

# Harnessing the Power of Heteroglossia: How to Multi-task with Teacher Talk



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**Abstract** To a large extent, the quality of classroom communication hinges on the teacher's ability to tune in and respond to emerging students' voices, which requires the astuteness and agility to hear layered messages, offer tailored assistance, and follow students' leads. It requires responding to multiple contingencies in real time. One important resource for managing such contingencies is heteroglossia (Bakhtin MM, *The dialogical imagination*. The University of Texas Press, Austin, 1981, p 324). Teacher talk can be deeply heteroglossic: a particular utterance can be saturated with more than one voice or can achieve more than one goal, making evident the multiple and potentially competing demands that teachers manage on a moment-by-moment basis. In this chapter, I illustrate what heteroglossia looks like in the language classroom and demonstrate how understanding heteroglossia as teacher talk can be usefully marshaled to create evidence-based teacher training. Throughout the chapter, problem scenarios that place the teacher in the difficult bind of having to manage competing demands such as honoring individual voices vs. cultivating inclusiveness are presented. Detailed transcripts of classroom interaction are then shown to demonstrate how heteroglossia can present at least one solution to these problems. A guided reading of each transcript will highlight the specific interactional resources that may be drawn upon to effectively produce heteroglossia. The chapter ends with a step-by-step plan for utilizing similar videotaped materials for teacher training purposes. It is hoped that understanding heteroglossia as a resource can awaken us to the ingenuity of teacher talk, and consequently, inspire us to become part of that ingenuity.

**Keywords** ESL · Classroom interaction · Heteroglossia · Multiple demands · Evidence-based teacher training · Multitasking

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281

## Abbreviations

- BB board
- LL students/class
- T teacher
- TB textbook

## 1 Introduction

To a large extent, the quality of classroom communication hinges on the teacher's ability to tune in and respond to emerging students' voices, which requires the astuteness and agility to hear layered messages, offer tailored assistance, follow students' leads, and work from within their world (Waring 2016). It requires, in other words, responding to multiple contingencies in real time. One important resource for managing such contingencies is heteroglossia, or literally, (the use of) multiple voices. As Bakhtin (1981) writes: "[e]ach utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related" (p. 106) and the "two voices are dialogically interrelated" (Bakhtin 1981: 324). Teacher talk can be deeply heteroglossic: a particular utterance can be saturated with more than one voice or achieve more than one goal, and a particular sequence can attend to multiple demands that the teachers manage on a daily basis: order, equity, learning, participation, progressivity, and inclusiveness. By deftly recruiting heteroglossia, teachers may succeed in, for example striking a delicate balance between exercising necessary control and fostering an open space for participation. In this chapter, I illustrate what heteroglossia looks like in the language classroom and demonstrate how understanding teacher talk as heteroglossia can constitute a practical foundation for creating evidence-based teacher training.

In what follows, I begin by highlighting the nature of teaching as a multifaceted juggling act. I then demonstrate how heteroglossia can present at least one resource for navigating the complexity inherent in teaching. The chapter ends with a preliminary guide of how to develop teachers' ability to *think and do* heteroglossia in pedagogically gainful ways as well as a general discussion on the challenges of applying conversation analytic (henceforth CA) findings to teacher training.

## 2 Teaching as a Multifaceted Juggling Act

The complexity of teaching has been recognized by various scholars both conceptually and empirically. In his illuminating discussions on classroom management in language education, Wright (2005) offers a portrayal of teaching as constantly managing the tasks of maintaining order, promoting learning, and last but not least,

building “a context of care” that attends to relationships and emotions. The complex interactional dimension of language teaching is also highlighted in Walsh’s (2006) proposal of the construct of classroom interactional competence (CIC) to capture what he later defines as “teachers’ and learners’ ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning (Walsh 2011: 158). As Walsh (2006) writes, “[a]lthough CIC is not the sole domain of teachers, it is still very much determined by them” (p. 130). In his attempt to refocus language teacher education from materials- and methodology-based to more interaction-centered, Walsh (2012) characterizes the interactional demands faced by language teachers as using language appropriate to particular pedagogical goals, maximizing interactional space for learner participation, and shaping learner contributions in productive ways. In a relatively more recent attempt to conceptualize the complex endeavor of teaching, Hall and Johnson (2014) propose the concept of “interactional competence specific to teaching” (ICT). ICT goes beyond such basic teacher practices as employing the IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback) to accommodate a wider range of interactional resources. Such resources would include not only talk, but also gaze, gesture, and body posture—a wide array of practices teachers draw upon to competently instruct and manage student involvement.

Empirical evidence for the complexity of teaching is rendered most visible in studies that document the multiple, and sometimes competing, demands managed by teachers. Without focusing on language classrooms in particular, Paoletti and Fele (2004) demonstrate how the teacher constantly endeavors to strike a difficult balance between maintaining control and soliciting student participation in a geography lesson for 13/14-year-old in Italy. Similarly, Emanuelsson and Sahlström (2008) show how in two mathematics classrooms in Sweden and the USA, the teachers navigate the tension between content control and student participation. In math tutoring with young children in the USA, an experienced teacher uses what Creider (2020) calls the *integration sequence* to promote student agency during potentially derailing student initiations while simultaneously accomplishing specific pedagogical goals. Exploring a somewhat similar issue in the second language classroom in the USA, Waring et al. (2016) describe how teachers engage two sets of resources—*respond with ironic teasing* and *invoke learning orientation* to manage moments of “disorder,” showcasing how control may be exercised in ways that advance rather than inhibit learner voice. Another study that draws from the same data set also features an experienced teacher who manages to maintain an open, yet structured space that fosters connection without sacrificing control. He does so by carefully embedding conversational elements into the structural constraints of classroom talk and ensuring such embedding does not compromise the classroom order (Waring 2014a). In a refreshing multimodal conversation analytic study, Creider (2016) also offers compelling evidence for neutralizing the dichotomy of teacher control and student agency by engaging participation without asking questions, which the two teachers in a French-immersion kindergarten classroom in the USA achieve by establishing routines, exercising framing and focusing, and shifting footing.

