as follows:

Discourse lives, as it were, beyond itself, in a living impulse [...] toward the object; if we detach ourselves completely from this impulse all we have left is the naked corpse of the word, from which we can learn nothing at all about the social situation or the fate of a given word in life. *To study the word as such, ignoring the impulse that reaches out beyond it, is just as senseless as to study psychological experience outside the context of that real life toward which it was directed and by which it is determined* (p. 292; emphasis in original).

This analytic stance is, in ethos, remarkably sympathetic to, for example, Schegloff's (1997) insistence on taking seriously the object of inquiry – ordinary conversation – in its own terms, “in its endogenous constitution, what it was for the parties involved in it, in its course, as embodied and displayed in the very details of its realization” (p. 168).

Thus Bakhtin makes theoretical provision for an empirically-based methodology. However, Bakhtin did not have access to the technological means available to analysts of human interaction today. Against such opportunities, his methods of using literary exemplars and reflective analysis of actual pieces of discourse recollected from his own observations of everyday social life are cast as limited and somewhat primitive; they do not meet the rigorous standards of acceptability introduced by transcription and analysis based on mechanical reproduction of naturally occurring events (see Duranti, 1997). Bakhtin's approach therefore lacks an empirically robust methodology of the kind CA has developed in order to realize more reliably the study vision inherent in a conception of language as *living dialogue* (Holquist, 1986).

And yet his observations were, even without technical mediational means, acutely sharp and accurate. To illustrate this claim, I end this section with three examples of his analytically pioneer perceptions. First, Bakhtin (1986) may be said to have paved the way for studying speech exchange systems and the sequential organization of turn-taking. “The boundaries of each concrete utterance as a unit of speech communication are determined by a *change of speaking subjects*, that is, a change of speakers” (p. 71).

Second, his observation that when we hear or read “we clearly sense the end of the utterance, as if we hear the speaker's concluding *dixi*” (ibid. p. 76) foreruns CA's notion of ‘projection’ whereby listeners are able to anticipate speakers' endings so that they can gear up to take the next turn with minimal gap or overlap (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, 1987).

Third, on the topic of agreement, Bakhtin (1986) notes:

Two utterances that are identical in all respects (“Beautiful weather!” – “Beautiful weather!”), if they are really *two* utterances belonging to *different* voices and not one, are linked by dialogic *relations of agreement*. (p. 125)

Bakhtin’s observation is reflected in the CA ‘finding’ that conversationalists will repeat what another has just said as a strategy for displaying strong agreement with their interlocutor (Pomerantz, 1984; Schegloff, 1996).

I therefore contend that there are a number of reasons why dialogism and CA might be a productive basis for approaching and analyzing classroom interaction. Dialogism comprehends CA’s interactional theatre of social action, challenging its mentality, and opening up analytic bearings, interpretative possibilities, while CA offers a disciplined methodology for grounding dialogic concepts and compressing theoretical peaks.

4.3.2 CA methodology

CA principles in profile

CA concerns the *micro-emic analysis* of the *sequential organization* of *talk-in-interaction*. This section unpacks the three component parts of this description as a way of structuring and profiling some of the distinctive principles and procedures of CA.

Whereas several schools of sociology study interaction and discourse from a macro or meso perspective, CA is unashamedly micro-emic in focus. An insistence “that analytic interests should not be constrained by external considerations” has been a key CA recommendation for credible, data-derived, analysis (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984, p. 17). Like ethnomethodology, CA embraces a ‘bottom-up’ approach and holds fast to an emic mentality which rationalizes the application of its methods. For ethnomethodology and CA, analysts’ orientations to factors not indigenous to the target event because of loyalty to theoretical or methodological principles, risks bypassing people’s active agency and the capabilities by which they bring about their social activities meaningfully. Any attempt to superimpose predetermined categories, presuppositions or theory on empirical material is likely to hijack emic analysis; it is liable to obscure or sideline the endogenous orientations of those involved in constructing the socio-interactional reality under investigation (Schegloff, 1997). In contrast to such etic projects, CA aims to disclose or make transparent the *analyses and understandings of the participants* in a target event.

This brings us to the *sequential organization* of participants’ verbal interaction. CA is founded on observations that people in conversation not only take turns at talk but do so in a systematically principled way, one

which can be formally described. For example, when people take turns at talk, they routinely follow rules (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974), they anticipate points of possible completion by current speaker so that transitions occur with minimal gap and overlap (*ibid*) or they might modify the manner of their talk to ward off another's speaker's entry (Schegloff, 1989). Such coordination between speakers means that they have produced each component part of their interaction *together*, as a concerted effort (*ibid.*).

The sequential organizing of talk works on a system of mutual participant display. In designing a turn, participants display what they consider to be a next relevant response while responses are built to display at least parts of speakers' understanding of the previous contribution (Schegloff, 1984). These demonstrations are *sense-making mechanisms* (Linell, 1998) and serve as in-built resources for the joint production of meaningful social engagement, that is, for co-achieving *intersubjectivity* (Heritage, 1984; Schegloff, 1992). What participants display to one another turn-by-turn is claimed by conversation analysts as a *proof procedure* to ensure a correlation between the analysis and participants' understandings of their interactional conduct (Sack, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974).

Third, the main reason for choice of the term *talk-in-interaction* is that CA does not only focus on conversations or everyday talk, but addresses a range of talk forms characteristic of, for example, classroom interaction, courtroom hearings, doctor-patient consultations and business meetings. The key criterion is that the talk must be *naturally-occurring* and *recorded* so that real-life exchanges can be reproduced, replayed and studied extendedly (Sacks, 1984). Such demands hark back to a critical watershed between linguists using *fictional* (imaginatively-composed) exemplars to illustrate and substantiate their claims and those working with *actual* (mechanically-recorded) instances of verbal interaction (Hopper, 1989). CA's insistence on the latter and the imperative that analysts ground their claims in the design and details of participants' talk (Schegloff, 1991) has earned CA a reputation as a rigorously empirical approach offering credible, life-congruent analysis (Levinson, 1983).

During its relatively short history, CA has developed a stock of conceptual principles and resources for analysis. Several of these have proved sufficiently robust to explicate data from a variety of institutional and formal settings and to sustain conceptual adjustment in the process. For example, *adjacency pairs* – the proximal placement of paired actions such as a request followed by compliance or refusal – has been applied by Sidnell (2004, 2010) in analysis of questioning in public inquiries. *Preference* – observable structural regularities and alignments in talk – has been applied

to language alternation by Auer (1995, 1998). *Repair* – mechanisms for resolving trouble in talk – has framed analysis by McHoul (1990)²⁸ of classroom correction sequences.

