Noticing the multidimensionality of active listening in a dialogic classroom

Christine Edwards-Groves and Christina Davidson

Charles Sturt University, Australia

ABSTRACT

An enduring problem in English curriculum and pedagogy is that listening and speaking, as intricately interconnected interactional practices, are often treated separately. In classroom discussions, attention is predominantly drawn to vocalisation as the key element of dialogue. Furthermore, listening as a silent embodied activity, is often taken to be either passive or a behavioural performance to be demonstrated; yet understanding what this means in practice remains not well understood by teachers. This article considers how different responses demonstrate listening actively in classroom lessons. Drawing on data gathered in practitioner action research conducted in twelve primary classrooms where teachers deliberately sought to promote dialogic pedagogies, lesson transcripts are examined to further understand how listening is connected to recipiency, meaning-making and co-production in talk-in-interaction in the multipartied conversations experienced in lessons. Conversation analysis delineates five interaction responses practices displaying activeness in listening. By drawing attention to the intricacies and multidimensionality of listening in classroom discussions, how the different dimensions align with a dialogic ideology are considered. It is argued that teacher knowledge of these realms of listening will assist teachers to recognise 'active' listening among and between students in lessons.

Introduction

Listening is a fundamental aspect of productive classroom discourse. However, a problem with listening is accentuated in many classrooms where students' listening is attributed to behaviour signalled through constant reminders for students to 'listen up', 'listen carefully' or to 'listen here'. These utterances generally act as behavioural directives with a performative regulatory function that masks the activeness required for listening for the purpose of responding in discussions. It is a proclivity that leaves the intricacies of demonstrating listening 'actively' within the flow of interactions to be neglected by many teachers or at least remain not well understood as it happens in practice.

This article problematises listening from the position of dialogic pedagogies in classrooms by seeking to understand the nuances of listening as it is demonstrated within classroom discussions. Although listening is apportioned equal status with speaking in most language curriculums, what it means in classroom

discussion is not as well understood. As Goodwin (1986) identified, the activity of the speaker noticeably dominates the study of language, leaving the actions of hearers (or listeners) conspicuously under-researched (p. 205). Further, as Gardner (1998) points out,

> in the teaching of listening in language pedagogy, there has been a tendency either to treat this skill as discrete from speaking, particularly as extended texts to be responded to after hearing them, or to focus on speaking rather than listening in the teaching of conversational skills. (p. 204)

Considering the issue raised in Gardner's statement, this article focuses on the ambiguity surrounding the interdependence between listening and speaking as it is accomplished in classroom talk and interaction. Thus, listening is examined in relation to the patterns of responsivity, including silence as a response (Schultz, 2010), found in classroom discussions.

Dialogic research largely lacks a focus on listening; this article seeks to address this gap. Thus, addressing

listening as a feature of talk and interaction for meaning making in classroom discussions is a central aim. This article begins with a review of relevant literature related to listening as it is represented in curriculum, as part of intersubjectivity and meaning making, social action, and dialogicality. Following Bakhtin (1986) this study construes dialogicality as referring to the critical importance of difference and voice in social interaction, and the ways that differently spoken and heard notions, relate to and impact on how one makes sense of the world. In classroom lessons, dialogicality concerns and becomes evident in the conduct, the ethos and the substantive content of the talk (Alexander, 2008). The article then outlines the theoretical perspective ethnomethodology and conversation analysis that frame the empirical research. Before presenting the findings, it offers a brief description of the empirical study.

Listening in the language curriculum

In many Western countries, including Australia, the place of listening is one that is generally coupled with speaking as it relates to communicating. In the *Australia Curriculum: English*, for example, it appears in the 'language for interacting' sub-strand (ACARA, 2018a), and in the 'interacting' sub-element in the *Literacy Learning Progressions* (ACARA, 2018b) in its framing statement that outlines proficiency in listening as evident by demonstrating listening 'strategies' of increasing gradation (e.g. asking what, when, why questions about a text they have listened to; or recalling, responding, rephrasing). In these core curriculum documents, listening like speaking is considered to be a teachable skill arranged as a more conventional taxonomy of skills rather than as an inextricable part of interacting. Since classroom discussions are rapid-fire interactive events (Edwards-Groves, 2003), more nuanced understandings about how listening is evidenced in talk-in-interaction is needed. Unless the role and activity of listening in conversation is understood more deeply, there is a danger that 'teachers and students may be misled into spending inordinate amounts of time practising 'specific skill outcomes' (e.g. phoneme discrimination) to perfection with little concern for transfer of the skill to target listening situations' (Rost & Candlin, 1991, p. 168).

