

Towards a New Appreciation of Speaking and Listening

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For many teachers, talk is at the centre of English curriculum and pedagogy. Their classrooms are rich linguistic communities in which all students participate...through listening and speaking, their students engage in imaginative play, negotiating issues of value, identity and voice in a way that is unique to the English classroom. For such teachers, classroom talk is a vital medium for exploring the interface between school and community, learner and teacher, for mediating between the formal demands of schooling and the linguistic communities to which their students belong (see www.stella.org.au).

1. Introduction

Formal curriculum documents often contain the phrase “speaking and listening” or some variation of it. This now common phrase, names an area of concern over which English teachers rightly have a heavy responsibility. At a very basic level the area “speaking and listening” names a language mode alongside other more common or popular language modes: “reading”, ‘writing’ and the now common, “viewing”. In the view of formal curriculum and standards documents at least, which are very often built around these language modes, these are the basis of English teachers’ knowledge and work. Despite the simplicity of these modes, they provide a basic language for talking about the different aspects of learning English, and indeed, other languages. They also provide a structure for thinking about the nature of knowledge and practice in English teaching—they have a self-evident quality about them. Teaching and learning English means teaching and learning how to read, write, view and speak and listen. While there is some use in

simplicity of language mode formations, there is some use in simplicity of course, but there are also limitations. One interesting problem with the language mode formation is that speaking and listening are often seen as a sideshow to the main attractions of reading and writing. Learning to read and write seems to take more effort, practice and is more teaching intensive. Compared to the important business of reading, writing and viewing, speaking and listening can seem secondary, an add on, or preparatory to reading and writing. In fact, speaking and listening have often been tagged onto the *end* of lists of literacy competencies in formal curriculums. This is a clear indication that speaking and listening are viewed as having lesser import and they are often presented as independent of social and cultural contexts.

The opening statement above, written as part of the STELLA project in Australia (see stella.org.au) in fact argues that talk has a central place in English curriculum and pedagogy. Clearly, this is a position that many English educators would take issue. However, we argue that placing talk at the center signals a *chief* importance, not a peripheral concern. Without talk, then, there is no center, no core, to the work that English teachers do in their classrooms, and to how English teachers understand language use and meaning making. As co-authors who are researchers and educators in different parts of the world (North America, South Africa, and Australia), we are committed to the concept that Back (2007) calls *engaged speaking*, which represents efforts to consciously practice speaking and listening. In this chapter, we tackle the topic with a shared commitment to thinking about speaking and listening as a core concern in literacy and language teaching and as mediated by place and subjectivities. To do so, we foreground theory that privileges the notions of speaking and listening, and we review empirical research that undergird theory in order to illustrate how researchers take up this theory and

consider ways in which educators apply speaking and listening in the classroom and teaching and learning contexts.

It is certainly not new to theorise speaking and listening as part and parcel of literacy experiences and as connected with how identities emerge while practicing literacy across different domains (Comber, 2015; Gee, 1999; Hicks, 2002; Lewis, Encisco, & Moje, 2007; Street, 1984) and in this chapter we look across the field to foreground work that strongly illustrates the importance of speaking and listening in educational spaces. What we want to emphasise though is how an approach to speaking and listening that focuses on skills misses the rich, complex repertoires of practice that are bound up deeply in the phrase, speaking and listening. In order to emphasise some elements of a richer understanding of speaking and listening, the chapter is divided into five sections that explore speaking and listening variously as situated, communicative, dialogic, voice and silence, and performance. We signal these five practices because we believe that they are under-recognized, under-developed, and not necessarily fully appreciated.

2. Speaking and Listening as Situated Practices

Centralised schooling curriculum statements, not infrequently, present an approach to speaking and listening as skills to be learnt in class within a general skills framework, with little connection to the situated and culturally-specific nature of listening, speaking, reading and writing. These standardised approaches to curriculum show evidence of roots in behaviorist models of skills development or alternatively in progressivist pedagogical theory, which see students and teachers as generalized subjects without any social location, and as more or less efficient communicators in regards to speaking, listening, writing, reading, and viewing. For

example, The National Curriculum Statement for South Africa (Department of Basic Education, 2011) sees speaking and listening as key blocks for organising the curriculum from Foundation Phase (the first years of schooling) to Secondary Phase (the last years of schooling). The Curriculum Statement describes listening and speaking as “different but co-dependent skills” and identifies “listening instruction” along with hearing, reading and writing instruction. It describes ‘listening instruction’ as a “three-phase activity which models independent listening strategies for decoding and understanding speech and other audio forms”. The phases are a pre-listening activity “which alerts them to the need for focused listening”; “Listening activities would help them recall details and evaluate the message” and “Post-listening might involve learners in responding to what they have heard through discussion”. Embedded in this broad curriculum outline is a notion of skill disconnected from any context. The Common Core State Standards (2010) in the USA might appear to be more contextually rooted: they aim to “establish clear, consistent guidelines for what every student should know and be able to do (in math and English language arts) from kindergarten through 12th grade” (as of August 2015, 42 states in the USA had adopted the CCSS in English Language Arts/literacy and Math). The things that kindergarten children, as an example, should “know” and “do” as regards to “comprehension” and “collaboration” include participating in conversations ‘about kindergarten topics’; follow rules for discussion as regards listening speaking and turn-taking; answering questions about texts read aloud; appropriately describe people, places and events when called on to do so, as well as appropriately incorporating visual material when called on to do so; while speaking audibly and expressing thoughts, feelings and ideas clearly. These skills and competencies have little relationship with contexts and with variable identities.