The competing or multiple demands of teaching are not limited to the tensions between teacher control and learner agency/participation. Nguyen (2007) shows how in one ESOL grammar class, the teacher skillfully deploys various interactional resources to build rapport with students while simultaneously accomplishing instruction. Attending to the interpersonal dimension of classroom life also figures in Hall and Smotrova's (2013) study of how teachers handle such unplanned moments as technical difficulties, where the practice of self-talk plays a significant role in maintaining the students' attention on the pedagogical task while inviting empathetic responses from latter. The ability to engage in a self-talk during these moments is therefore evidence of the teacher's "interactional dexterity" for managing such multiple demands as resolving a technical glitch, holding on to the instructional floor, and relating to students in "positive, pro-social ways" (p. 88). Interactional dexterity is also a must during moments when competing student voices emerge in responding to teacher elicitation, and the teachers may deploy *selective attending* or *sequential attending* to strike a delicate balance between such concerns as varied as advancing learning, promoting progressivity, maintaining order, and being inclusive in the adult ESL classroom (Waring 2013a). Finally, in resolving what she calls the "participation paradox" or the necessity of *engaging in* and *disengaging from* interactions with individual students to promote extended as well as even participation, Reddington (2018) demonstrates a teacher's tactful use of such practices as *gear up*, *embody active listenership*, and *close and connect contributions* in a low intermediate ESL classroom.

In sum, juggling multiple or competing demands of moment-to-moment classroom interaction is a practical concern for teachers who live the classroom life replete with complexity and contingencies. These demands include but are not limited to (also see Waring 2017):

- promote agency and participation without losing the pedagogical focus;
- foster play and exploration without undermining necessary control;
- build rapport without compromising instruction;
- cultivate "conversation"--the essence of interactional competence--in an environment that is not a natural habitat for such conversation;
- assess performance in ways that assist performance
- resolve the paradox of authenticity, where authentic interaction is often off-task, and where greater participation may entail less authentic interaction;
- resolve the "participation paradox" (Reddington 2018), where extended participation with individual students can undercut even and inclusive participation for the whole class.

The multitudes of demands call for multitudes of measures, and one such measure, as I mentioned earlier, is the exploitation of heteroglossia in teacher talk.

### 3 Heteroglossia as a Potential Solution

In this section, I show three cases from the adult ESL classroom where the teacher exploits heteroglossia to manage a range of practical dilemmas: How does one attend to individual voices in a whole-class setting where such attending may derail the pedagogical focus, undermine even participation, discourage volunteering, or cost someone a learning opportunity? All three cases are drawn from a larger data set of video-recordings (Informed consent was obtained from all participants) that have been transcribed in their entirety using conversation analytic (CA) conventions (see Appendix). These transcripts provide the empirical basis for a CA analysis to elucidate the heteroglossic nature of what the teachers do in these three cases. Before we proceed, a note on transcribing nonverbal conduct is worth highlighting. As shown in the appendix, a dash that connects the verbal and nonverbal (or silence) is used to convey simultaneity. With “((*nods*))-yes,” for example, the nod co-occurs with *yes*. The absence of the dash would indicate that the nod precedes the delivery of *yes*. Sometimes it is necessary to demarcate the extent of the co-occurrence, and curly brackets are used to do such demarcation. With “{((*nods*))-yes, I} did,” for example, the nod ends after *I*.

The first case involves the perhaps familiar scenario of side talk (Lemke 1990). In this particular ESL classroom, the students are taking turns sharing how they spent their weekend. As Halloween took place over that particular weekend, most of the students’ stories focused on their celebrations of the holiday. Immediately prior to the segment, as one student Maria was sharing her Halloween experience, the teacher noticed that three others had started looking at a phone and talking quietly among themselves, which creates a dilemma for the teacher: staying on the main floor ignores the side talkers and can deprive them of a learning opportunity, and attending to the side talkers can disrupt the flow of the conversation on the main floor, compromise the pedagogical focus at the time, or even spotlight the side-talkers in ways that potentially alienate rather than assist the latter (Waring et al. 2016). What can she do to attend to the needs of both the individual and the group? As the segment begins, upon the completion of Maria’s story, the teacher produces an acknowledgement *okay* and a positive assessment *very good* (lines 01–02). Notably, in the midst of her delivery of *very good*, she shifts her gaze to the three side talkers. In other words, at this “choice point” where the sequence could go in different directions (Hepburn et al. 2014), it looks as if the teacher were about to attend to the side talkers in some way, but how? She could certainly chastise the behavior and end the disruption.