For CA then, *it's all happening at the micro level*. However, with regard to what knowledge the approach might offer, it is worth noting Sack's (1984) vision for what CA may contribute: "It is possible that detailed study of small phenomena may give an enormous understanding of the way humans do things and the kinds of objects they use to construct and order their affairs" (p. 24).²⁹

CA procedures in profile

Within CA, the craft of treating raw communicative phenomena so that it can be examined systematically includes four activities – the event, the reproduction, the representation and the (*re*)analysis.

The *reproduction* records some of what happened during a sociocultural event with the aid of, for example, audio and/or video recording equipment. The recorded material is viewed by conversation analysts as the data itself (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998) which is subsequently represented in various ways. The prime advantage of a reproduction is that it generates replayable, repeatable data. Although not everything that happened during the event is recorded and therefore recoverable, much CA rests on the assurance that at least *what was recorded did happen* (Sacks, 1984).

Transcription renders typographically some of the actions and features caught as recorded data to produce a transcript (Jefferson, 2004). A transcript serves as a *representation* of the data (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998). Transcripts are representational means that, alongside other resources, *mediate* investigation, not the *actual phenomena* analysts seek to grasp; as representations, they reconfigure complex phenomena in line with researchers' theoretical orientations and interests. Therefore, transcription is an account-forming *part* of data analysis, not something that happens *prior* to analysis (*ibid.*).

Re-analysis and developing analysis entails a further level of orientation to the data rendered accessible by recordings and transcripts. On the basis of these core research activities, conversation analytic procedures are principled by (at least) the following component processes:

²⁸ See Macbeth (2004) for a critical review of McHoul's study.

²⁹ See Study 3, Part 2.

1. Investigation begins with *observation*, close looking at the data, *as a basis for theorizing* (Sacks, 1984). Efforts are made to describe “what a thing *is* rather than what it is like” (Sidnell, 2010, p. 29).
2. This process leads to the identification of phenomena found significant such as recurring features or salient formulations and to the selection of focal or potentially focal stretches or fragments of interaction (ibid.).
3. These sequences are then transcribed in a way which foregrounds what the researcher considers interesting (Jefferson, 2004).
4. Data-driven analysis demands that analyses develop out of interplay between *re-viewing* the reproduction and *referring* to the representation rather than discarding the data once the transcript is in place (Hopper, 1989; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998).
5. A final stage, common in CA, is the practice of testing and checking interpretations through further data sessions with, for example, research group colleagues.

These five stages comprise that analytic procedure which has sought to ground the four studies of Part 2 *empirically*.

CA for multimodal analysis

CA's concern with talk-in-interaction has undoubtedly been challenged by the emergence of “the visual or multimodal *turn*” (Jewitt, 2009, p. 4). In reply to the question “What is multimodality?” Jewitt (2009) answers “multimodality approaches representation, communication and interaction as something more than language” (p. 1). She continues to qualify her statement with “The starting point for multimodality is to extend the social interpretation of language and its meanings to the whole range of representational and communicational modes or semiotic resources for making meaning that are employed in a culture – such as image, writing, gesture, gaze, speech, posture” (ibid.)³⁰.

CA's initial focus on audio recordings of telephone conversations, yielding CA foundations, has been justified especially because the medium excludes other complicating contextual features in the analysis of interpersonal talk (Hopper, 1992; Schegloff, 1986). However, with the widening field of applied CA, CA has tended to privilege talk in representation and analysis of interaction even in arenas of study where verbal, visual, material and spatial dimensions are being configured for communication (Heath

³⁰ See Jewitt (2009) or Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) for outlines of the various strands of influence and research that have lent impetus to multimodal approaches.

& Hindmarsh, 2002). In view of the wide agreement that human meaning-making is inherently *multimodal* (Duranti, 1997) and CA's commitment to following what is *procedurally consequential* for the participants (Schegloff, 1992), talk-focused analysis, however fine-grained, in face-to-face events, may put *emic views* at risk.

Charles Goodwin (e.g. 1979, 1994, 2000, 2003) has pioneered a development in CA towards detailed, micro, multimodal analysis of visual and verbal interaction. His studies demonstrate a concern to explicate the dynamic and intricate integration of diverse semiotic fields deployed by participants as interactional resources to produce meaningful human action.

Goodwin, among others³¹, has inspired various multimodal approaches which seek to capture some of the visually and verbally configured interactions of classrooms. CA-aligned classroom studies use talk transcription conventions combined with other representational means such as gaze direction indicators, screenshots, sketches, photos and diagrams to elucidate how interactions are co-composed by participants through a coordination of several modes. Multimodal phenomena have been analysed in second language classrooms (e.g. Mori, 2004; Stone, 2012) in classroom reading activity (Melandar & Sahlström, 2009), in Maths lessons (e.g. Melander & Sahlström, 2010) and in a vocational program for electricians (Lundström, 2012).

4.4 An amplified transcription system

Impetus for an amplified transcription system springs from my experience during classroom observations of being struck repeatedly by the finely-tuned coordination of body movements, positioning, written and verbal language composing teacher and student interactions. Observation declared: *speech is sophisticated, but does not fly solo*. As a novice researcher keen to show some of these exquisitely configured communicative performances, I faced the formidable task of how to represent, in a way which does justice to the participants, what details of verbal utterances and bodily orientations in the material surround I sought to inspect (see Heath & Hindmarsh, 2002). As a member of the CCD research group, initial efforts to gain analytical leverage on multimodal phenomena have been assisted by collaborative work with my immediate research colleagues and parallel projects in the group.

Methodologically, steps towards a transcription system (a work still in progress) are guided by a CA commitment to pursue *emic views* of actual

³¹ Norris (2004), for example, provides a methodological framework for analyzing multimodal interaction.

occurrences in the classroom. At the same time, these steps were motivated by a recognition that “in face-to-face interaction what humans say to one another must be understood vis-à-vis what they do with their body and where they are located in space” (Duranti, 1997, p.145).

A first response was to increase the description of the non-lexical and visual events, double-bracketed, within current verbally oriented transcripts. But such representations give the impression that the verbal utterances and the visual actions are related *sequentially*, occurring one after the other, when (I saw and heard that) they are, more often than not, *synchronized to coincide and affect each other*. As a transcriptional system, it rendered invisible the multilateral texture of communicative moves, portraying them fictitiously as discretely distributed actions and monopolized by a single medium.

In an attempt to more fully represent the multimodal composition of classroom interaction, transcriptional aperture on the data has been widened in order to show some of the synchronic and reciprocally sensitive relations between the verbal and visual conduct under study. This framework of action is arranged as a *multilevel score* by adding further tracks to the transcription of talk. In terms of basic construction, each ‘line’ is composed by three tracks which represent a) the speaker’s verbal production, b) some of the speaker’s bodily actions and c) some of the addressee’s actions. The transcript symbols representing verbal features are based on CA conventions (e.g. Jefferson, 2004) supplemented by additional symbols such as teacher turns (☞) to the whiteboard (☒) or a student’s gaze lowered (↓) onto her textbook (☐). As in a musical score, the system allows some of the participants’ visual actions and the artifacts they use to be tracked graphically in synchronous relation to concurrent talk. It can also accommodate the addition of further tracks such as teacher board work or more detailed representations in the form of sketches or photos.