A further problem in education, particularly in Australian schools, is that national testing agendas focused on reading and writing performance have led to an override of the importance of speaking and, even less so, listening as integral dimensions of talk and interaction (Bignell, 2012). As Bignell points out, from a school's perspective it is raising standards in reading or writing 'against which [it] will ultimately be judged' (Bignell, 2012, p. 53). Yet, this is in contrast to the way talk itself is accorded value in the classrooms of, for example, France, Russia and other European countries (Mercer, Dawes & Staarman, 2009). An issue for teaching speaking and listening (in particular) arises from three main challenges in teaching and learning of English: first, the prominence of reading and writing performance in national testing reported in the educational and political media; second, its connection to making and producing meaning in reading and writing remains underestimated or at least sidelined; and third, the lack of attention speaking and listening receives in relation to understanding its place in pedagogy and learning.

Listening, intersubjectivity and meaning making

More elusive in an 'evidence based' climate in education is information concerning evidence of listening. In classroom conversations or discussions, ideas are chained together discursively as people hear and respond to what has been vocalised in utterances and sequences of utterances. Bakhtin (1986, p. 91) points out that these chains of utterances form representations or echoes and reverberations of prior utterances. As Schatzki (2017) suggests,

> People quote words or phrases they have heard or read, absorb ideas expressed in other's words and are motivated or oriented by what others have said. What's more, their utterances explicitly or implicitly, refute, affirm, supplement, rely on, presuppose and take what others say into account. Utterances also anticipate possible responses and of course, become part of the stock of utterances to which subsequent utterances 'respond' in the ways just mentioned. (p. 135)

Ideas, words or phrases proffered in these chains both constitute and circle through the conversations people have with one another. Listening, often the 'silent' link in the chain of discursive action and interactivity, forms a critical part of the interlocutory machinery of conversation. As hearers and speakers, people as interlocutors in conversation with one another, strive for intersubjective meaning making. That is to say, teachers and students in their classroom interactions strive for their ideas, words, phrases, or points of view to be shared (voiced and heard) and understood with varying degrees of alignment.

Meaning making is an underlying principle of listening. In conversation, meanings are intersubjectively created, co-ordinated and constructed through and between people when they come together in their interactions with one another (Edwards-Groves, 2018;

Edwards-Groves, Anstey & Bull, 2014). Making meaning forms a pivotal part of language use that is a dynamically active, reticulatory interflow of meanings for knowledge construction that oscillates incessantly between hearers and speakers in the course of their interactions (Edwards-Groves & Davidson, 2017). This view points to how listening is part of discursive action that forms the interaction between speakers and hearers as it happens in the flow of talk-in-interaction.

As Clark and Hecht (1983) put it, 'language use demands that two distinct processes – production and comprehension – be coordinated. This in turn suggests that one part of acquisition consists of coordinating what one can produce with what one can understand' (p. 326). More specifically, as established by Halliday (1970) in his exchange structure analysis, making meaning – in the realms of producing and comprehending – forms a central part of the linguistic experience which exists as an interpretative space between interactants as they strive, despite their differences, to make sense of one another's contributions in their talk and interaction. Furthermore, interactions principally function to produce sensible coherent utterances and responses (located in the thinking of individuals, embodied performatively in talk and interaction or evident in *later-to-be-produced* spoken texts) (Halliday, 1970). This is a crucial notion for understanding listening and speaking in classrooms particularly since students are often judged on their capacity for making and producing meaningful responses, and thus 'demonstrating active listening'. The extent to which a student is deemed successful or unsuccessful, or correct or incorrect, is generally made evident by the teacher's feedback or evaluation of the listener-then-speaker's response.