Despite their differences in emphasis, these broad curricula outlined in South Africa, Australia, and the U.S. both imply that if children simply respond to teacher directives and incentives to speak and listen coherently and efficiently, they will succeed at school. The question arises then, as to why children from poorer families, with the most to gain from schooling success, do not take advantage of the resources on offer and succeed in speaking, listening and then reading and writing in ways that lead to their doing well at school. Why do schools continue to sort children into winners and losers in patterns that largely reflect the social status of their parents, and how do speaking and listening fit into these dynamics? Bernstein's (1971) influential answer in *Class, Codes and Control* was that languages are socially shaped resources and that there are differences in patterns of spoken language between working-class and middle-class groups, even when they are all identifiably speakers of the "same" language (English, for example). Bernstein described the language of the middle classes along with that of schooling as constituting an "elaborated code" for the conveying of "explicit", "universalistic" and "context-independent" meanings whereas children of the poor and working poor were seen as acquiring a "restricted code" for making "implicit", "particularistic" and "context-bound" meanings. Bernstein's claim implied that the children from poorer families were better at talking to intimates in local settings in close-knit local communities whereas middle-class children were better at talking in more formal, impersonal contexts, including those that contained strangers, and in conveying generalised information structured by logic rather than by situated values and views. This made them do better at school and it all started with listening and speaking at home.

Bernstein's (1971) primary argument that there is a semantic continuity between home and school for the middle-classes and a discontinuity for the poor (in the United Kingdom, where he

worked, as well as all other class-based societies) can be said to present a “deficit” view of language differences in that working class resources are the more limited ones, but he does raise the important point that languages are social resources and that, because of their broadly social nature, they are variable resources, not the same regardless of context. Heath’s (1983) *Ways With Words* asked a similar question, as to why Black students in the southern USA were failing in the recently desegregated schools but gave a more complex answer than Bernstein’s “two codes” answer. Heath contrasted the language and literacy socialization in home settings of Black children of mill workers with children of White mill workers in a neighboring community as well as with middle-class children in the same town and made the case that there are not two, but multiple ways of taking and making meaning in speaking, reading and writing practices. Particular blends of talk, distribution of action, turn-taking in communication, uses of writing and references to written and visual objects were group-specific and consistent with patterns of child rearing that contrasted markedly across the three communities that she studied. What counted in effective communication, she pointed out, was not a generalized competence (e.g., being able to “speak English” or “code and decode letters”) but a situated, communicative competence embedded in acquired, “deep” cultural knowledge and learned models of using situated language in specific ways, drawing on varying histories and different rules for socially interacting, for sharing knowledge and opinions, and for reading and writing. Her answer as to why the class/race divide between winners and losers persisted was that the ways of schooling with regard to speaking, listening, reading and writing were closer to those of middle-class “professionals” than to any other group of people.

Scollon and Scollon's (1981) research made a related point that the Athabaskan people of Canada and Alaska were faced with challenges to their sense of identity and being in moments of speaking and interacting in schools, requiring them for example to take on ways of relating to intimates and non-intimates that differed from those with which they had grown up. In contributing to this debate, Gee (1990), in *Social Linguistics and Literacies*, drew an influential distinction between the "primary Discourse" and "secondary Discourses", to distinguish between the ways of speaking, listening, knowing, valuing, acting, and attitudes to writing that children inherited in their home environments and the secondary Discourses of social institutions, such as schools, that might be in accord or at variance with different groups of children's primary Discourses. Similarly, Heath's (1983) study of language development and socialization of Black and White children in the working class and middle class communities speak to the power of primary and secondary Discourse communities particularly as it relates to the effects of literacy and oral language use. Learning to read and write as part of secondary Discourses required new forms of socialization for socially marginal children to those they brought with them to school.

More recently, in an incisive critique of Bernstein's (1971) "two codes", Jones (2013) has argued that in effect Bernstein's "elaborated code" was in fact a description of the literacy practices of formal education as seen through the eyes of Street's (1984) 'autonomous model' of literacy. This "code" had the same features that the "autonomous" model uncritically attributed to written language. The features of the "restricted code" were those diametrically opposite features that the "autonomous model" attributed to speech. The particular strategies for certain kinds of school writing then became criteria for making judgements about children's spoken language, whether they follow certain narrative patterns with regard to referring to items and ideas and in

responding to cues as also evidenced in the socializing experiences and schooling experiences of the children in Heath's (1983) work where talk patterns in some communities more closely modelled traditional mainstream schooling/classrooms. Jones (2013) argued that an ingrained and unselfconscious *scriptism* infuses the model of elaborated and restricted codes—from initial assumptions and methodology through to the “semantic” constructs used in analysis. Scriptism refers, firstly, to the ways that ideas developed by linguists from the study of examples of written language get transposed as theories about spoken language. Secondly, as Street (1984) explained it, in a critique of the autonomous model of literacy, scriptism is a version of the ‘literacy myth’, a belief in the superiority in various respects of written language over spoken language and the view that some forms or uses of language are more “context-dependent” or “objective” than others. Bernstein's “elaborated code” is just a code for using an idealised model of conventional literacy practices as criteria for comparing characteristics of speech across groups of people. Middle-class or professional class parents whose interactive talk patterns have been shaped by their familiarity and common use of conventional written language genres and narrative strategies will pass these onto their children. Jones says that the deficit view of working class children's spoken resources is both inaccurate and unnecessary for understanding the challenges of speaking and writing as school-based activities:

... if a child at school has a problem understanding the ‘instructional discourse’ there is no reason to explain this by infrequent use of ‘decontextualized language’, it is enough just to say that the child does not understand what the teacher is saying, perhaps due to lack of the relevant background knowledge or interest in the subject matter (Jones, 2013, p. 170).

This section highlights a rich history in literacy studies that has been somewhat overlooked with a recent concentration on digital worlds and different forms of communication and a goal of the chapter is to remind readers of the role of speaking and listening *not as a peripheral concern, but rather of chief importance*.