The choices of additional symbols have been guided by criteria such as the need for *recognisability* (e.g. ☉☉ for class), *symbolic coherence* (e.g. ○ for ‘head’, ⊖ for ‘shakes head’, ⊕ for ‘nods’) and *sequential combinability* (e.g. T ☞ ☉☉☉ for ‘teacher turns and faces the class’). During the course of development, sketches have enhanced the format. With regard to gestural conduct, abstract symbols are only pale reflections of the fluid and intricate gestural work synchronized with talk in classrooms. For example, in the course of teacher instructions in a French lesson, the four different gestural motions below are related in that they all coincide with phrases containing the words ‘several classmates’:

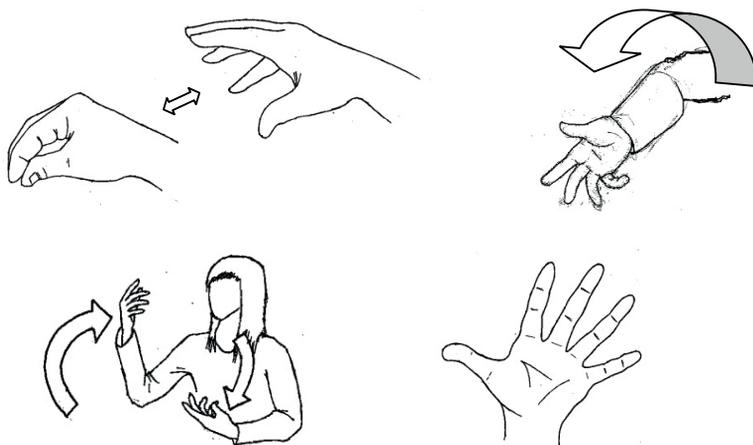


Figure 4. Gesturing ‘several classmates’

Each gesture forwards a different aspect of the task – ‘group-regroup procedure’, ‘repetition’, ‘mixing up’ and ‘a considerable number’ – which visually specify and correlate the different facets of working with ‘several classmates’.

5. Overview and Synthesis of the studies

In this final chapter the four empirical studies are condensed and final conclusions are drawn. Part 1 ends with some pointers towards future research prospects.

5.1 The four studies

5.1.1 Study 1

St John, Oliver (2010). Bilingual lexical interillumination in the foreign language classroom. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 23(3), 199-218.

Study 1 sets Bakhtin's concept of *interillumination* against the monolingual orientation that has proved persistent in shaping methodologies of second language acquisition (SLA) research and second or additional language (SAL). "Languages", Bakhtin (1981) contends, "throw light on each other: one language can, after all, see itself only in the light of another language" (p. 12). The implications of such a view of languages as interdependent, reflexively related, in coordinating situated sense-making offers a radically different perspective to views of languages as self-sufficient systems "which need to be segregated in some way for the sake of acquiring and using them meaningfully" (p. 203). For Bakhtin, language only becomes meaningful, apprehensible, and therefore *acquirable*, as it is appropriated alongside other words and utterances for personal communicative purposes in social engagement with others.

This study focuses on data in which lexical *illumination* is achieved by juxtaposing an unknown or unclear word or phrase in one language (usually the target language) with a matching known word or phrase in another (usually the first or familiar language). Vološinov's (1973) notion of *counter word* offers a window onto the sense-making activity sustained by language deployed between speakers. A *counter word* highlights the importance of orienting responsively to someone else's utterance for grasping their intended meanings. When faced with an 'alien' word and understanding hinges on an active response, then a *counter word* in another language provides a ready way of orienting oneself to it; a corresponding context is created in which to answer and relate to the troublesome word. In language learning settings, *bilingual countering* positions communicators to make sense of another word's value and sustain their responsive participation in classroom tasks.

The study also examines SAL classroom data which show the way participants orient to unknown or potentially troublesome French words by

seeking to equate or *counter* them with related Swedish lexis in an interlingual set or matrix. Within a *sense-making equation*, lexical orientation is coordinated in the impetus of seeking to explore and relate the value differences represented on either side. As participants strive to fit the *inter- and intralingual* relationships into a coherent pattern, the discursive matrix is readjusted and developed *collectively*. In such a framework, a focus on French tends to throw the ‘corresponding’ Swedish terms into relief so that the qualities of what was considered lexically well-known are oriented to in a new light. Because Swedish is used to explore French, student and teacher *voices* drive the discourse forward and the exploratory excursions are animated and elaborate. Because lexical items in both languages are being oriented to as relevant in the light of their interrelationships, *knowledge stakes* are temporarily but tangibly evenly distributed and, to a significant extent, stretches of *interactional symmetry* between all participants are sustained. The concept of *interillumination* offers a precise and penetrating description of these multilingual lexical patterns of operation.

It is when students can pitch in on terms that they are comfortable with that classroom interaction supports a rich and intricate exchange of views and elucidations. Interillumination processes in this episode therefore afford open access to, indeed authorship of, the official classroom discourse; they create conditions for high levels of engagement among participants and for more symmetrical relationships between all classroom members, who stand side by side as language experts in their own right and, at the same time, as language learners (p. 216).

As the study shows, the force of *interillumination* and the idea of interlingual *countering* challenge the privileging or the subordination of any one language in language-learning interaction. This is so because monolingual practices in SAL education mirror *monological principles* that language is, first and foremost, (and may be acquired as) a unified system and that utterances are the product of individual performance. This study offers evidence of bilingual interaction in which participants gain orientation to lexical items in both languages as they explore their interrelationships in and through discourse which is collectively and progressively generated. *Interillumination* and *counter word* prove particularly relevant concepts for analyzing *what can happen to classroom interaction* when two or more national languages enter into *dialogic interanimation* with each other.

5.1.2 Study 2

Bagga-Gupta, Sangeeta & St John, Oliver. Making complexities (in)visible. Empirically-derived contributions to the scholarly (re)presentations of social interactions (Accepted).

Study 2 seeks to demonstrate the relevance of the Bakhtinian concepts of *interillumination* and *countering* not only to the dialogic orientations between utterances but also to the relations between different semiotic modes cooperating simultaneously in concerted action. To support arguments for multimodal analysis, the study examines data from French lessons which testify to the verbally, visually and spatially interdependent composition of naturally occurring classroom interaction. With respect to this interactional order, the study shows that “communicative meaning for participants hinges on multimodal *interillumination* that is, the operative alignment of *different modes that mutually interpret each other*” (p. 14).