## (1) side talk

- 01 T: ((gaze at Maria, smiles and nods))-okay, very  
 02 ((gaze at Cindy, Noriko and Sarah))-good. .hh ((mock scowls))  
 03 → -\$↑what are you three <doing>. exactly.\$  
 04 LL: ((gaze at Cindy, Noriko and Sarah))  
 05 Luisa: hhh  
 06 LL: hhhhh  
 07 T: ((gazes at Cindy, Noriko and Sarah))-{\$what are you  
 08 looking-((shakes head, smiles))} at.\$  
 09 (2.0)-((Cindy, Norika and Sarah still looking at  
 10 phone and talking))  
 11 ((Cindy, Noriko and Sarah look up))  
 12 T: [hhhh]  
 13 LL: [hhhh]  
 14 T: → \$so what's going o:n. wanna sha:re?\$(  
 15 Cindy: (what?)  
 16 T: <\$what are you↑talking about.\$>  
 17 Cindy: ( )  
 18 Noriko: hh ( )  
 19 Cindy: (telling) that I was in a wedding this  
 20 ↑weekend, so I was (showing pictures.)  
 21 T: → Was it a Hallowee:n the:med wedding? ((smiles))  
 22 Cindy: no.  
 23 T: ((shakes head))- n(h)o(h). (.) ((smiles))- <sup>o</sup>that  
 24 would've been fun.=okay,<sup>o</sup> ↑who's wedding was it.

As can be seen, line 03 begins with an inbreath that signals perhaps the beginning of a multi-unit turn, which is followed by a quizzical look that accompanies the question *what are you three doing exactly?* (lines 02–03). The question immediately draws the class' attention to the side talkers (line 04) and subsequent laughter (lines 05–06). With this redirected focus from the class, the teacher then asks a second question in a smiley voice and a head shake: *What are you looking at?* as the side talk continues (lines 09–10), which draws further laughter from the teacher and the class (lines 12–13). The side talkers finally look up in line 11. With this eventually obtained attention of the three, the teacher then redoes her earlier questions, again in a smiley voice: *What's going on, wanna share?* After what appears to be a repair initiation from Cindy (line 15), the teacher repeats her question in line 16, without losing the smiley voice, in a slower speed and raised pitch on the word *talk*, which finally receives a response from Cindy in lines 19–20 that reports on her activity of showing pictures of the wedding she attended this past weekend. The report is taken up by the teacher in the next turn as she asks *Was it a Halloween themed weddings?* followed by a smile, apparently registering the irony of the question and its teasing stance. Another follow-up question that seeks the details of the wedding ensues (line 24) after Cindy's *no* response.

The series of questions along with their delivery, as I would argue, are heteroglossic in that they are inhabited with the co-existence of a number of voices and achieve a number of goals simultaneously. First, they make evident the conduct of

the side-talk as outside the realm of what is considered the expected, appropriate conduct in the classroom but do so in an affiliative rather than an authoritative register. The emphasis on *you* in the first question, for example, clearly demarcates the three as bystanders apart from the main classroom floor, which is recognized via laughter from the rest of the class. This rather implicit “chastising” is also delivered in a smiley voice and teasing tone. Hence, the practical aim of ending the side talk is reached with much finesse. Second, quite apart from drawing attention to the *conduct* of the side talk, these heteroglossic questions also appear to convey a genuine interest in the *content* of the side talk without dismissing it as entirely irrelevant. The side talkers end up sharing their conversation with the class in ways that are addressed to the activity of the moment: sharing weekend activities (not shown). Through the repeated and follow-up questions then, the teacher manages to bring the side talk onto to main conversation floor and integrate what might have otherwise remained as irrelevant underground talk into the pedagogical focus at the time. With such heteroglossia, the teacher is able to build rapport without undercutting control and to honor individual voices without compromising the group agenda. This is done, in part, by designing questions, that simultaneously express interest and disapproval and delivering those questions in light-hearted and yet persistent ways.

A second scenario concerns what Reddington (2018) refers to as the participation paradox—the necessity to engage and exit interactions with individual students to ensure extended and yet even participation at the same time, part of which involves our routine difficulty of ending a student contribution that appears to be lasting longer than necessary: staying with this individual student must be done at the expense of other voices, but moving on to the others may leave this student feeling that they have not been adequately heard. In this particular ESL class, the students have been given a list of sentences with typical language errors (e.g., misplacing/missing commas in non-restrictive relative clauses). They worked in groups to correct these mistakes. As the teacher brings the class back together, he asks why even the best students would make these kinds of mistakes, and Freida volunteers her answer in line 17 after a (2.2) second gap. As will be seen, her answer continues beyond what may be considered necessary, and the teacher is placed in the position of having to deal with that continuation in ways that honors Freida’s voice while ensuring participation from the rest of the class.

## (2) number one

- 01 T: ((*lines omitted*)) why do you think (.) even the best students  
 02 make these mistakes. in essays. >°why do you think.°<  
 03 (2.2)  
 04 Freida: (and even thou') sometimes? when you are sure  
 05 that you really know something? ((*T nods*)) then you just  
 06 don't think, when you are  
 07 writ {ing?-(*T nods and points to F with gaze away*)}  
 08 a:nd, you just write. [that's it. ]  
 09 T: → [((*nods with gaze shift away*))] ((*nods*))  
 10 [ \$NUmber one.\$ huh ]-(*gaze back to Freida with nods*)  
 11 Freida: [an' you USUally don't] check?  
 12 [°befo:re° ]  
 13 T: → [.hhh-(*gaze away but points to F*)]