The ability and capacity for responding in lessons has been captured in Rubin's (1990) notion of response-*ability* in classroom conversation. Response-*ability* positions the teacher as the central mediatory interactant in classrooms whereby opportunities for student contributions are limited by the teacher's intercessory place for responding in the classroom exchange system. Important here is research by Edwards-Groves and Davidson (2017) that extends Rubin's conception to one that also strives to value and promote the student's power in and capacity for taking responsibility for managing the turn-taking and for producing position-relevant turns. As they found, dialogicality in classrooms is reflected by the teacher's deliberativeness in recognising and responding to students' interactional competencies (as well theorised by Halliday, 1970) in the conduct of lesson discussions; this means that listening by and to the teacher *and* other students enables a more equitable distribution of response-*ability* of conversants in the classroom discussions they participate in.

Meaning making is generated by listening actively in which the linguistic form triggers a response. Rost and Candlin (1991) indicate that rather than being understood as a simply a transaction or the passive reception of information, meanings are displayed in embodied and/or voiced responses as interpretations of what been heard and understood. These interpretations are offered from within the listener's realm of experience, including their background, and the listener's purpose for participating in the interaction in the first place. Moreover, background is then not only the linguistic and pragmatic knowledge that comes into relevance, but also a basic interest in and orientation toward the content of the discourse (Winograd & Flores, 1987). In this sense, a listener's background and interactive experiences influence the possible interpretations of what can be shown as understood *in the moment*. Meaning making in discourse is thus created by the listener from within their personal knowledge domain and extended depending on purposes and how the response-*ability* is managed during talk-in-interaction. This is, in classroom discussions, more than the simple conveyance of information, a proposition well illustrated in Alexander's (2008) work on dialogic learning that clearly signals the reciprocity between the cognitive imperative of well-structured talk and the agency of both teachers *and* students in its conduct.

Listening actively and performativity
In many ways, the purposes for listening in classrooms seem simple: to receive instructions, to obtain information, to gain understandings, to learn or to respond to a story, poem or music for example. These receptive goals imply a certain kind of passivity, where the listener is the recipient of a vocalisation, leaving implicit the notion that listening is *for* responding (Edwards-Groves & Davidson, 2017); that is, listening itself can largely only be determined by a response even if that response is minimal.

In a rare study that focused on the listener rather than the speaker, findings reported by McGregor and White (1990) suggested that 'the listener is not only more than a passive recipient, but has a crucial influence on the shaping of the discourse' (p. 1). They go on to argue that this is 'because it is hearers as receiver-responders, who are the actual arbiters of what becomes meaningfully determinant in an interpretive sense' (p. 1). Pellowe (1986) went even further to suggest, 'that hearers are more powerful than speakers' (pp. 11–12). This means listeners and their subsequent actions and

contributions not only display what meanings or interpretations were generated from what has been heard, but that their turn directs or determines what is said (interpreted and understood) by others in the next turn in a conversational exchange. In discussions, these turns or utterances are linked together forming chains of meanings, or continuously produced 'dialogic chains of thinking' (Maine, 2015, p. 113). In a dialogic classroom, as indicated by Alexander (2008), this is signified in instances whereby 'individual teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil exchanges are chained into coherent lines of enquiry rather than left stranded and disconnected' (p. 42).

In his work, Heritage (1985) described active listening as 'summarising, glossing, or developing the gist of an informant's earlier statements' (p. 100). These listening performances are actions most often demonstrated post the aural event. Listening for performance was also considered by Rost and Candlin (1991) who outlined ways in which listener understanding can be *inferred* in what they described as transactional discourse. In their study of second-language learners three demonstrations of listening were considered: in performance outcomes on retrospective (post-listening) tasks, such as summarisation (verbal or written); in the performance on prospective (pre-listening) tasks, such as predictions (verbal or written); and in performance during the course of talk (while-listening) tasks, such as note-taking. Drawing on the methods of conversation analysis, Rost and Candlin (1991) further identified ways participation strategies and interpretation orientations vary with expected degrees of collaboration in the discursive event; this they suggest, depends on the role of the listener in the discourse at the time.