One example of efforts to illuminate ongoing instructional behaviour *multimodally* arises from the concerted collaboration in a French speaking activity between the teacher’s use of gesture in synchrony with her talk and in relation to a picture framing language practice. The point is made that:

it is not only talk that is serving to elucidate meanings; *verbal language, gesture and picture throw light on each other*. They not only operate concurrently, in various ways they *stand for each other*. Like paraphrases that unpack previous utterances, verbal and gestural conduct linked to textual artifact interpret each other communicatively. It is in reciprocal representational alignment that they achieve their purpose of generating intelligibility for electing student production of French (p. 21-22).

From data analysis, intermodal orientations are found to be communicatively significant and subtle. Observation suggests that, like languages, modes in operation are not self-sufficient, but, as Bakhtin (1986) claims for utterances, are “aware of and mutually reflect one another” (p. 91). Language is seen to be contingent for its particularity and potency on the work of other significant illuminators. The study highlights the way various semiotic modes engage with each other as *interpretative resources* to actualize situated and specific meanings which bear consequentiality for subsequent participant understandings and responses.

Interilluminary processes between modes are certainly not claimed as peculiar to the kinds of interaction occurring in school classrooms. Rather, the finding is another example of the parallels between classroom interaction and mundane conversations which make comparative analysis between them useful (Heritage, 1984). It suggests that classroom interaction

is an off-shoot, an institutional version of “real-life dialogue [...] the simplest and the most classic form of speech communication” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 75) and therefore exhibits many of its ‘parent’ features.

5.1.3 Study 3

St John, Oliver & Cromdal, Jakob. Crafting instructions collaboratively (Resubmitted to *Discourse Processes*).

This study focuses on instructions for tasks in whole-class arrangements as a site of dialogic engagement and interactional complexity. Much classroom research since the 1970s has stressed the constraints on student participation in instructional activity. This prevalent theme tends to project the view that the management of classroom interaction is primarily or even exclusively a teacher accomplished order. Moreover, task instructions, *in particular*, are commonly associated with individual or non-interactional objectives and operations. However, classroom video data have suggested that task instructions are *interactionally ordered* and unfold meaningfully on the basis of participants' mutual orientations through embodied visual and verbal actions. The primary aim is therefore to examine task instructional activity for evidence of the ways teacher and students orient toward each other in the sequential and multimodal organization of their interactions. A secondary aim is to explicate the methods or operations by which students are welded into a collective body and participation is managed in an environment specified to provide conditions for students to successfully comprehend and complete particular tasks.

In pursuit of these aims and with the means of conversation analytic procedures, four task instructional data sequences are analyzed. These extracts are taken from the seventh- and eighth-grade learning environments of four different subjects – English, home economics, French and science. Analyses reveal that task instructions are *interactionally crafted*; they are crucially connected to and contingent on what other participants in the context are doing. The instructional format is textured by intricate addressivity work by which turn-takers select their recipients and sustain their mutual orientations. The analyses, with the aid of an amplified transcription system, draw attention to the prevalent role of gaze, head and posture in targeting particular recipients and thereby coordinating participants' instructional moves.

From analyses, it is evident that students contribute decisively, both visually and verbally, to the interactional flow as well as the instructional content. From the instructor's point of view, student questions may be more or less relevant to the immediate focal activity, but they forward a relevancy that the questioner *is orienting to*. Thus student contributions, in response to whole-class task instructions, whether viewed as valuable or violative, set up *two kinds of accountability* – one to respond to the questioner with an adjacent answer and another to maintain instructional con-

tinuity and coherence for the cohort. What seems remarkable in the data is the care instructors take to meet both *individual and collective* accountabilities. One is not attended to at the cost of the other.

One strategy which has emerged as vital in efforts to meet this *dual accountability* – providing sufficient and coherent instructions for tasks to all the students as well as providing an appropriate answer levelled at the questioner – is *dual addressivity*. Dual addressivity is observably accomplished through alternating embodied turnings between group and individual so that two addressees are engaged successively within the same stretch of interaction and accountability to each can be settled in concerted action. As recipient of a student question, dual addressivity allows the instructor to make the issue available to the whole group while nesting an answer directed toward the particular questioner. It also serves to reassimilate an individual questioner into the group so that the instructor can continue to address the students as a collective.

These small phenomena project larger teacher practices and educational principles. For example, they point to the importance of treating the collective *as configured by individuals* (with unique competences and histories) and treating individuals *as group members* with a fundamental need to become a part of something larger than themselves. The grain of dual addressivity work microcosms that education, in the final analysis, is neither a *utilitarian* nor a purely *individualized* project. Furthermore, teacher-student interactions in this environment also indicate that the work of making instructions coherent, *followable* is largely cooperative. Turning *student problems* into *pedagogic prospects* is an inherently collaborative achievement.

The study identifies two related senses in which task instructions are crafted collaboratively – *sequentially* and *simultaneously*. CA explicates the first; addressivity accounts for the second. Educationally, it appears vital to recognize student instructed action as a condition for making task instructions *followable* and such *in vivo* work as *integral* to task-related learning.

5.1.4 Study 4

St John, Oliver. Language through *linguaging*: Contested boundaries and semiotic countering (Manuscript in preparation for submission).

The concept of *linguaging* has gained currency in sociolinguistics and dialogic accounts of communication. It foregrounds language as communicational action and the diverse discursive practices realized through language performance between interacting beings in concrete social situations. The concept has been provoked by often contested boundary issues running centrally through the study of language. These include, first, the boundaries between language as system and action and second, between ‘national’ languages as well as between language variation within a language. A third boundary between language deployment and other types of communication is made salient by multimodal study of communication. The aim of this article is to gain some leverage on the complexity of language as a natural phenomenon through the concept of *linguaging* with particular focus on these boundaries or dichotomies.

Linguaging represents an attempt to dissolve the system-action boundary by reconceptualizing abstract systems of linguistic resources “in action-oriented terms as constraints on utterances or more generally on linguaging” (Linell, 2009, p. 274). In this way, the organizing centre or force of constraint that holds language in dialectic tension so that it affords meaning potential across different contexts is its deployment in these contexts aligned retrospectively and prospectively in responsive action. In other words, it is people’s performances in the “chain of speech communion” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 84) which regulates the scope of what can be meant by what. The study points out difficulties with this dialogic assumption, for example, the circularity of the argument that language performance can serve as its own organizing principle while still sustaining the kind of constraint on performance that insures the tenacity of linguaging to retain certain context-transcending parameters of meaning.