Image 1: Extract 2 Line 13

- 14 ((*gaze back to F*))-which is another problem. Yes.\$=  
 15 =((*shifts gaze to L*))-Number two. Lena.  
 16 Lena: for me:, when I need to (gues?) ((*continues*))

At the possible completion of her very first compound turn-construction unit (TCU) (Lerner 1991), Freida has offered a reason that might be considered sufficient—that sometimes people just don't think when they're writing. The teacher signals acceptance with nodding and pointing (line 07), but Freida continues with *and you just write* (line 07). When this second TCU comes to an end, the teacher again nods but with his gaze shifted away (line 09). At the same time, Freida continues further with yet another TCU: *That's it* (line 08). What the teacher does next despite Freida's further continuation is shift his gaze back to Freida and say: *Number One*, which is done in raised volume and thus in competition with Freida's continuation (Note that Freida also raises her volume immediately afterwards with *USUALLY*). Such competition serves to curtail Freida's ongoing turn, which the latter registers by moving into a trail-off (Local and Kelly 1986) at the completion of her current TCU (line 12). Both the smiley voice and the ensuing laugh token (line 10) may be hearable as mitigating the blunt delivered by such curtailment. In line 13, upon immediate completion of her TCU of *you usually don't check* in overlap with Freida's trail-off °befo:re°, the teacher takes an inbreath as he points to Freida but with his gaze away, as if acknowledging the insight the latter just produced to the rest of the group. He then shifts his gaze back to Freida with an other-initiated increment to what Freida just said: *which is another problem* followed by



a confirming *Yes* in a smiley voice. Immediately thereafter in latching, the teacher shifts his gaze to Lena as he selects the latter to produce reason *Number two* (line 14). Lena then proceeds with her response (line 16).

In an effort to attend to Freida's contribution while preserving a participation space for the rest of the class, the teacher engages both verbal and embodied resources in designing his deeply heteroglossic uptake. First, while the nod in line 08 indicates acceptance of Freida's response, the gaze shift launches a move away from Freida the individual speaker to the class as a whole. Similarly, while the pointing gesture in line 12 is directed toward Freida, the gaze is to the class (see image 1). By splitting his embodied displays as such, the teacher attends to both Freida and the others. Second, as noted earlier, while the competitive launching of *number one* serves to prevent Freida from talking further, the smiley voice in which it is delivered as well as the ensuing laughter token softens the blow. Moreover, while *Number one* validates what Freida has said so far as an officially acceptable answer, it also frames her contribution as the first reason in a list of reasons that are yet to be completed—though by others in the room. It works, in other words, as an account for exiting the interaction with Freida as well as an invitation for others to contribute. Third, in lines 13–14, before his “rush” (see latching) away from Freida to select Lena, the teacher displays great sensitivity in acknowledging and confirming Freida's contribution which is delivered in overlap with his *Number one*. In various ways then, the teacher embodies the message of *being there* for both Freida and for the rest of the class. Such heteroglossia is made possible by an ensemble of verbal and embodied resources, carefully choreographed to regulate, to affiliate, to validate, and to invite.

In a third scenario, the teacher faces yet another dilemma—that of responding to “competing voices” (Waring 2013a). When an unselected student volunteers what may be considered a correct answer while the selected student struggles, moving on with the right answer would deprive the struggling student of a learning opportunity; ignoring the volunteered contribution could send subtle signals that are conducive to building a climate that discourages rather than encourages participation. The teacher is leading the class to figure out the meaning of the noun *produce*. As the segment begins, he offers a clue to the word (lines 01–03) and then selects Ana to respond (lines 05 & 07). Kara, however, is the one who offers the response (line 08) while the teacher's hand is still extended towards the direction of Ana. What might the teacher's next move be?

## (3) produce

01	T:	I can tell y- every single person in this class
02		does know this word.=°you've all <u>seen</u> this wo:rd,
03		in supermarkets.°
04		(0.5)
05		Ana?-( <i>leans forward</i> )
06		(0.8)
07		[ <i>((left hand extends to Ana))</i> ]
08	Kara:	[ It's agricultural? ]
09		[p r o d u c t s?
10	T: →	[°Ah° -((to K with finger up and then {points}))->°ye[ah.<°}]
11	Ana:	[ vege ]
12		[ t a b l e:::s ]
13	T: →	[ <i>((gaze and arm swerved to A))</i> ]
14	Ana:	[ a:: n [ d ]
15	T: →	[ <i>((pivots to inducing gesture))</i> ]-[A::]ND?
16	Ana:	°fruit:°=
17	T:	=Yes-( <i>(nods and retracts arm)</i> )
18		(2.0)-( <i>(T nods)</i> )
19		( <i>(underlines 'produce')</i> )
20		(1.0)-( <i>(T nods)</i> )
21		<u>PRO</u> duce. >vegetables and fruits.<
22	→	( <i>(gaze and gesture to K)</i> )- <u>Or</u> agricultural
23		products °( <i>(to LL)</i> )-°like Kara said.°

As shown, in line 10, upon hearing Kara's *agricultural*, the teacher, with a cut-off *Ah* in low volume, immediately lifts his right index finger to an "on-hold" position that subsequently pivots to a pointing gesture along with the *sotto voce* and quick-paced *yeah* as Kara completes with *products* (line 54). The teacher's *yeah* acceptance also partially overlaps with the onset of Ana's offer of *vegetable* as an example of agricultural products (lines 11–12), at which point he promptly swings his right arm toward Ana (line 13)—a gesture that subsequently pivots into an circular inducing movement (line 15) as Ana continues with *and*. The teacher then repeats the *and* in partial overlap with a sound stretch on the word *and* and a rising intonation as he continues the inducing gesture. Finally, we hear Ana's *fruit* in line 16. The teacher's subsequent acceptance of Ana's answer begins with the latched *yes* in line 17 and ends, notably, with a repetition of Kara's contribution earlier with a specific attribution to Kara (*as Kara said*) (lines 22–23)—a response he initially stalled and only briefly acknowledged as a quick sidebar (line 10).