3. Speaking and Listening as Communicative Resources

We started this discussion on literacy competencies by suggesting that school curricula such as those discussed earlier present speaking and listening as preparation work for reading and writing (and viewing), all of them conceived of skills that can be thought of as not connected to actually situated and culturally-specific listening, speaking, reading and writing. In contrast, the starting point for a socially-situated view of speech and writing is the premise that they always occur in a social context, which is never neutral or ahistorical. Communication is, in this view, unavoidably, a social phenomenon—language is “social through its entire range and in each and every of its factors, from the sound image to the furthest reaches of abstract meaning” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 259). A feature of this situatedness is that the language used in any interaction has an immediacy and unpredictability to it as people respond to one another, but they do so using language resources (and other semiotic resources) that are pre-shaped in fundamentally important ways, so that unique instances of communication are necessarily framed as understandable communication that uses socially and culturally ordered patterns and expectations. Thus Silverstein (1985) describes any instance of language in use as “an unstable mutual interaction of meaningful sign forms, contextualized to situations of interested human use and mediated by the fact of cultural ideology” (p. 220) and he describes this feature as the “total linguistic fact” to distinguish this view from that of language as carrying meanings through its

forms, independent of context. This is a view of language as comprising linguistic resources that do not carry inherently stable and context-free meanings from one setting to the next, but rather as resources invested with social and cultural interests. In Malinowski's (1965) words: "the main function of language is not to express thought, not to duplicate mental processes, but rather to play an active pragmatic part in human behaviour" (p. 7). The potential indeterminacy of meanings made in any instance of language use, as speakers or writers respond to each other, is countered by the linking of linguistic forms into recognisable models of conventional use that are in wider circulation and that are appropriate for particular settings. These models of use are called indexical orders by Silverstein, because of what they signal at a social level about the language users' social identities and interests. These indexical orders provide communicative resources that are both situationally-specific or "placed" as well as historically shaped and which both enable and constrain communicative discourse. As Blommaert (2007) summarised it:

Silverstein distinguished between two views of interaction, one centered on intentionally produced and organized denotation (a one-dimensional view), and another centered on what was achieved *indexically* by means of a complex mode of communicative behavior in which pragmatic and metapragmatic (ideological) aspects are inseparable – a multidimensional view in which vastly more is achieved by participants than merely denotational alignment. (Blommaert, 2007, p. 4)

It is also true that much listening, speaking and viewing, in schools and in everyday life is not distinct from reading and writing and is in other ways strongly influenced by reading, writing and linked communicative activities. Barton and Hamilton's (1998) study of literacy in a community setting concluded that much talk in everyday life that they studied was in fact talk

about texts or shaped by documents or textual practices. They pointed to the extent to which texts change social interaction in ways that had not formerly been widely noticed, in sociolinguistics or in sociological research, and emphasized that writing and writing artifacts were very much part of the ‘glue’ of social life. Baynham’s (1995) study of literacy practices examined the way that Moroccan migrants in London shifted between the communicative modes of text and talk in social interaction among themselves, while assisting each other with language and literacy challenges. Bilingual talk around monolingual text in school classrooms and community settings is, indeed, characteristic of most multilingual social contexts.

Teachers in many locations around the world face linguistically and socio-culturally diverse groups of student (Gardner and Martin-Jones, 2012; Blackledge and Creese, 2010) and this diversity has major consequences for how speaking and listening are carried out and have effect in schools. Migrants and mobile persons are a striking feature of the globalized world and bring a range of language resources and ways with words into classrooms. Whereas school-based standardized testing often labels youth from minority backgrounds as failing or at risk, researchers such as Garcia (2013), Canagarajah (2011), and Orellana (2015) examine the multilingual resources of both youths and adults from minority backgrounds, and their bilingual or [multilingual](#) resources. Speaking and listening in school can be a very different experience for students whose language and sociocultural backgrounds are similar or different to those of their teachers and other students in their class. Linguistic and socio-cultural diversity in classrooms and in society poses a range of social, cultural and material challenges to educational systems that were developed around the dictates of a ‘monoglossic language ideology’ (García 2009) where variations from the standard are often understood as deficiencies. At the most elementary

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level, educational institutions commonly insist on monolingual instruction through the medium of a standard regional, national or international language. As Davila (2016) argues, standard language ideologies, such as, for example, Standard English, in North American, European and African contexts, or Standard Spanish, in South American, European or North American contexts, advance beliefs about one, stable, correct language variety that is a superior and, therefore, commonsense dialect for school, business, and public settings. It becomes “an unmarked, unnamed, and unmodified language associated with notions of correctness and functioning in the service of ideas or meaning” (Davila, 2016, 136), in contrast with other, marked language use, for example, by students with bilingual nonstandard resources and ways of speaking. Palmer and Martinez (2013) point out that the connection between schooling and standard languages is bidirectional, in that schools teach and expect standard languages because they are superior and correct. Conversely, the focus on standard languages in schools supports the perception of widespread availability of the standard and it becomes normative in working and other social contexts.

However, increasing awareness of diversity would seem to require more dynamic and mobile concepts around language and literacy than the monolingual, standard orientations often prevalent in classroom speaking and listening. In response, researchers have started to look for examples of classroom interaction that treats students’ non-Standard language backgrounds as resources rather than as problems. Blackledge and Creese (2010), Creese and Blackledge (2015) and Leeman (2015) have turned to complementary schools and classes, which are run for children of migrants or other linguistic minorities, where classes are held on weekends or after regular day school. Typically such programs are run by community groups, cultural associations,

churches, or other non-profit groups. A particular feature that these researchers identified in these schools is that of ‘translanguaging’, where, freed from the pedagogic demands of practicing only the standard, dominant language for testing purposes in school, students and teachers alike are free to draw on the best available language resources in their multi-language and multi-register repertoire.

While classrooms have mostly stuck to maintaining clear borders between the language and learnings of school and the out-of-school language and literacy practices of bilingual youths, researchers such as Garcia and Wei (2014) and Canagarajah (2011) have called for translanguaging strategies in the classroom, based on the argument that all pedagogical approaches to speaking and listening as well as literacy should be contextualized and start with the language resources that children bring to school. As they describe it, translanguaging is an approach to language and literacy that encourages teachers to foster the use of whatever resources are at hand, across languages, rather than to insist on maintaining strict boundaries between designated languages in their uses, in talk and in writing. As Busch (2010, p.284) summarises it: “In this view, linguistic practice differing from the normalized standard, such as language crossing, or the appropriation of elements across language boundaries, is understood as resource rather than as deficiency.”