Linguaging holds considerable conceptual appeal for linguists who seek to highlight the competence displayed in the linguistically hybrid yet fluid communicative performances of people in multilingual settings. The concept covers the way ground-level language performance crosses both conventional interlingual and intralingual boundaries and composes novel fusions – phenomena that cannot be adequately accounted for by monolithic and monolingual approaches. However, the study points out that linguaging does less descriptive justice to the other side sustaining the possibility of human meaning-making, that, while we may be able to *language* when communicating, we are also *linguaged* communicators. In learning

to manipulate language, to engage in discursive practices and meaning making that is, to *language*, we are manipulated by *language* and, if we want to be intelligible, have to conform to its patterns and conceptual distinctions in the here and now.

Multimodal analysis of human communication shows that oral language operates as one of a number of semiotic resources which work concurrently and cooperatively as a whole to produce naturally occurring interaction. In terms of interactional dynamics, the contribution of languaging is configured into a framework of modes which interilluminate each other to invigorate and specify local meaningful action. From this view, the privileging of language action which languaging as discursive practices suggests, creates a boundary between the operations of language and other communicative resources which risks misrepresenting the multilayered nature of human interaction.

5.2 Overarching conclusions

The agenda of the thesis has been set by three issues with three corresponding aims. The first problem is how to analyse bi- and multilingual practices in a way which is congruent with the views of those engaged in them. The second question is how the kind of open-ended, processual conception of dialogue Bakhtin advocates may be relevant to school classrooms where there is an emphasis on gaining a predetermined body of knowledge and converging on right answers. The third problem revolves around the sufficiency of representation for analysis of naturally occurring interaction which inevitably draws into view the issue of the relevant context of study. Each of these challenges is countered by a thesis aim. This section seeks to synthesize the ways in which the four studies address these three thesis issues and the aims they induce. As an extension of this account, the following section highlights the educational implications of treating classroom interaction as *dialogic action*.

5.2.1 Addressing thesis aims

Accounting for multilingual communication emically

Bakhtin's claim that *all living discourse is dialogical* provides theoretical ground for radically alternative perspectives on language alternation to monolingual and monolithic descriptions and distinctions. Bakhtin's vision of heteroglossia is an incisive deconstruction, a grand shaking-up, of the notion of languages as unitary, monolithic and absolute. It unsettles systematic language separation and rigid boundaries. Heteroglossia provides elemental conditions for framing and rationalizing a local climate of language juxtaposition, interpenetration and hybrid forms. This base and the bearings of related Bakhtinian concepts allow the analyst to sidestep dichotomous models of language alternation practices and to reconceptualise them in *dialogic terms*. A few examples follow.

A dialogic perspective brought to bear on naturalistic interaction through the forces of *interillumination* and interlingual *countering* “challenges the privileging or the subordination of any one language in language-learning settings because no language is ever completely unified”.³² Respecifying Bakhtin's notion of *counter word* to *intermodal countering* has served to gain analytic purchase on the interilluminative work between semiotic modes-in-operation which mutually interpret and qualify each other to configure specific situated meanings.³³

³² Study 1, Part 2, p. 216.

³³ See Study 2, Part 2.

Bakhtin's (1981) notion of *ventriloquation* and *voicing* recast (students') everyday bilingual way of talking in terms of one *voice* speaking *through* another *voice* in moments of *appropriation*. These concepts indicate that words in one language may be folded into the texture of a seamless flow of talk in another *as two voices* because the former *capture* the most appropriate and precise accent or tone for the occasion. Translating such words into another language would entail losing the *voice*, the *socially charged edge*, they offer. This account majors on *new ways to mean* through the *interanimation* between two languages rather than the dissection of discourse into one language or another.

How may dialogism be relevant to classroom interaction?

In line with the above, the studies all testify to the penetrative analytic affordance of Bakhtinian perceptions for *studying* classroom pedagogic interaction. This said, the studies also seek to demonstrate that Bakhtinian dialogism has outstanding relevance for classroom pedagogy and participation. In support of this claim, three examples are offered.

Centripetal and centrifugal processes

The relevance of dialogism to classroom interaction has been raised *as an issue* by the apparent contradiction between *nonteleological* views of dialogue and the dominating *teleological* logic of pedagogic activity in schools geared to performative results in relation to curricular goals. However, while Bakhtinian epistemology is marked by a nonteleological thrust, his stance clearly shows that such momentum only emerges from the confrontation and combustion of *both* converging *and* diverging discursive tendencies bearing on each other. Language forms and knowledge fan out forcefully through heteroglossia because of *centripetal and centrifugal* impulses in opposition and struggle. Bakhtin's (1981) emphasis on linguistic stratification and diversity must be weighed against the implication of "two embattled tendencies in the life of language" working *alongside each other* (p. 272). It seems that both are necessary for provoking dialogic impetus and producing new strata of meaning-making possibility.

In (second) language classrooms, these essential orientations are reflected in attempts to integrate form- versus meaning-focused instruction and pedagogical progression which involves varying degrees of systematic language practice and idiosyncratic production. Language learning is about being *linguaged* as well as languaging.³⁴ This is important because the exuberance of grammarless, 'zero option' communicative teaching is still

³⁴ See Study 4, Part 2.

an ideal that motivates language teaching classroom objectives and practices. One consequence of ‘immersion’ models of communicative language teaching is that full grammatical competence does not seem to develop (Ellis, 1997, 2008; Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Interillumination

In alignment with the above, Bakhtin’s concept of *interillumination* puts the spotlight on not language compartmentalization but linguistic relationships; more particularly, on the interanimation that occurs at points of language contact and intersection. In schools, everyday vernaculars intermingle and clash with the more formal discourses of the disciplines. *Interillumination* challenges the privileging of discipline-based languages and counsels the advantage of bringing students’ vernacular genres into creative play alongside formal discourses for participation and new consciousness within specific school subjects. Bakhtin claims that in the process students’ social languages will not only throw light on a particular school discourse but will, simultaneously, become transformed for those using it. In time, both varieties will find their place as ideological resources for expanding student capacity for dialogue with and perception of the world.

Within language learning settings, *interillumination* exposes the principle of intralingual teaching as monologic and as offering truncated opportunities for language development. Contrastively, this perception recommends the exploration of the borderlines between two (or more) languages for coordinating (re)orientation to lexical and grammatical items in each variety.³⁵ This is pedagogically vital because “People do not ‘accept’ their native language – it is in their native language that they first reach awareness” (Vološinov, 1973, p. 81).

(Dual) addressivity

The notion of *addressivity*, explored in Study 3 as *dual addressivity*, bears pedagogic relevance for it casts classroom participation as primarily *social experience*. In their daily work, teachers orient to both individuals and collectives repeatedly. Dual addressivity in instructional encounters points to the pedagogical expediency of treating groups as *configured by idiosyncratic persons* who together forge dynamics and turning to individuals as *group members* with a yearning to become part of a greater whole. The teachers in Study 3 make sure that the individual is not sacrificed for the sake of the collective and neither is the collective sidelined in attending to

³⁵ See Study 1, Part 2.

the individual. The grain of their conduct microcosms that, ultimately, education is neither a *utilitarian* nor a purely *individualized* project.