In other words, the teacher's conduct in handling these competing voices is being strikingly heteroglossic. First, in line 10, the split second pivot from the stalling *ah*-to the accepting *yeah* as well as the low volume and quick pace in which both are delivered allow him to subtly and discreetly signal his awareness of and appreciation for Kara's contribution. At the same time, it also firmly renders the latter's voice as secondary to his primary attention to Ana. Second, the teacher's extensive support of Ana's struggle to find and produce her answer as well as his final acceptance of that answer (lines 13, 15 & 17) is not done at the expense of diminishing Kara's

contribution: he deftly enfold the latter’s earlier contribution into his final words that ends the sequence (lines 22–23). In a remarkably executed juggling act then, the teacher is able to carve out a safe space for Ana to work out her understanding without discouraging or devaluing Kara’s spontaneous participation. Again, it is the skillful deployment of verbal and embodied resources in their precise sequential moments that yields the magic of heteroglossia.

#### 4 Pedagogical Implications: Training for Heteroglossia

So far, I have offered some exhibits of how heteroglossia may be deployed at least as a partial solution to some paradoxes of the classroom, but the question remains: how do we apply this understanding to teaching and teacher training? In this section, inspired by the recent development of CA intervention (see *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 2014 special issue) and in particular the CARM (Stokoe 2014), I offer a preliminary proposal for a five-stage SWEAR framework that might serve as an initial template for launching the endeavor of making classroom CA findings useful or accessible to practioners: (1) *Situate* the problem, (2) *Work* with a recording, (3) *Expand* the discussion, (4) *Articulate* the strategies, and (5) *Record* and repeat. For illustrative purposes, I return to the notion of “participation paradox” (Reddington 2018) and show how one might follow the SWEAR framework to help the teachers develop the ability to exploit heteroglossia in managing this paradox. It is important to note, as one reviewer points out, rather than being a mere set of technical exercises, the framework is best used as a way to enhance teachers’ awareness of the challenges and possible solutions in classroom talk.

**Situate a Problem** Situating the problem is the first step in training for heteroglossia. It involves establishing and validating a particular issue of pedagogical concern, and in our case, the participation paradox--by simply starting a conversation with teacher candidates. My own experience with observing, supervising, and conversing with teachers-in-training in both practicum courses and post-observation conferences, for example, has brought me face to face with some of the routine problems teachers encounter in the classroom, a considerable subset of which revolves around the issue of participation: *How do I get everyone to participate? How do I get silent students to talk? How do I make sure that the floor is not hogged by a few?* (Compare the present discussion with the issues discussed in Kim and Silver [this volume](#), which focus on how different participation frameworks affect mentor-mentee talk in the Singaporean educational context). Many of these questions are crystalized in the notion of “participation paradox” mentioned earlier--the challenge of engaging and exiting interactions with individual students in order to ensure extended yet even participation (Reddington 2018). In a classroom where the teacher is constantly distributing his or her attention among a collective of individuals, who gets to participate when and for how much (or how long) is indeed (or should be) one of the central practical concerns of everyday pedagogy.

During this conversation with teacher candidates, it would be reassuring to emphasize that the challenge of ensuring the active participation of all learners in the language classroom has been documented in the literature as well (Allwright 1980; Paoletti and Fele 2004; Mohr and Mohr 2007). Allwright (1980), for example, observes that “[f]or many years teachers have been urged to secure the active participation of all learners at all times, ... Given a teacher with the declared aim to secure an even distribution of participation, some learners will negotiate for more than their ‘fair’ share, others for ‘less’” (p. 166). Paoletti and Fele (2004) also remark on the tension between maintaining control and inviting participation (p. 78). It would also be helpful to point out that there are a host of strategies aimed at promoting wider participation such as designing pair or group work or following procedures like having each current-speaking student select the next speaker. These strategies, however, are not suited to managing spontaneous, whole-class discussions.

**Work with a Recording (and/or Transcript)** Having firmly established and validated the problem of participation paradox, the second step is to work with a carefully chosen video-recorded segment of an actual classroom where the teacher is placed in the position of navigating this paradox. Before we proceed, however, where can such a recording be obtained in the first place? One might immediately think of online resources such as the *youtube*. Indeed, various videos of English language teaching are easily accessible online. There are also video repositories in large corpora such as the Corpus of English for Academic and Professional Purposes (CEAPP) (2014) (<http://ceap-php.vmhost.psu.edu>) that is currently being developed at Penn State University. The most useful recording, however, would be one made of an expert teacher in the specific context for which a teacher candidate is being trained for. Even a single recording of a single class would suffice, and to obtain such a recording for training purposes should not pose insurmountable logistical difficulties. One would be amazed at the complexity and richness of what just a 1-h video can potentially offer when placed under the kinds of micro-analyses I have shown so far. As a starter, without the benefit of a recording, one can also begin with transcripts in published materials such as the ones exhibited in this chapter. For illustrative purposes, I now return to the case of managing the participation paradox discussed earlier and specify the four steps involved in working with a recording/transcript.