Translanguaging as a concept and idea first emerged in Welsh education in the 1980s (Lewis, Jones and Baker, 2012, 642) as a reaction to the historic separation of “two ‘monolingualisms’ (Welsh and English) with a difference in prestige”. From an opening position of conflict, suppression of Welsh and of English language dominance, Welsh language revitalisation efforts

produced a situation where the idea of Welsh and English as “holistic, additive, and advantageous” emerged and where language synergies rather than solitudes became acceptable. Palmer and Martinez (2013) note that language of schooling is often narrowly defined as *academic English* and this allows little space for registers of other world languages in the classroom and even less space for the often low-status registers or dialects children bring from home or the rich hybrid language practices that emerge in bilingual contexts. However, the idea of translanguaging as a strategy for bilingual, linguistically diverse and minority language classrooms has recently grown, promoted in the work of Garcia and Wei (2014), Hornberger and Link (2012) amongst others. In such developmental research the opening understanding of translanguaging as a practice of conscious switching in conversation or writing between two or more discrete languages has given way, theoretically, to the idea of communicants drawing on available language resources. A sharp distinction regarding a practice of conscious switching between two or more distinct “languages” has given way to a consideration of a much more fluid process taking place in instances of classroom talk.

4. Speaking and Listening as a Dialogic Process

Critical interpretive sociolinguistics makes the case for research into the interactional and textual fine-grain of everyday life in educational settings with attention to specific institutional regimes, including wider processes of political economy and change in contemporary society (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Heller, 2007; Martin-Jones, 2007). Martin-Jones (2007) calls for attention to the everyday communicative practices of teachers and learners in schools as well to the wider policy discourses as they are articulated in policy documents. A starting point in this research is a

recognition of the potential fluidity of language resources and attention to their often more rigid construction in educational policy and practice. As Martin-Jones (2007) puts it,

Schools operate as institutions (linked to the state) where specific languages (national official languages) and specific linguistic practices (ways of speaking, reading and writing) come to be inculcated with legitimacy and authority. (p.172)

These authors draw our attention to the ways in which schools function as spaces to select and categorise students, for assessing performance (including linguistic performance) and providing credentials tied to positioning in the world of work. Bailey (2007) suggests that socially infused constructs such as heteroglossia and indexicality are useful for directing attention to the historical and ideological dimensions of language meanings and identity construction. We can then study the ways in which educational policies *and* classroom practices contribute to the reproduction of asymmetries of power between groups with different social and linguistic resources in specific places. The Bakhtinian notion of *heteroglossia* refers to the intertextual nature of talk, writing and other semiotic resources, including images and sounds. Intertextuality refers to the ways meanings of talk, writing, etc. depend on past uses and associations of these forms. As Bailey (2007) summarises it, to speak or to write (to use language—or indeed to use other media) is to position oneself in the social world, i.e. to engage in identity practices.

Although “languages” (e.g. English) are commonly seen as unified and homogeneous (monoglossic), they are always fractured and stratified (heteroglossic). Heteroglossia addresses the many-voicedness of language and the tensions and conflicts among those signs, based on the sociohistorical associations they carry with them. For example, they include traces of other “national” languages and of “unofficial” resources from the “same” or “other” “languages”.

Heteroglossia is present at an interactional scale, where every utterance contains within it the

trace of other utterances, both in the past and in the future, as well as in other forms, in books and in other genres and registers of language use. No language, and no identity, is as unified and homogeneous as it claims.

Within the domain of speaking and listening, there has been significant drawing out of Bakhtin's work on heteroglossia, dialogism and multivoicedness, and intertextuality. For example, Lee & Moon (2013) use Bakhtin's concept of re-voicing to examine teachers' reflection processes in a teacher education course. Their study showed that in-service teachers shaped literature that they use in their classrooms around the cultures within their classrooms and reflect on the process.

Using Bakhtin to elicit speaking and listening in formalized contexts like schools or more informal contexts like homes. The authors discuss in detail an activity in a literacy methods class that requires the in-service teachers to put the idea of culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1994) into action using drama and read-alouds in their classrooms. Speaking and listening are used in this instance as a way of symbolically opening up spaces for students to find a voice in educational contexts. The concept of dialogism in particular has been incorporated into significant research that examines aspects of meaning making and speaking and listening across varied contexts. Cohen's research (2015) demonstrates the benefits of a Bakhtinian analysis of double voicing in early childhood programs. Cohen applies Bakhtin's three varieties of double voice discourse as: (a) unidirectional, (b) vari-directional, and (c) active discourse. The research study focuses on young children's play with blocks and the different forms of discourse displayed as young children use blocks and the types of passive double voicing that happens which is both uni-directional and vari-directional. Similarly, in their research on adolescents, Fecho and Amatucci (2008) apply Bakhtin's dialogic theory and the notion of heteroglossia to

describe research with a high school student, Andy, a working class adolescent who is exploring his sexual identity. Through dialogues with others, the researchers describe how Andy becomes an agent through a continuing formation of many cultural lives. Through dialogical exchanges Andy and Kristi forge their identities and the researchers examine the consequences of transactions. In another study by Fecho and Botzakis (2007), the researchers look at the teaching of literacy in U.S. secondary schools. These authors offer the concept of a dialogic classroom as one in which questions and responses are encouraged; context is discussed and embraced; there is openness to multiple perspectives; and, hierarchies are flattened.

Bakhtin's work has undergirded research on the notion of talk, discourse, and speaking and listening in digital and technological media. Through their framing of Bakhtin and Bourdieu, Bulfin and North (2007) show how youth learn language through a complex range of texts and practices that flow across and between school, home and other spaces. Bulfin and North argue that young people's practices that they develop around their use of digital technologies flow across home and school spaces, making simple distinctions and binaries about use in each domain problematic. The researchers illustrate the ebb and flow across contexts through ethnographic case study snapshots of 15-16-year-olds from contrasting schools in and around Melbourne, Australia. Using Bakhtin's theorising of a dialogic contextual and identity-laden negotiation coupled with Bourdieu's notion of habitus, they suggest that texts, meanings and practices do not emerge wholly from one social/physical domain but instead are traced and sourced from the whole life world of experience. In terms of theorizing of Bakhtin's heteroglossia and dialogism, Henward (2014) conducted an interesting study of children's experiences and understandings of television viewing. The research studied the horror media talk

of a preschool girl in a poor and working-class preschool program in a conservative Christian area in the Southern United States. One extended story by Jakaysha, a five-year-old African-American girl shows how gendered discourses play out in her narrative through a combination of media consumption and engagement with her local community. This kind of nuanced analyses of speaking and listening illustrate how dialogism figures in the everyday and pushes for an acknowledgement of the importance of talk and hearing different voices in research. The authors focus on one reading of her tale where she uses horror to escape feminized versions and expectations of self (Henward, 2014).