Representational sufficiency for analysis of classroom interaction

Each study, to varying degrees, testifies to the multimodal fabric of classroom interaction and to the potential consequentiality of any participant action – *visual or verbal* – for ensuing participant conduct and the course of their interactions. These studies therefore highlight the contingency of participants’ situated understandings on the occurrence or nonoccurrence of such interactional detail. The implication is that when multimodal phenomena is not represented, detail may be dimmed or eliminated from view which may be critical for enabling analysts to reveal and align with participants’ analyses of the situation. Emic analysis is at stake.

In view of the methodological association between Bakhtin and CA, the issue of representation and relevant context raises questions about the sufficiency of an exclusively emic focus. There are problems with CA’s tightly circumscribed and ‘world-unto-itself’ perception of social order and context. First, the agency and competences of participants in composing their own patch of social life are elevated at the expense of exploring how other influences and discourses of sociocultural life may play a part in impacting or sustaining their socio-interactional reality. The problem that an ethnomethodology and CA approach leaves unresolved “is how to build from micro second-by-second experiences outwards to the broader social structures that people come to experience, somehow, as constraints upon their lives” (Weeks, 1995, p. 468).

Second, the logic of CA, linked to a participant defined context and determined by what is displayed in the *inspectable* details of the participants’ talk, makes a number of assumptions which include that:

- a) participants’ understandings and meanings are displayed in their orientations to each other
- b) talk is a sufficient index of these orientations and that
- c) participants have a monopoly on assessing what is relevant in a particular situation.

Each of these assumptions may be contested. With regard to the first, participants in any situation, for all manner of cultural and personal reasons, do not always reveal their ‘inner’ stances through their response to prior talk³⁶. Linell (2009) asserts “theoretically it is an untenable position to claim that cognition is exclusively a publicly available phenomenon; people simply do not disclose everything they think [...] and some (sub) cognitive

³⁶ See Heritage (1984, p. 260) for further commentary on this point.

processes cannot be brought into language in an accountable manner” (p. 15).

The second assumption seems to me to be attributing an omnirelevance to language (Watson, 1992) that goes beyond its attributes. While language undoubtedly enables social intelligibility and consciousness (Vygotsky, 1986), it does not have a *monopoly* on meaning making and the constitution of reality (Beck, 1993; Fishman, 2010; Holquist, 2002).

The third assumption makes the participant group the *sole criterion* in assessing what is (ultimately) relevant in a situation. There are surely other sides to consider in relation to this claim. For example, Goffman (1957) noted that interaction works best when interactants engage each other *unselfconsciously*, that is, without focusing overtly on the manner of their moves. Garfinkel’s (1967) exploration of *indexicality* makes it clear that much understanding between participants-in-conversation is presupposed and assumed as a *background* to their talk rather than oriented to with any degree of explicit attention or marking. It has long been a hallmark of ethnography that it is precisely the *outsider* in the observer, the *professional stranger* (Agar, 2008) that *makes visible* what to participants, through contextual immersion and the veil of habit, has become invisible.

Bakhtin (1986) states that, because “Creative understanding continues creativity” (p. 142), analysts’ understanding of a given text or interaction *can and should* be better than the understandings achieved in the context under study. In view of the above points, Bakhtin’s claim may not be merely arrogant, but an acknowledgement of the mediational means and distance available to analysts which are not available to participants in the situation (see following section, 5.2.2).

5.2.2 Classroom dialogic action: Educational implications

The educational implications of treating classroom interaction as dialogic action are many and far-reaching. Linked to the immediately preceding accounts, three lines of reflection are offered as perspectives on educational principles and practices.

Riding tension

A first implication is to view the dialogic classroom as the project of capitalizing on the animation between nonteleological, divergent, and teleological, convergent, kinds of knowledge-seeking activity for coordinating pedagogic encounters and possibilities. In other words, the Bakhtinian educational challenge is not to try to excommunicate monologic tendencies from the classroom for this would be neither pedagogically productive nor, given disciplinary demarcations and definitions, practical. Moreover, as men-

tioned, this is not possible, for the dynamics of dialogue depend on *interanimation* between centripetal and centrifugal forces in language life. The conversation may be ‘unending’ but its power to run comes from the combustion between the need to steer in a particular direction and the urge to strike out in new orientations (cf. Alexander, 2008). Confrontation and struggle between them is creative, catalytic, in forging new kinds of language action and meaning making (Bakhtin, 1981).

There is then an *irreducible tension* between predetermined pedagogic direction and emergent pedagogic engagement. The art of dialogic instruction is to *ride such tensions*. As Renshaw (2004) suggests, working dialogically in the classroom is to learn to perform pedagogically in this contradictory space. “Tensions are a source of movement in individuals as well as in dialogue” (Linell, 2009, p. 87). The pedagogic challenge is to involve this momentum profitably so that it contributes to an exploration of the instructional matter. Participants can *respond for divergence* and *respond for convergence* so that the activity draws on the *unfinalizable* dialogue any pedagogic process or resolution is a part of within a particular subject sphere (ibid.).

There is also tension between the goal-orientated practices of instructors and the divergent efforts of the novice (Renshaw, 2004). Given knowledge asymmetries and variety of experiences in the classroom, contrast and incongruity between questions and answers, provocation and reaction, guidance and following, are bound to mark a considerable amount of classroom communication. There is a latent force in *contrast*, in deviating or dissenting views, which make *distinct* wider parameters of possible perception. It is through coordinating action which is alert to the epistemic and semantic *contrasts*, *differentials*, between questions and answers, between successive responses, that much classroom interaction finds its pedagogic orientation, its *educative edge*.

Bridging action

Second, *other-orientation*, the thrust of addressivity, affords insight into what it is about (classroom) interaction that excites the learning of something and is particularly *educative*. Other-orientation implies that I have been addressed and express a *response* to another which actively participates in the generative, discursive, emergence of understanding another’s action (Bakhtin, 1981). At the same time, my response “is directed towards an *answer* and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates” (ibid. p. 280). Thus through a synthesis of expressing a response and forming it in alignment with the other’s particular position and anticipated response, interactants contribute to and partici-

pate in a chain of *communicative coherence* around a topic or theme. Efforts to respond creatively and align communicatively engender a productive tension; they imply an interactionally recurrent *leading out* from one's own premises and a *linking in* to something that we would not have been able to produce by our own consciousness. Other-orientation is not only *self-realizing* but shows up the thoroughly *social character* of educative processes (Vološinov, 1973); it underscores the vitality of investing in *participant relationships* as the bedrock of successful pedagogy. If 'self' is a *relation*, then pedagogy is inherently *participant-powered*.