1. Introduce the case with a script such as: *This is an advanced level ESL, and the class is discussing why even the best students would make certain grammar mistakes. Freida volunteers to respond after approximately two seconds, and the teacher’s job is to hear Freida out but at the same time ensure that others can participate as well.* Play the segment of the recording that contains the teacher’s question as part of the introduction.

(3a) *teacher's question*

01 T: ((*lines omitted*)) why do you think (.) even the best students  
 02 make these mistakes. in essays. >°why do you think.<°  
 03 (2.2)

2. Play an audio-only clip incrementally as the teacher candidates listen to Freida's response in "real time" up to the following lines.

(3b) *Freida's answer (part 1)*

01 Freida: (and even thou') sometimes? when you are sure  
 02 that you really know something?  
 03 then you just don't think,  
 04 when you are writing?  
 05 a:nd, you just write.  
 06 that's it.

Emphasizing that a key ingredient to being responsive in the classroom involves close and intensive listening, prior to playing the clip, try using a script along the lines of:

*As the teacher, you want to hear from Freida, and you want to hear from others as well, but you have a very limited amount of time to do this, so one question you might ask yourself as you are listening to Freida is: When should I jump in and accept Freida's response as sufficient? As you listen to the recording, listen carefully and signal (e.g., raise hand, tap on desk, say "stop") to indicate when that "stop" point is for you. I will stop the recording upon your signal. We'll talk briefly about why that may be treated as a good time to stop Freida. I will then continue to play the recording until all the "stop" points are exhausted.*

Alternatively, stop the recording at the end of each of the lines above (without showing the transcript yet) and ask: *Would this be a good time to stop Freida? Why or why not?* At the end of line 01, for example, we reach the end of an adverbial clause, where the main clause is still to be expected, and intervening at this point could be construed as interruptive. The same can be said of the end of line 02. The end of line 03, however, could potentially be treated as the completion of an adequate response, that is, one makes mistakes when we are not thinking. A complete thought has been expressed or a turn construction unit (TCU) (Sacks et al. 1974) has been delivered, and the same can be said of the rest of the lines, where the teacher could reasonably interject.

3. Discuss choices that could be made at each “stop” point or what Hepburn et al. (2014) refer to as “choice points,” where a variety of next turns become possible (p. 248). With the recording above, once a common understanding has been established with regard to where those choice points are, play the audio-only clip again and stop at each choice point to ask: *If you were the teacher, what would you say and/or do next? How exactly would you say and/or do it? What are the possible consequences (e.g., advantages or disadvantages) of the various options?*
4. Play the full video clip along with a transcript to show the teacher’s choices. This is also a good time to introduce ways of capturing interactional details in a transcript and using transcripts as a tool for teacher learning.

(3c) *Teacher’s response*

01	Freida:	(and even thou’) sometimes? when you are sure
02		that you really know something? ((T nods)) then you just
03		don’t think, when you are
04	→	writ {ing?-(T nods and points to F with gaze away))}
05		a:nd, you just write. [that’s it. ]
06	T: →	[[nods with gaze shift away]] ((nods))
07	→	[ \$NUmber one.\$ huh ]-((gaze back to Freida with nods))
08	Freida:	[an’ you USUally don’t] check?
09		[°befo:re° ]
10	T: →	[.hhh-((gaze away but points to F))]
11		((gaze back to F))- \$which is another problem. Yes.\$=
12		=(shifts gaze to L))-Number two. Lena.
13	Lena:	for me:, when I need to (guess)? ((continues))

Highlight what this teacher does at his particular choice points as indicated by the arrowed turns in lines 4, 6, 7 and 10 and the heteroglossic nature of these choices which serve to both validate Freida’s contribution and to open the floor to others to participate. This could also be the moment to raise questions such as: *Is what the teacher does an effective way of managing the situation? What are some other possible alternatives?*

**Expand the Discussion** If possible, a useful exercise at this particular juncture is to expand the discussion beyond the single case above and bring in additional transcribed scenarios that exemplify the participation paradox to deepen the discussion. For the sake of illustration, I turn to two more scenarios below taken from an intermediate-level adult ESL classroom (also see Waring 2013b, 2014b). The transcription symbols may be explained again at this point.

**Scenario 1**

In the first scenario, the teacher is leading a discussion on why a particular joke in an ESL textbook is funny. The segment begins with him asking how the joke exemplifies “incongruity.” Consider (4a) below: *What can the teacher say or do after Stacy’s turn in line 07 to validate her contribution and keep the opportunity to participate open for others?*

(4a) incongruity  
 01 T: Okay:, (0.6) So:, how- how is this an example o:f  
 02 incongruity.-((to class))  
 03 (0.8)  
 05 T: According to- (.) >according to what we heard in  
 06 the introduction [(there’s) incongruity. ]  
 07 Stacy: [Very unexpected ending.]

Summarize the discussion so far on possible responses at this particular choice point and show the rest of the transcript that displays the teacher’s response after.