To understand activeness in listening calls for teachers to be able to recognise the differences between listener roles, purposes and responses, and thereby the different kinds of teacher utterances (questions or directives) that elicit them. This aligns with points made by Edwards-Groves (2014, p. 7), who described demonstrating active listening as part of interaction:

> which moves teachers and students towards clarifying the meanings students are making when they take their turns. In this, teachers and/or students reframe, revoice or repeat a student's contribution; this demonstrates students have listened to and considered the ideas, opinions or the facts in evidence of others. Students' turns are treated as resources for learning and further thinking as both teachers and class members listen to and engage with each other's contributions. In one way, active listening and subsequent responses creates a formative assessment 'touchstone' for both the teacher and the students as they hear back their articulated points. (p. 7)

However, this description largely orients towards speaking turns, leaving implicit the nuanced understandings of listening itself. Edwards-Groves and Davidson (2017) also argued that equally essential is that listening (by teachers and students alike) requires recognising and attending to the local exigencies at work:

- in the lesson (whereby a responder's turn is topically and sequentially relevant in the discursive flow of the moment);
- in the classroom (whereby the expectations of particular kinds of students' contributions are deemed relevant or appropriate for the particular group of students involved);
- in the school context (how students are influenced by the broader conditions and circumstances that form the lived realities for students in their particular school).

These local conditions reciprocally and unrelentingly influence what is possible and what actually happens interactionally in lessons; that is, listening and speaking are never neutral, they are always coupled and always influenced by other practices, conditions and circumstances. The question for teachers and students then, is how, in lessons, do they understand and co-ordinate their turns coherently and responsively in ways that demonstrate active listening.

Listening is a critical lever in and for meaning making in classroom discussions that can be differently focused in order for listeners *as* responders to make different kinds of contributions (Edwards-Groves & Davidson, 2017). So, taking an alternative position to the task performance orientation made by Rost and Candlin (1991), the article orients more directly to listening as an embodied action as it is evidenced in 'next turn' responses during talk-in-interaction in classroom discussions.

Listening and dialogicality in classroom talk

From a dialogic stance, listening in classrooms is always considered dynamic since in every class discussion there are multiple listeners for every speaking or responding turn. A dialogic view positions listeners and speakers as equal co-participants in conversations who construct the talk and interaction together. Longstanding portrayals of dialogic teaching share a fundamental interest in the strategic interactive moves teachers make to more overtly bring students into classroom discussions (Muhonen, Rasku-Puttonen, Pakarinen, Poikkeus & Lerkkanen, 2016). Broadly, the goals of dialogic pedagogies are participation, clarity and engagement in academically productive

learning-focused conversations (e.g. Alexander, 2010; Brown, 1995; Michaels, O'Connor & Resnick, 2008; Nystrand, 1997; Skidmore & Murakami, 2016). Amidst a growing body of work researching dialogic approaches to teaching and learning, most characterisations of dialogic pedagogies however, remain dominated by a focus on vocalisation and leave implicit what it means for listening and the multipartiedness of classroom discussions.

The attention given to listening as being central for meaning making is what matters in a dialogic classroom according to Kazemi and Hintz (2014). They state, 'listening is as important to learning as is talking and sharing your ideas (in speech, written text, multimodal text or images)' (p. 19). A key goal of listening is to not only hear what a speaker says, but that as a listener, you might be able to make a contribution to the conversation. This means also listening for the place to enter the conversation, to actively take your turn to speak within the sequences of turns. The research presented next considers the complexity of listening in relation to how it works in multipartied conversations in classroom discussions, how it is recognised where there are usually multiple parties (often the group of students) listening to the speaker (generally the teacher), what provisions are made for multiple listeners to respond, and what happens when multiple parties respond simultaneously.

Theoretical position
The study is informed by ethnomethodology (EM) and conversation analysis (EM/CA). Related to sociology, ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967) centrally examines the methods that people use to produce witnessable and orderly 'practical action and practical reasoning' (Hester & Francis, 1997, p. 97). CA describes and explicates the specific features of interactional encounters (Sacks, 1995) by delineating the rules for turn-taking in ordinary conversation showing how institutional talk accomplishes institutional goals and identities (Schegloff, 1992). To address the irony of having to depend on speaking to interpret listening, CA and its careful transcription methods for representing recorded conversations orient to *talk-in-interaction* (Sacks, 1995). This makes it possible for the analyst to identify how conversation is comprised of actions-in-talk situations such as pausing, silence, inflexion, interactive trouble (hearings and mishearings) and other embodied actions (such as gaze). Delineating these actions-in-talk forms an integral part of examining and understanding how episodes of conversation (in light of its situation) work.