While all of these research studies reveal the strength of Bakhtinian theorizing to illustrate speaking and listening across pedagogical contexts and situations, it is worth noting that Ball conducted a study that involved defining and relating 'ideological becoming' and its relation to language, literacy and learning. Before defining this, the author gives two definitions of ideology with the second one relating to Bakhtin's theories most. This definition is "A set of doctrines or beliefs that forms the basis of a political, economic, or other system" (Ball, 2004, p. 4). It goes on to explain that Bakhtin's definition of 'ideological becoming' is "how we develop our way of viewing the world, [and] our system of ideas..." (Ball, 2004, p. 5). Ball explains that Bakhtin believes that most effective social interactions are those in which tension and conflict are present.

Bakhtin and his followers are interested in the development of the whole person and his or her complex ideas and concepts, including political ideas, but not to the exclusion of other parts of the idea system. Bakhtin is concerned with more than individual growth because he places the individual firmly

within a social context and shows that the individual influences the social world, just as the social world influences the individual. (Ball, 2004, p. 5)

In terms of our chapter, this definition works well within our overall definition of speaking and listening because in many ways we view it as a way of becoming and as part of the whole person. We believe that languages or codes can only be understood as distinct objects to the extent to which they are treated as such by social actors. Their distinctiveness lies here, not in language analysts' *a priori* claims of distinctiveness. In the same way, particular moments of classroom talk are never simply about the language used and the meanings carried: what is involved is the coming together of place, bodies, material objects and discursive practices in situated, dynamic, and complex ways. Pedagogies (already the entanglement of bodies, discourse, material objects, and place) of speaking and listening produce not merely instructional methods but also particular social, cultural and embodied cognitive effects (Jones, 2016, p. 76).

5. Speaking and Listening as Voice and Silence

Migrants and mobile persons are a striking feature of the globalized world and raise particular questions for language, and education, including attention to speaking and writing in the classroom. While school-based standardized testing often labels youth from minority backgrounds as failing or at risk, researchers such as Garcia (2013), Canagarajah (2011), and Orellana (2015) examine the multilingual resources of both youth and adults from minority backgrounds, and the transnational or cross-border practices they engage in, involving both print and digital literacies. Though classrooms have mostly stuck to maintaining clear borders between the language and learnings of school and the out-of-school language and literacy practices of bilingual youths, Garcia and Canagarajah have called for “translanguaging”, and situated

literacies in the classroom, based on the argument that all literacy pedagogical approaches should be contextualized and start with the language and literacy resources that children bring to school. As they describe it, translanguaging is an approach to language and literacy that encourages teachers to foster the use of whatever resources are at hand, across languages, rather than to insist on maintaining strict boundaries between designated languages in their uses, in talk and in writing. In contrast, we can look at examples of classroom discourse where curriculum imperatives encounter social diversity with distinctive outcomes.

At best teachers and students “talk past each other”, and at worst students hear a message that schools are generally places where adults talk at young people, but rarely with them. These problems are clearly more acute for young people who bring to school alternative language resources that are not recognised or seen as potential resources in their development and education. Boyd and Markarian’s (2015) article on dialogic teaching argues for an instructional stance where dialogue is a “functional construct where rather than structural, and classroom oracy can thrive” (p. 273). In their study, the teachers used reading logs and read-alouds as a way to develop third grade students’ writing, and agency as learners with the main goal of “listening to and reading an author” (p. 286). For these researchers, dialogic talk functions to “model and support cognitive activity and inquiry and supportive classroom relations to engage multiple voices and perspectives across time; and to animate student ideas and contributions. Talk in that space was authoritative and exploratory, collaborative, performative, and negotiated and contextualized. Yet, for talk to be meaningful and purposeful, the authors point out that, “learning to listen was just as important as learning to elaborate” (p. 290). In this setting, effective teaching and learning using oracy practices are “linked to a teachers’ instructional

stance, pedagogical flexibility, oral fluency, and willingness to listen and then make decisions about whether and how to bridge what is needed to ready study to connect what they know, to what is being learned” (p. 291). Speaking and listening, then, functions as a bridge—a way to connect ideas.

The integration of oracy as a core literacy practice can also be seen in a study by Grioir, Grimaldo, Vaughn, and Roberts (2015) looks at interactive read-alouds for English Language Learners (ELLs) in the elementary grades the authors contend that the interactive text-based discussion of the text provided an “authentic context that makes academic language and registers accessible and meaningful” (p. 640). Within the classroom, the accessibility of curricular content i.e. students’ understanding of the text, is directly scaffolded by contextual supports that include visuals, verbal intonation, physical gestures, and the use of first language that are negotiated around text. These contextual supports facilitate interaction and mediate further language development. Gilles (2010) advocates for an alternative yet related approach talk in the middle school via her examination of talk that is exploratory (i.e. students share and build on each others’ ideas) and presentational (i.e. polished report). In her study of a 7th grade classroom, Gilles states that though talk is one of the four language arts, “little time is spent learning and practicing how to talk and listen” (p. 9). To support her focus on implementing specific practices such as “talk circles” that purposefully integrate speaking and listening, Gilles draws on Bakhtin’s concept of “heteroglossia” to capture the dialogue of engaging and creating new, shared meaning where the students’ talk is guided by the teachers’ ground rules of conversation. In this process, students use these guiding “talk circle” questions—not only to guide how and what they talk about but also to observe their peers’ talk.