(4b) what’s the expected  
 08 (0.6)-((T looks to Stacy))  
 09 T: → ((points to Stacy but looks toward rest of class))-so  
 10 what’s the expected ending.  
 11 Stacy: That- (0.2)  
 12 Angie: °It was silly ending. Yeah.  
 13 It was unusual.°

Note that the teacher demonstrates a good hearing of Stacy’s contribution by shifting his gaze to her in line 08. His follow-up question is notably directly away from Stacy to the class. By pointing his finger at Stacy at the same time, however, he acknowledges the relevance of the latter’s contribution. He further acknowledges and accepts (although implicitly so) Stacy’s contribution by building his next question as seeking a specification of what Stacy has said so far. With this ensemble of verbal and visible resources, the teacher is able to display attentiveness to Stacy while keeping the opportunity space open for others to join in—another exemplar of heteroglossia. Indeed, Angie speaks next.

**Scenario 2**

The second scenario involves Stacy as well. Again, the class is discussing whether the two cartoons in the “humor” unit of the textbook are funny, and there is uncertainty as to whether one of them actually is. As the segment begins, Stacy offers her

opinion that it is the weirdness of the the cartoon that makes it funny. Note that Stacy's response — which expands over multiple lines — does not seem to be heading towards any clear direction. Consider (5a) below: *What can the teacher say or do at the blank lines to keep the opportunity to participate open for others without dismissing Stacy's contribution?*

(5a) weird

01	Stacy:	=Maybe it's a pur- it's on purpose to make it so
02		weird, (0.4) that it's funny.
03	T:	_____
05	Stacy:	You know so,
06	T:	_____
07	Stacy:	because I laugh >at it because I think it's< (0.4) I
08		laugh (0.2) at it because I don't understand it.
09		Because I think it's so:, <u>not</u> fu::nny:.=Heh
10		heh so <u>that</u> makes me <u>lau:gh</u> .
11	T:	_____
12	Stacy:	.hhh >so I don't know< if <u>that</u> 's (syl syl syl),
13	T:	_____

Show the full transcript after summarizing the discussion so far.

(5b) hm what about

01	Stacy:	=Maybe it's a per- {it's on purpose to make it so
02	→	weird, (0.4) that it's funny.-((T looks to Stacy))}
03		(0.2)
04	T: →	Ok[ay, ]-((head up to a nod and looks down to TB))
05	Stacy:	[You] know so,
06	T: →	>so weird that-< So, a'right °a'right°, -((looks down to TB))=
07	Stacy:	=because I laugh >at it because I think it's< (0.4) I
08		laugh (0.2) at it because I don't understand it.
09		Because I think it's so:, <u>not</u> fu::nny:.=Heh
10		[heh so <u>that</u> makes me <u>lau:gh</u> .]=
11	T & L: →	[((giggling))]
12	Stacy:	=.hhh >so I don't know< if <u>that</u> 's (syl syl syl),
13	T: →	H↑m::m. □ What about- ((gaze turns to Angie)) (0.2)
14		well, Angie do you have any thoughts about
15		this?
16	Angie:	No. I (0.2) (syl) more than the first (syl syl).

Discuss whether and in what ways the teacher's response at each arrow may be thought of as heteroglossic—making choices that attend to Stacy and keeping the floor open for the rest of the class. As shown, the teacher turns to Stacy soon after she begins talking (line 01), showing attentive listening. Following a very brief 0.2 s gap after her turn completion, the teacher utters a minimally acknowledging *Okay* in a nodding motion and at the same time withdraws his gaze from Stacy (line 04), thereby accepting the latter's response without encouraging further talk. In line 06, the teacher quickly repeats the gist of Stacy's claim but comes to a cut-off and opts



for a series of closing signals as his gaze continues to be directed down to the text-book (e.g., *so... So. A'right alright*). In so doing, he again validates Stacy's contribution but at the same time begins to disengage from her. In line 11, the teacher giggles along with another student at the same time as Stacy continues, showing appreciation and perhaps at the same time a readiness to reclaim the floor space. In line 13, the teacher employs *minimal acknowledgement + redirection* (Waring 2013b), where the brief acknowledgement of Tracy's contribution is followed by individual nomination of another student, again splitting his attention between the two. As shown, the series of teacher moves culminate in redistributing the floor to Angie (line 16). In summary, the teacher dispatches varied and incremental responses over the course of the sequence, each of which is carefully fitted to what Stacy says next.

**Articulate the Strategies** The next stage in the *SWEAR* framework is to begin a discussion on whether it would be possible to deduce specific strategies of formulating heteroglossic responses that might be more broadly applicable to one's teaching. If we make an attempt to extrapolate from this exercise on managing the participation paradox so far, for example, a few "lessons" seem noteworthy. First, *precision listening* appears to be key to building a heteroglossic response. As demonstrated earlier, it takes highly fine-grained word-by-word, sound-by-sound listening to locate the optimal point at which the teacher might intervene during an individual student's talk to ensure that the intervention is neither interruptive nor overdue. Without precision listening, one misses the timing of being heteroglossic—and the timing to walk the fine line between promoting extended vs. even participation. Second, such precision listening must be *sustained* throughout the interaction to allow for incremental responses carefully tailored to each next student turn as shown in Scenario 2 above. In other words, heteroglossic management of the participation paradox is an accumulative endeavor. It can, for example, involve gazing at a student in one turn and withdrawing that gaze in the next. Third, *embodied resources* afford remarkable efficiency in managing the participation paradox with heteroglossia. Pointing to an individual student while speaking to and gazing at the others, for instance, allows the teacher to split their attention (cf. Box 2017) to two "parties" at one time, thereby neutralizing the potential tension between listening to the individual and attending to the group. Finally, *linguistic acrobatics* may be performed while designing next turns to invite others in ways that validate the individual contributions so far. The teacher's use of *Number one* in Extract (2) above, for example, grants legitimacy to Freida's response while opening up a space for the others to contribute "Number Two." In Extract (4), when the teacher asks the class *So what's the expected ending?* immediately after Stacy's comment on the *unexpected ending*, the question implicitly accepts that comment by virtue of being an extension of the latter.