All conversations, including classroom discussions, are realised in the turn-taking apparatus of talk-in-interaction. From the perspective of EM/CA, listening is accomplished or made apparent through sequential turn-taking actions and exhibits recognisable and methodic features used by interactive participants (both hearers and speakers). Conversation analysts McGregor and White (1990) suggest that in any interaction 'the notion of recipiency is inextricably tied to the notion of response since reception is response, and response is reception' (p. 1). Gardner's (1998) early CA work develops core understandings of the ways that listening is produced in ordinary conversation and how it is accomplished in classrooms.

Method
Data are drawn from Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR) projects (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon, 2014) involving 12 primary teachers aiming to develop dialogic pedagogies for literacy learning. Each teacher developed and refined their particular interaction focus using cycles of CPAR. Researchers facilitated professional learning related to classroom talk and interaction, dialogic pedagogies and action research. Data included interviews, teacher produced written reflections, and video/audio recordings of lessons.

Phase 1 of the study encompassed thematic analysis across the 12 projects. Phase 2 involved analyses of selected recordings, using EM/CA, to provide rigorous description and explication of classroom interaction. Here lesson recordings were closely examined numerous times and transcribed using Jefferson notation (Atkinson & Heritage, 1999) to represent different interactional features present in the talk. Protocols for ethical approval and informed participant consent were followed; all participants (system and school personnel, and students and their parents) provided informed consent. Pseudonyms are used for teachers and students. Transcription symbols are provided in Appendix A.

The data
Data for this article are drawn from Phase 2 EM/CA focused on detailed transcriptions of a classroom recording of a whole class discussion in a lesson conducted in a Year 3/4 primary classroom (students aged between 7 and 9 years). The class was located in a disadvantaged school located in the outer metropolitan region of a city in Australia. The teacher had five years' experience. This teacher's action research was focused on improving student participation in whole class discussions with student's demonstrating active listening.

Results

CA, often criticised for its limited narrow focus, establishes more dynamic understandings of listening as a participatory dialogic function in classroom interactions by delineating five response practices constitutive of listening actively. These *listening response practices* are patterns of responsivity, found in the realms of:

1. Interactivity, whereby responders hear and acknowledge the speaker, and provide feedback (minimal or extended – embodied or vocalised) to the preceding speaker's turn.
2. Reflectivity, whereby responders retell, repeat, or revoice what was previously heard (reflecting back to the speaker or main floor).
3. Integration, whereby responders say it back in their own words, rephrase, take up and/or integrate the substantive idea of what was heard across *multiple* preceding turns or sequences.
4. Interpretation, whereby responders, build on and extend the ideas and concepts by interpreting and accommodating preceding utterances and prior experiences or knowledge into their turn or their own newly formed idea.
5. Criticality, whereby responders comment critically, producing reasoning and evidentiary talk on prior turns in their questioning, critique, evaluation, agreement or disagreement.

Examples are presented in four extracts from a whole class discussion about a previously read factual text on Anzac Day (an Australian national commemoration). The 27 students and the teacher are sitting on the floor in a circle, the text placed beside the teacher. The teacher introduces the purpose of the discussion in her first utterance; here she identifies how the speaking and listening will work.

Listening, talking and hearing are explicitly identified in the initial teacher turn that pronounced the conventions for participating in a discussion in this lesson. She names 'talking to and listening to everybody' (lines 6 and 7) and speaking in a 'big loud voice so everyone can hear your point, your opinion' (lines 8 and 9) as interactive moves that enable the conversation to be had. Noticeable in the subsequent student turns (lines 16, 17 and 18) that respond directly to the teacher question 'why do we have Anzac Day?' (line 13) is Aimee's orientation to hearing and listening in her direction to Conrad to 'speak louder' so she could 'hear' his point. At a basic interactional level, this extract demonstrates ways that participating in the discussion means making points, opinions and questions hearable in the first instance; and that participant responses themselves are indicative of activeness in the listening in a discussion, in the second.

In Extract 2, different listening response practices are evident. It follows on from Conrad's response to the initial teacher question (line 13), naming 'remembering' as a reason for celebrating Anzac Day. The sequence of turns shows ways some students respond in minimal ways and others take up ideas they have previously heard in their own integrated more extended responses. It begins with Conrad (line 20) directly responding to the teacher request for an explanation in him producing a reason for remembering; this was followed by Brenton's apparent hearing and extending of Conrad's explanation (line 21).