With other-orientation in focus, a further implication of classroom interaction as *dialogic* is conceptualizing pedagogic engagement between participants as *bridging action* where one end depends on the addresser and the other end on the addressee. The bridge built by orienting communicatively to others provides a challenging image of pedagogic encounters as involving student initiative, risk, but as creating access for teachers to meet students where they are and offer them a way across barriers or gaps they can manage. Other-orientation insures that what happens *between* teachers and learners is *more significant* for what is understood and achieved than the quality of teacher input or the interpretative capacities of recipients as discrete variables.

Framing freedom

With regard to the issues of contextual relevance and sufficient representation, I submit that Bakhtin's dialogic approach challenges CA's exclusive emic explication of social action and order as *contextually accountable*.

The social order that Bakhtin found in the production of utterances is a perception of the sociocultural milieu which *constrains local social action* while insuring the *agency of the social actors*. It is neither functionalist nor exclusively emic. Bakhtin's fine balance between constraint and agency is illustrated quintessentially in *speech genres*³⁷. On one hand, *generic speech types, genres*, "organize our speech" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 78) giving it expressive pattern and potency. "Even in the most free, the most unconstrained conversation, we cast our speech in definite generic forms" (ibid). On the other hand, the word must be *appropriated* and made one's own (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293-4). This act suggests strong agency, a freedom upheld by the climate of heteroglossia that maintains language's capacity to be adapted, transformed, into singular meaningful configurations.

³⁷ For definitions and discussion of 'social languages' and 'speech genres', see Bakhtin (1986, p. 60-102); Holquist (1981b, 2002) and Wertsch (1991).

Bakhtin's analysis of generic language constraint and independent appropriation introduces a paradox that is fundamental to language – that its realization is a function of 'givens' – patterns of form and potentials of meaning³⁸ – as well as a free, transformative move; that language entails both an *aligning* to a conception of the world and, as indeed CA assumes, a *striving* to conceive it. Appropriation underwrites language use as an autonomous action, a choice within a wider set of social, generic constraints that, if flaunted or disregarded, condemn a communicator to being unintelligible and insignificant. This paradox of language reflects, in my view, the deeper principle that freedom cannot be exercised or enjoyed outside a framework of responsibility and restraint; ultimately, *freedom is the capacity to choose to submit to such constraints*.

For these reasons, I conclude that a CA approach stands to benefit analytically from a dialogic frame which holds the situated and its broader social setting as linked organically and reflexively. An utterance, an engagement in the world, is always an *answer*, a link, to a preceding action in a "very complexly organized chain of other utterances" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 69). Educationally, this position suggests that the resources students deploy for independent sense-making and reorientation to instructional content are not *only* interactional. They partake of the contexts in which they have lived their *socially charged lives* (Bakhtin, 1981). Assessing learning in schools must assume that student contributions and conduct are contingent on *distal* as well as *proximal, local*, links in the chain of communication which every classroom exchange, every utterance, is an integral part of.

At the same time, viewing classroom interaction as dialogic action proclaims ongoing, boundless, *pedagogic prospects*. Bakhtin (1986) is adamant that there is never a last word or meaning, but an answer always gives rise to a new question from itself. This prospect blazons *educative opportunity* for there is always a new way to respond, to *mean* and to continue *dialogic* engagement. While there is dialogue, there is *hope*.

5.3 Future research prospects and epilogue

When climbing a mountain, it is common to imagine that the final ascent is over the next rise. On reaching the top of the current slope, however, a different view is afforded and climbers can look out on a panorama of ranges, a new horizon, spread out at their feet. In a similar way, 'landings' on journeys are not polar, but places which afford more penetrating views of what the journey involves, places from which to reset bearings and embark on a new stretch of journeying. This human experience prompts

³⁸ See Linell (1998, 2009).

scanning a couple of dialogic prospects for future research and pausing temporarily at an epilogue

One aspect of mundane interaction which observations have suggested as of interest to explore comprises the dynamics of communicative counteraction for sense-making. This is a recurrent theme with Bakhtin. While CA emphasizes contiguity, sequentiality, compliance to organizational preference, Bakhtin stresses confrontation, simultaneity and oppositional stances. Paradoxically, there is order in such incongruity which may be accounted for in terms of sense-making coordination. The notion of participants taking contrastively oriented positions as a strategy for coordinating grasp of a topic or meaning between the differential of utterance and response remains an intrigue which this thesis has not explored. The Bakhtinian notions of *counter word* and *interanimation* seem well suited to gain analytic purchase on such strategic contrastive stances.

The critique that the studies of this thesis more or less take an emic stance when Bakhtin straddles both insider and outsider perspectives must clearly inform future research effort. A future research prospect when approaching classroom interaction dialogically must include an exploration of how a system of representation portraying local, situated action can be made sensitive to linked extra-local 'realities'.

As I think about how to end Part 1 of the thesis, two final questions emerge: What has the thesis contributed to a) educational research and b) personal growth? With regard to the first, I hope this thesis will contribute impetus to the *dialogic stream* within education which invites teachers as *learners* and students as capable *dialogic partners* to reason together and deepen their understanding from drawing contrasting viewpoints into dialogue. This dialogic challenge to education serves as a pedagogical counterforce to schooling locked into a results vis-à-vis goals logic. I hope that this thesis helps highlight the significance of Bakhtinian perceptions of language, context and understanding for illuminating the pedagogical prospects of *approaching* and *participating* in classroom interaction as *dialogic action*. By taking steps towards dialogical analysis of classroom interaction through a CA inspired amplified transcription system, some contribution is made to the field of multimodal analysis of classroom data.

Finally, in a climate where the difficulties and pressures that school teachers face daily is a chronically prevalent theme, this thesis *pays tribute* to the pedagogic skills and sensitivities of many teachers in our schools today. I hope this thesis contributes to recognition of the *local instructional order* many teachers co-craft artfully with their students and greater focus on the pedagogic performances through which these teachers lead their

students out of themselves to the thresholds of new worlds. The participants are simply *greater* than the research on them.

While a thesis is not ‘for life’, I can’t help reflecting on how life with this thesis has impacted *my* life. Given the reflexive nature of research processes and the inevitable participation of personal convictions in courses of study, it would be strange not to assume personal reorientation. Put personally, in seeking significance within a *dialogic paradigm*, have I increased my capacity for *dialogue*? More, particularly, have I, through using a Bakhtinian lens for analysis, become a more sensitive listener, better able to bring dissonant voices into dialogue, to respond more astutely, more justly? Or in CA terms, has *doing* conversation analysis made me into a better *conversationalist*? These are not simply intriguing questions, but I suggest *interillumination* at its most significant reflexive plane.