**Record and Reflect** The final stage in the *SWEAR* framework is to move from close observations and analyses of others' teaching to one's own. It requires video-recording one's own teaching and reflecting upon the recording with micro-analytic

sensitivities that may hopefully have been cultivated from multiple exposures to exercises such as the above. Useful questions to ask at this stage may include:

1. Are there moments when the teacher seems to engage in heteroglossia? If yes, what/where/when are they?
2. What specific pedagogical demands are being managed through such heteroglossia?
3. What specific verbal and embodied resources are deployed to choreograph such heteroglossia?
4. Are there moments when engaging in heteroglossia might be useful or called for but does not occur?
5. If yes, how so? What specific pedagogical demands are at stake?
6. What specific verbal and embodied resources may be deployed to perform the needed heteroglossia?

In summary, implementing such a framework as SWEAR would enable us to move from broad discussions of pedagogical strategies to focused observations of specific practices—practices that can resonate with teachers confronted with the messy realities of the classroom and practices that constitute real solutions to real problems. Ultimately, CA-based teacher training will need to begin with a serious interest in understanding what *actually* happens in the classroom on a moment-by-moment basis (Waring and Creider, [in press](#)), as opposed to relying on more “traditionally” theoretically prescriptive approaches to teacher education, which have tended to emphasize what “should happen. It is hoped that understanding heteroglossia as a resource can awaken us to the ingenuity of teacher talk, and consequently, inspire us to become part of that ingenuity.

## 5 Coda: Implications for Curricular Innovation

In his 2000 #1 U.S. National Bestseller *The Tipping Point: How Little Things can Make a Big Difference*, Malcolm Gladwell asks: “How is it that all the weird, idiosyncratic things that really cool kids do end up in the mainstream?” (p. 199). In applied linguistics, the *weird, idiosyncratic thing* called CA innovation as launched by classroom conversation analysts, to my knowledge, has barely reached the *really cool kids*, let alone the *mainstream*, and the difficulties are understandable. Markee (1993) launched the earliest discussion for curricular innovation in applied linguistics—by arguing for a diffusion-of-innovation framework for developing language teaching theory and practice. Centering on the questions of “*Who adopts what, where, when, why and how?*” (Cooper in Markee 1993, p. 230), diffusion-of-innovation addresses a vast array of complexities involved in curricular innovation in language teaching (also see Markee 1997; Filipi and Markee 2018). Not surprisingly, the SWEAR framework introduced above—with its applicability beyond

heteroglossia— bespeaks a range of practical challenges inherent in this endeavor of translating conversation analytic (CA) findings to (language) teacher training. Such challenges include, for the teacher trainer, the logistics of video-recording, the technicalities of CA transcriptions, and last but not least, access to CA research findings to begin with. These challenges would be non-existent, of course, were teacher trainers conversation analysts themselves, which is ideal but rare—at least for now. Admittedly, there is a small but emerging group of *really cool kids* in graduate programs such as applied linguistics (where CA courses are available) who are drawing upon CA research as instructors of teaching practica or supervisors of student teaching, but what we need is an epidemic of CA-based teacher training.

In describing how social epidemics work, Gladwell (2000) calls the Innovators and Early Adopters (*really cool kids*) the visionaries who need the Connectors, Mavens, and Salesmen to bring the innovation to its tipping point. These latter three categories of characters, according to Gladwell, are the “translators” who “take ideas and information from a highly specialized world and translate them into a language the rest of us can understand” (p. 200). Connectors know a lot of people; Mavens accumulate knowledge; Salesmen persuade. These are the CA translators we desperately need, and it is unclear who they are at the moment. The long-term solution would be to build CA training into graduate programs in TESOL and applied linguistics. After all, a teacher or teacher trainer arriving on the scene with an appreciation for video-recording, a familiarity with CA transcripts, and a knowledge base of classroom CA research would be at once (and at least to some extent) the Connector, the Maven, and the Salesman. Until we get there with a critical mass, collaboration between conversation analysts and teacher trainers may be a prudent intermediate step—one that would, of course, require the courage and diligence of the conversation analyst to reach out and the curiosity and adventurousness of the teacher trainer to get on board.

Still, even for a conversation analyst engaged in teacher training, the need for a true Maven is clear and critical. There is at the moment no accumulative and collective resource, aside from monographs such as Sert (2015) and Waring (2016) as well as articles scattered across a variety of journals, from which one could obtain classroom conversation analytic research potentially applicable to teacher training (also see Sert 2019, [this volume](#)). The Maven or the information specialist who voraciously gathers the growing body of relevant CA research and organizes it into digestible forms for teacher education is yet to arrive, and the current volume appears to be a promising candidate.

Until we reach that tipping point, however, the time is now to begin with one conversation analyst, one teacher-trainer, one recording, one transcript, one issue, and one practice, and if agreeable, let that practice be heteroglossia.

## Conventions for Transcribing Embodied Conduct

{((words))-words} dash to indicate co-occurrence of nonverbal behavior and verbal elements; curly brackets to mark the beginning and ending of such co-occurrence when necessary

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