Extract 1: Listening and hearing as core interaction practices

1.	Tch:	alright (.) sitting on your bottoms please (0.2) now remember
2.		that this is a discussion many points of view(.) opinions (.) questions (.)
3.		Martin wriggle back (.) Corbin on your bottom (0.2) so::o (.)
4.		working on two things here (.) having the discussion in the ways we
5.		have been practising and understanding more about our book (0.2)
6.		and so we're talking to all of (.) each other (.) we're talking to and
7.		listening to everybody (.) getting your ideas (.) questions ready (0.2)
8.		so (.) make sure you've got a big loud voice so everyone can hear
9.		your point (.) your opinion (0.2) okay (.) so we read the book
10.		Anzac Day (.) which I've just lost ((Max passes the book))
11.		thank you Max (0.2) so:o (.) we read the book and we've been doing a
12.		lot of work around Anzac Day (0.1) my question to you is why do we
13.		have these important days (.) why do we have Anzac Day? you don't
14.		need to put your hand up in a discussion ((tch makes palms facing
15.		downward hand gestures))
16.	Con:	°For remembrance°
17.	Aim:	speak louder (.) I can't hear you Con ((leaning in towards Conrad))
18.	Con:	for remembering↑

Extract 2: Integrating and interpreting

19.	Tch:	o::okay (.) can you explain that for us?
20.	Con:	so::o (.) we can remember all of the people that passed away at war=
21.	Bre:	=and risked their lives to save us
22.	Mir:	hm::m (0.2) for respect
23.	Tar:	but they just didn't die (.) they did it for our country!
24.	St1:	for our country (.) what?
25.	Roc:	well re- remember (.) think 'bout them an' respect the soldiers who
26.		risked (.) sacrificed their lives for our country
27.	St2:	[[sacrifice (.) that's a good one
28.	St3:	[[mm::m yeah
29.	Ang:	[[((nodding))
30.	Tch:	there's some great quotes (0.2) let's talk about the sacrifice (.)
31.		what happened? what did they do?
32.	Roc:	they go to war and they risk getting shot and die for their country
33.		(.) ours and sometimes they try to save [[prisoners an' they die for
34.		other countries

Listening in this sequence is evident in the ways students' contributions were not only topically relevant but interactionally relevant. First, instances of recipiency are found across the series of exchanges, as students directly provide an answer to a preceding questioning turn (see lines 19–20, 24–25 and 29–30). For example, at a core interactional level the teacher's questioning turn (line 19) is followed by Conrad's 'appropriate' or relevant response demonstrating he was listening. Appropriateness was confirmed in Brenton's subsequent turn (line 21) that took up Conrad's response and extended the point further by supplying additional information about those who 'risked their lives to save us'. These turns are tied together through the topically-related pair of ideas *passing away* (in Conrad's point) and *risking lives* in Brenton's point. Brenton's turn then provoked an assemblage of related responses from five students who, in turn, offered further ideas and clarifications about remembering, risk, respect and sacrifice (lines 22–29).

This series of turns shows how different realms of listening are demonstrated through the sequence of student responses, and how each turn is intricately tied to what was heard in prior turns. Here we notice ways listening *leverages* responding. For example, in line 23, Tarnee's turn 'but they just didn't die, they did it for our country' integrates earlier points made by Conrad (line 20) and Brenton (line 21). As she rephrases, Tarnee connects her word *dying* to Conrad's use of *passed away* and relates *our country* to Brenton's use of the word *us* in his turn 'risked their lives to save us'.

In a further example, in lines 25 and 26, Rocco provided a clarification that remembering means to 'think 'bout them', a definition called for earlier by the teacher in line 19. As he continued, Rocco went further than simply repeating previously heard ideas by integrating ideas of *remembering*, *respect* and *dying for our country* into his response. His response added precision from the previously used pronoun references (they and them) in his naming of 'soldiers' while introducing new concepts about the sacrifice for country in his point 'sacrificed their lives for our country' (line 26).