Inciting engagement, discussion, and response from adolescents and teenagers often requires drawing out of their ruling passions (Barton & Hamilton, 1998) and their stories. Bruner (1990) talks about how people lead ‘storied lives’ and certainly young people with many interests and imaginings need spaces to share, especially if they are asked to speak and to listen. In *Making Stories*, Bruner (2003) examines the everyday habit of telling stories and the ways that stories can animate parts of identities that can remain hidden in daily discourse and practice. What starts to happen when constructing a listening space is that stories start to flow and to invite other stories. What stories can do is mobilize emotions, beliefs, embodiments and convictions in powerful ways (Lewis & Tierney, 2013) that can naturally lead into speaking and listening. In their research study in a high school classroom in Minnesota, Lewis and Tierney (2013) observed many classroom moments when emotion and affect stood out as modalities in their own rights, rather than constructed through language, especially during in-class discussions about contentious or identity-laden topics such as race, religion, and values.

Based on the research highlighted in this chapter, we contend that to speak/address the issue of speaking and listening is to acknowledge power dynamics and constructs that overtly, covertly, shape the dialogic relationship and inherent tensions between (a) speaker and listener (b) teacher and student (c) author and reader/viewer, and (d) language-user and language learner. In this dialogic space, there is the negotiation of what counts as knowledge, whose voice is heard, and who gets to make such decisions—a space that ultimately involves power. In the English Language Arts (ELA) classroom in particular, in light of acceptable academic discourses,

literacy practices, and linguistic usage, we find that students and teachers have to confront the politics of the word and the world. Cook-Sather (2002) speaks of “authorizing student perspectives” that confronts the silencing of voices by finding ways to introduce into critical conversations the missing perspectives of those who experience daily, the effects of existing education policies-in-practice” (p. 2). The act of engaged speaking and listening is central to critical literacy and pedagogy for it acknowledges the “Other”, provide opportunities for students’ authentic voice, and more importantly takes purposeful action in response to what was heard. The authors argue that power is only viable when it is applied, enacted, wielded. So, creating a space for students to share their perspectives is one thing; finding value in their voice, perspectives having their perspectives directly inform, disrupt, and transform the “next steps” and subsequent utterances is another.

Another related dimension of speaking and listening is the notion of speaking as “voice” and listening as a “valuing of voice”. Dreher’s (2012) digital storytelling project in Australia, which was aimed at having young people from emerging and marginalized communities tell their stories and find a voice. According to Dreher “we must attend to the practices and politics of “listening: in order to achieve meaningful voice” (p. 3). Using digital storytelling as a form of participatory media, the author examines how listening is understood not simply as aurality, but as a metaphor for valuing of attention and response, as well as openness and recognition of the communicative process. It is in the exploration of issues of inclusion, democratic and participatory expression and communication that the tensions of power arise: Whose voice is heard? Who is listening? Who gets to speak and for what purpose? Who gets to decide? Central to the notion of voice is that of silence and

the silencing of voice. In the classroom space, the responsibilities for how voice and silence are enacted often rest with institutional and individual actors and factors including teachers' pedagogical stances, the school community and structures, literacy practices, curricular choices, and academic discourses—all of which are dynamically interconnected. San Pedro's (2015) ethnographic study of the ways high school students in an ethnic studies class used silence as a form of critical literacy in response to racial micro-aggressions enacted by their peers and teachers. In asking the central question: "How does exclusion of student and community knowledges limit students' voices and stories in educational spaces?" the San Pedro engages with the issue of silencing and the concept of "critical silent literacies" as a way to "give voice and agency to student resistances in dominant educational spaces" (p. 134). By sharing the stories of his three Native American participants experiences, the author argues that Native American students use silence in academic spaces to shield their identities is in fact "an agentive, resilient and transformative act because it reflects their overt attempts to have their multiple truths, perspectives, and realities included within schooling spaces" (pp. 134-135). "Storying" the silences, according to San Pedro, provides ways to voice, challenge, re-inscribe or counter dominant structures that have imposed silences on these students through narrow school curricular and peer acceptance.

Silencing of voice often occurs in the teacher-student interactions, classroom discourses and pedagogical practices that resist what Styslinger and colleagues (Styslinger & Pollock 2010; Stylinger & Overstreet, 2014) refer to as opportunities for unencumbered student response and talk. Through the use of Socratic Circles, Stylinger and Pollock designed to get 67 students in the

8th grade to engage in deeper understanding through dialogue and conversation while sharing and gaining various perspectives and viewpoints and opinions. Students' responses to survey and written reflection revealed a clear reciprocal relationship between talk and text comprehension, and highlighted that public talk can be perceived as a performance that created anxiety about being judged. However, in terms of the focus on power of speaking and listening in this chapter, the researchers' awareness of the evolving understanding that it was in fact the process of "talking with each other and listening to our students talk with one another [that] has heightened our awareness of those factors that might encourage classroom conversation" (p. 45).

Common among researchers who study classroom talk is the view that silence is socially produced. For example, Schultz (2009) explores the notion of silence as a form of classroom participation. Whereas San Pedro (2015) approached students' active use of silence as a shield to protect their identities and as a tool for constructing critical consciousness in defense of microaggressions and institutional norms, Schultz explores students' silence as choice that affords reflection, resistance and control. For Schultz, silence affords students opportunities to have agency over their thinking and learning process and engaged participation. According to Schultz, silence and speech are interconnected. For example, in one of her studies of classroom silence involving Luis, a participant, the author argues that by breaking his silence in the classroom, Luis, broke the general negative perceptions, interpretations and assumptions of what his silence meant. In fact, Luis' insightful comments to his classmates and teacher revealed that he was actively participating by making the strategic choice of when to speak and about what to speak. Thus, for Schultz, silence afforded him the opportunity to reflect, choose his words carefully, and affect his audience and meaningfully engage his listeners (peers and teachers). Even further, in Schultz's (2010) discussion of three middle school students in a desegregated school, she

identified students' use of silence as protection—of academic identity, of position in social hierarchy, and of privacy.