Bakhtin has undoubtedly met me at several points of personal need. First up is my sheer *indebtedness* to others, before and on the journey, for what I stand on. Bakhtin has helped me recognize that much of what I currently understand has been gained in *response* to what others have done, struggled with and accomplished. Any speaker, Bakhtin (1986) reminds us “is himself a respondent to a greater or lesser degree. He is not, after all, the first speaker, the one who disturbs the eternal silence of the universe” (p. 68).

Then there is the precious possibility, in my hands, of a present, self-realizing, response. My single, independent response bears far-reaching, social, resonance; it can *resound* my voice to make a world of difference. *That* reverberation alone should make us mindful of the moment.

Finally, Bakhtin’s emphasis on other-orientation confronts me sternly. The challenge to appropriate and routinely achieve an *other-recognizing*, *other-reaching*, life stance is wise counsel for much of the confinement a self-serving, monologic, habit inflicts.

If lucid recognition of the need to change ignites the process of lasting change, then dialogue with Bakhtin has indeed been *life-changing*.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Breakdown of fieldwork visits

Class Year	Week	Dates	Number of days
7B	8	21-22 February, 08	2
	11	10-14 March, 08	5
	15	9-11 April, 08	3
	17	21-23 April, 08	3
	22	26-30 May, 08	5
8B	38	15-19 Sept. 08	5
	41	6-10 Oct. 08	5
	48	24-28 Nov. 08	5
	7	9-10 Feb. 09	2
	8	18-20 Feb. 09	3
	10	2-6 March, 09	5
	17	20-24 April, 09	5
	21	19-20 May, 09	2
	22	28-29 May, 09	2
			Total: 52 days

Appendix B: Video recordings of lessons

Key:

So = Social science;

N/T = Number/Total

T/S = Teacher or substitute

Spring 2008: Class 7b

Date	Time	Lesson	Topic	N/T	T/S
09-04-08	11.55-13.10	Science	Electricity-revision	1/4	T
09-04-08	13.25-14.55	So	Finishing plays	1/3	T
10-04-08	10.05-11.35	French	Vocab.+ excercises	1/4	T
10-04-08	12.25-13.30	Maths	Revision, ch.5	1/5	T
11-04-08	08.10-09.10	Maths	Ch.5 cont.	2/5	T
11-04-08	12.00-13.05	English	'Friends' and 'Crush'	1/3	T
21-04-08	12.45-13.30	French	'Préparer interviews'	2/4	T
21-04-08	14.30-15.30	Science	Balloon Race Cars	2/4	T
23-04-08	11.55-13.10	Science	Balloon powered cars	3/4	T
26-05-08	12.45-13.30	French	Petits Sketches (Ch.6)	3/4	T
27-05-08	11.15-12.00	Science	Going through the test	4/4	T
27-05-08	12.40-13.40	English	Story: 'My simple little..	2/3	T
27-05-08	13.50-15.20	So	'Slave' presentations	2/3	T
28-05-08	08.35-09.30	Maths	Last 'läxa' class were set	3/5	T
28-05-08	13.25-14.55	So	'Slave' presentations	3/3	T
29-05-08	08.50-09.45	English	Prepositional phrases	3/3	T
29-05-08	10-05-11.35	French	Sketches and grammar	4/4	T
29-05-08	12.25-13.30	Maths	'Ränta!'	4/5	T
30-05-08	08.10-09.10	Maths	'Ränta!' (Follow-up exc.)	5/5	T

Total number of lessons = 19

Autumn 2008: Class 8b

Date	Time	Lesson	Topic	N/T	T/S
17-09-08	10.10-11.25	French	Les quatre saisons	1/7	T
17-09-08	13.20-14.20	English	'Holes' and groupwork	1/7	T
18-09-08	08.50-09.50	French	(TF)	2/7	T
18-09-08	10.00-11.00	English	(Picture, no sound)	2/7	T
19-09-08	10.55-12.25	Home Ec	Test, nutrition	1/1	T
24-09-08	10.10-11.25	French	Parlez des saisons	3/7	T
25-09-08	10.00-11.00	English	Press conf. and Holes	3/7	T
06-10-08	11.10-12.10	English	Gp work and vocab test	4/7	T
06-10-08	14.05-15.00	Maths	Simplifying fractions	1/5	S

07-10-08	09.10-10.30	Maths	Test, fractions, etc.	2/5	T
07-10-08	12.45-14.00	Science	Inside body parts	1/3	T
08-10-08	10.10-11.25	French	(Fire drill!) indiv. work	4/7	T
08-10-08	11.45-12.30	Science	Respiration	2/3	T
09-10-08	08.50-09.50	French	Grammar: prendre, faire	5/7	T
09-10-08	10.00-11.00	English	Focus on writing	5/7	T
24-11-08	11.10-12.10	English	'Food for thought' prep	6/7	T
24-11-08	14.05-15.00	Maths	Test (Switched off Cs)	3/5	T
25-11-08	09.10-10.30	Maths	4 sheets to complete	4/5	S
25-11-08	12.45-14.00	Science	Text: Transport (Heart)	3/3	S
26-11-08	10.10-11.25	French	Le sport: exc. and text	6/7	T
26-11-08	13.20-14.20	English	Klines review and tasting	7/7	T
27-11-08	08.50-09.50	French	H/W, Préparer interviews	7/7	T
28-11-08	10.00-10.45	Maths	H/Os	5/5	S

Total number of lessons = 23

Spring 2009: Class 8b

Date	Time	Lesson	Topic	N/T	T/S
09-02-09	11.10-12.10	English	Cat in family, agony aunt	1/4	T
10-02-09	12.45-14.00	Science	Convalent bonding	1/2	T
18-02-09	10.05-11.25	French	Revision lesson	1/7	T
18-02-09	11.45-12.30	Science	Chemical equations	2/2	T
19-02-09	08.50-09.50	French	Qu'est-ce qui se passe	2/7	T
20-02-09	10.00-10.45	Maths	Textbook excercises	1/3	T
02-03-09	11.10-12.10	English	Gp work and agony aunts	2/4	T
02-03-09	14.05-15.00	Maths	Expressions and integers	2/3	T
03-03-09	09.10-10.30	Maths	Formulas	3/3	T
04-03-09	10.10-11.25	French	Vitrine excercises	3/7	T
05-03-09	10.00-11.00	English	Snake charmer and India	3/4	T
20-04-09	11.10-12.10	English	Gp work: Read/comp. ?s	4/4	T
22-04-09	10.10-11.25	French	Prepositions/grammar	4/7	T
23-04-09	08.50-09.50	French	Game, 'Ma Chambre	5/7	T
20-05-09	10.10-11.25	French	Lille, La revision	6/7	T
28-05-09	08.50-09.50	French	Personal pronouns/vocab	7/7	T

Total number of lessons = 16

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