These scholars' work highlighted in this section reminds us that there are many meanings of silence and the inherent value of listening to what is said, and equally important, what is not said or silenced. In considering the body of work on this notion of talk and silence, studies such as Schultz' and San Pedro's point to the pivotal role of the teacher in structuring and layering conversation, and in attending to the ways power is asserted and denied in the classroom. Perhaps one key is to have teachers understand the function silence, help them find opportunities to translate the silence. For example, Schultz (2010) suggests multimodal storytelling as a way to translate silence into stories. In thinking of the value and purpose and use of engaged speaking and listening, both Schultz and San Pedro (2015) offer educators insights into the importance of listening to the silences of texts and contexts by attending its functions and meanings and what it indicates about power relations and students' responses to classroom interactions.

As educators and researchers, it is important to recognize the value of speaking and listening as central to our work—both in and out of the classroom. To say that a pedagogy and methodology that are designed around speaking and listening is to acknowledge the power of their roles in directly shaping the character of a space, the relationships within that space, and the depth of work that can take place among the members/participants/individuals who inhabit that space. When teachers, students, and researchers actively practice ways in which to listen to and speak with each other, this creates a space for individual and multiple 'voices' to be heard/acknowledged in

meaningful ways. It is the art and process of letting our students and our research subjects speak. It generates a type of cultural responsiveness—one that can be defined as the listener’s and speaker’s understanding that we each carry with us parts of our identity in: (a) our specific discourses; (b) the perspectives and ideologies we hold; (c) lived experiences and feelings that inform our perspectives; (d) social and cultural groups with which we identify; and (e) the material manifestation or embodiment of our dominant identities. Understanding that these factors directly impact/shape our own practice as educators and researchers—particularly in our interactions and relationships with our students and participants: the extent to which there are opportunities for all to speak and listen; what we *hear* when someone speaks (i.e. how we receive it); and how and what we *say* (i.e. the discourses and the responses to others’ discourses); what we do in response (i.e. actions and re-actions).

6. Speaking and Listening as Performance

Speaking and listening are of course also central to drama education, and scholars who work across drama and language arts have made significant contributions to understanding how drama, and how speaking and listening processes as key aspects of imaginative dramatic activities, are central to the development of young people’s literate capacities and identities. From the very early years young children’s play is deeply intertwined with various forms of talk—be they exploratory or more formalized—and these early talk experiences are at the very centre of early language learning and development (e.g. Barnes, 1976; Barnes, Britton & Rosen, 1971; Britton, 1970). Beyond these early talk and play experiences, in formal drama education settings through primary and secondary schooling, young people are also able to bring together various forms of

play, imagination and talk in increasingly powerful ways. There is a long tradition of using drama to place students in contexts and situations through which they can ‘generate forms of thought, feeling, and language beyond those usually generated in typical classroom interactions’ (Edmiston, Enciso and King, 1987, p. 219; see also Bolton, 1979; Heathcote 1980, 1984). There is an almost endless set of dramatic possibilities and contexts through which young people are able to explore meaning making through speaking and listening practices and processes. We choose also to highlight the notion of speaking and listening as performance particularly as it relates to the teacher as performer, where the teacher, as actor, delivers an instructional performance. This performance emphasizes skills such as presentation, delivery, voice, movement, and timing (Sawyer, 2004). Sawyer argues that creative teaching is an “improvised performance” that is interactional and responsive and disciplined yet must be collaborative or emergent simply because the classroom discussion arises from the collective. In this way, it is neither scripted nor prescriptive; it is responsive to and transformed by the interactions, the voices/contributions of the participants themselves. The classroom discussion as a process rather than a product is what makes it transformative, collaborative, and improvised. The role of such collaborative practices and the social space of the classroom was the focus of Enright, Torres-Torretti and Carreo’s (2012) study of classroom talk and teacher-student roles in two 9th grade ELA classes examined the normative roles and practices into which students are socialized. Ultimately, the teacher plays a central role in framing not only the practices but also the relationships that can foster such approaches.

Perhaps most well known is an approach originally developed by Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton called “mantle of the expert” (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995). In this approach young

people—or ‘students’—are reframed as “experts” engaged in a dramatic-inquiry where they must solve some set of ‘real world’ problems which experts or professionals typically face in their work. The problems the student experts face are challenging and often ethically complex. With the help of the teacher—acting in role alongside the class of experts—the activity is framed so that a dramatic world is established for the action; this framing then enables group members (the experts) to take up appropriate ‘roles’ in the drama. Pointing to some of the advantages of the mantle of the expert approach, Neelands (1990) notes that:

The group become characters endowed with specialist knowledge that is relevant to the situation . . . the situation is usually task-oriented . . . power and responsibility move from teacher to group; learners feel respected by having expert status. (p. 23)

What is useful to note in the context of this chapter is that the mantle of the expert approach attempts to activate young people’s learning by grounding the inquiry in an authentic context, or ‘place’, and within particular professional communities and discourses, as these are learned and explored by the group. Critically, this invites those involved in the drama to ‘think from inside [the] situation’ (Heathcote, 1980) and from there to link out and beyond it. We would add that such an approach—and others which put young people into an epistemic frame (cf Edmiston, 2011; Shaffer, 2006)—not only enables young people to “think” from inside situations, but also to “speak” and “listen” from inside these same situations. Doing so is a powerful way for young people to develop richer understandings of both the complexities within imagined dramatic worlds, but also the complexities of their own everyday lives.

The clear speaking and listening implications of approaches such as the mantle of the expert have also been explored in relation to the development of young people’s ethical and relational

understanding (Edmiston, 2000, 2015; Winston 1998). Brian Edmiston's work is a good example of research in this direction. In much of his work Edmiston develops an approach to drama education based in Bakhtin's dialogic theory. In particular, Edmiston is interested in how drama education can be used to create situations where young people, and their teachers, can inquire together into the way their own and others' stories, narratives and discourses position them vis-à-vis the world and their relations to others in the world. To do this, he develops a number of useful concepts based on Bakhtin's work: dialogising discourses and dramatic inquiry. It is Edmiston's view that ethically valuable educational (speaking and listening) experiences must do more than ask young people to take a side in a complex ethical debate—as if it is possible to explore complexity by simply choosing one neat end of a binary opposition (good/evil, or right/wrong etc.). Instead, beginning from a Bakhtinian perspective, Edmiston argues that a dialogic perspective on language encourages a more complex understanding of dialogue as more than simply conversation, argument or talk between people. Instead, while dialogue can be experienced as a form of external conflict, "more important is a person's experience of internal conflict between different competing [discourse] positions" (Edmiston, 2000, p. 73). Different discourse positions are 'dialogised' when they are brought into contact and dialogue with each other, whether externally between speakers or internally within the speaker herself. Edmiston (2000) notes that:

Discourses are dialogised when one discourse is placed in dialogue with another so that the underlying assumptions of one discourse, including ethical ones, are 'seen' through those in another. (p. 73)

When drama activities allow for different perspectives and discourses within texts to be dialogised then more complex and nuanced thinking is required to negotiate and mediate

between different positions. Young people involved in such activities can be invited to experience the range of competing discourses and positions within a text or narrative, and to imagine themselves and their group responsible to act and answerable for whatever actions might flow from the holding of particular positions. Edmiston argues that this can lead to students ‘substantially re-evaluating positions and the ethical assumptions underlying them’ (2000, p. 80).

Edmiston’s notion of ‘dramatic inquiry’ takes the idea of dialogizing discourses and puts it to work in a more coherent and planned sequence of tasks focused by dialogic inquiry. Dramatic inquiry is a collaborative exploration of events within a narrative, focused by rich inquiry questions that have strong social, cultural and ethical dimensions. These questions are drawn from themes ‘contextualized in the fictional world of the narrative or text being used for the inquiry. Students and the teacher-leader use this fictional drama world as a place to explore, experience and reflect on imagined events. For Edmiston (2014), inquiry in the imagined, fictional world allows the group to reflect on resonances in the ‘real world’:

Repeatedly under the direction of a teacher-leader participants collectively or individually ‘step in’ to imagine ‘what IF?’ spaces in a fictional world and ‘out’ to make meaning as they reflect in the everyday world of ‘what IS’. (2014, p. 81)

Again, like Heathcote’s mantle of the expert approach, the creation of carefully sequenced speaking and listening opportunities, contextualized within a fictional world creates a ‘layering effect of positionings’ (Edmiston, 2000, p. 80) which can engage young people’s ethical imaginations in exploring complex questions of communication, identity, choice and relationships. Here young people are presented with more than “the moral ambiguities of narratives” but are able to “experience conflict between discourses” (p. 75) and learn how to

negotiate them. At the heart of speaking and listening, as argued in this chapter, is dialogism as educators and learners work together to create open, inclusive spaces that allow for improvisation and responsive identity practices.

7. Conclusion

A presiding message in our chapter is the need to develop the art of listening (Back, 2007). Traditionally, the concept of speaking that has informed teaching methods, teacher education, student evaluation and assessment and learning in general has been top-down, stand-and-deliver forms of instruction. In contrast, the concept of listening that informs teaching and learning has been that the listener is *tabula rasa*—with passive, almost inert participation. Speaking proposes and directs, while listening receives and responds. Speaking and listening has been somewhat constrained by these narrow definitions and practices of speaking and listening. There is an assumption that teacher-led speaking is powerful enough to foster deep listening, which is not always the case. People listen in different ways with varying degrees of attention and sometimes need to hear an idea or concept several times, in a range of ways in order to understand it. In the face of modern technologies, social media, and different forms of communication, speakers have far more competition for listeners' attention (Goldhaber, 1997). The speaking and listening pedagogy that we encourage in this chapter is more dialogic, recursive and reciprocal and it takes time and revisiting.

Back (2007) talks about the art of listening “as letting a research subject speak” (p. 21) and in this chapter, the authors, as educators and researchers, take seriously this notion to uncover lived experiences with speaking and listening. Informed by a commitment to

participant lives – we push for a belief in speaking the voices participants have spoken and to listen attentively to thoughts expressed by silenced listeners. But, can we always presume that we have the right to listen and to tell participant stories? What does it mean to *really* listen to participants? Like speaking, our theorizing of the term ‘listening’ is double-edged in that as ethnographic researchers we try as much as possible to listen to participants to accurately tell their stories and in the chapter the topic of listening in a conventional way is a focus of analyses. Thus, the shift in mindset toward speaking *with* and listening *to* the participant becomes a purposeful way of mindful listening and speaking. Similar to what we have observed in the classroom with students (McLean & Rowsell, 2015), by flattening the power dynamics that created a shared space where the participant also had the power to set the tone, and take the lead. By acquiescing some of the power, it afforded us both opportunities to symbolically have some sort of meaningful dialogue.

In theorizing the notion of engaged speaking and listening, where, “our culture is one that speaks rather than listens” (Back, 2007, p. 32), we acknowledge the challenges of more consciously practising speaking and listening. In our globally-connected world, our communication and relationships are so increasingly driven by technological social media and an emphasis on immediacy of consuming and producing information, that the attention to the *processing* thoughts and ideas both in terms of what we said and what we hear can become sidelined. The careful attention to listening for *story* and *voice* in order to actively participate in others’ lives as opposed to listening and speaking being reduced to automaticity/spectator sport. We argue that in order to cultivate the art of *really* listening, there needs to be a refiguring of relationships with

self and others; it demands a reframing of the internal and interpersonal dialogue so that we make the familiar strange.

Listening to each other's perspectives and research allows them to "listen *for* a story" not *to* a story (Back, 2007, p. 7). That is, they create the story as they work together and learn with each other. This is not to say that such an approach is not without its limitations and challenges. Getting consensus is difficult and it requires negotiation, especially when faced with diverse opinions, but these negotiations create a listening space. Through our pedagogical approach, listening is bi-directional because it is no longer speaking as giving and listening as receiving. It is not about fixing and controlling subjects, this pedagogy is about some instability and complexity in practices and conversations. This approach to teaching methods flattens hierarchies and allows for participatory engagement. By purposefully enacting engaged listening and speaking, we begin to validate and acknowledge social diversity and individuality and context, and challenge the tendency toward a generalized competence or one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and learning. We would also add that to privilege some literacy competencies over others ignores the interconnectedness of all skills—speaking, listening, viewing, reading and writing—in contributing to holistic and meaningful learning.

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