At this point in the conversation, Rocco's introduction of the word 'sacrificed' influences two subsequent actions: first it acts as an interpretation of the collection of concepts he had heard, and second provokes a topic shift. Here, the concept of sacrifice was oriented to in simultaneously produced student responses (signalled by the [[, in the transcript); these turns offered by St2, St3 and Angela were positive feedback turns also taken up by the teacher in line 30 in her request for students to 'talk about the sacrifice'. It is interesting that although minimal, interactionally St3 (*mm::m* and *yeah* in line 28) and Angela's (*nodding* gesture in line 29) turns could be considered to be of equal status to the turn offered by St2 (line 27) who reflected back the vocalised turn. That is, *mm*, *yeah* and *nodding* (offered by Angela) does the same interactional responsive work as St2s' 'sacrifice, that's a good one'. This kind of interactive listening counts recognisably as the work of listening.

At this point, students' vocalised and embodied responses offered as minimal feedback directly relate to what was heard in a prior turn. Minimal feedback markers (e.g. *mm, yeah, right, uh huh, okay, nah, mm hm*) have 'some interactional meaning' (Gardner, 1998, p. 206). Such responses are tokens which mark instances of listening in talk-in-interaction that show

acknowledgement, agreement, disagreement, continuance or evaluation (Coates, 1986; Heritage, 1985; Yngve, 1970). These listening moves draw attention to listening for meaning making and participation; opening up possibilities for 'providing ways in which conversationalists express their understanding of what another is saying, and as such are an example par excellence of co-construction of meanings in the talk-in-action' (Gardner, 2001). Yet often these utterances or embodied gestural responses go unnoticed by teachers in classroom interactions, but like in everyday conversations such items are a display of listening. As argued by Gardner (1998), it might be profitable for teachers to also have some knowledge of the different kinds of listening markers vocalised by hearers and the relevance of their place in responding in classroom conversations.

Extract 3 occurs a short time later. It draws attention to interactive trouble, listening and hearability. This sequence highlights a number of central features of listening in classroom discussions and what happens, as it sometimes does, when turns overlap or side conversations transpire. These side floor conversations are described in EMCA as schismed talk (that 'has broken off' from the main floor) (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974); it is interactive trouble since the turn-by-turn interaction order in talk has been disrupted. It begins with Shelby's turn (lines 35–38) that both integrates previously heard points and interprets these in her provision of further reasoning and explanations that build on and extend the topical line.

In this example, Aimee (in line 39) initiates a side floor conversation with Tarnee that overlaps with Shelby's endorsed extended main floor turn (lines 35–38). But their schisming does not deter Shelby from finishing her turn, most likely because the side conversation was

conducted quietly (signified by the ° ° in the transcript). However, this episode did not go unnoticed by the teacher, who in fact oriented to it by asking the girls to 'go further' (line 42) to explain the importance of their points about greed, securing land and treasures. Interactive trouble occurs when Adrian and Marcelle's turns (lines 43 and 44) about pigeons also overlaps with the teacher's request to Aimee and Tarnee. At this point, the teacher notices multiple speakers speaking at once, attempts to restore interaction order in the turn-taking sequencing in her intervention turn (lines 45–50) by re-instating the need for clarity, hearability and following one line of thought. For this teacher and her Year 3/4 students, the overt attention to talk and interaction explicitly focused students' contributions towards listening and hearing.

Across the extracts, students are producing responses that demonstrate reasoning and evidentiary talk, a key feature of dialogic classrooms. These responses not only build on prior turns in their questioning (teacher line 41–42, Marcelle in line 44), evaluating (St2 line 27 in Extract 2, teacher line 46), agreeing (St 3 line 28 and Angela line 29 Extract 2, Tarnee line 40) or disagreeing (Brenton line 61 Extract 4), they often demonstrate a more critical engagement with what was said previously. This is considered more closely in this final extract that continues from the one above. Here the multidimensionality of listening is captured in responses offered from across the sequence of turns. It begins with a sustained exchange between the teacher and Adrian (lines 50–59), developing his earlier point about pigeons and communication.

After hearing, agreeing with and extending Adrian's point about the use of pigeons as mechanisms for communication in the war, Brenton (line 60) changed

Extract 3: Making talk hearable: interactive trouble, overlapping and schisming

35.	She:	=because it's the people who just risked their lives to save us an'
36.		some people wanted to take over our country[and they fight back so
37.		we can keep our country (.) that's why we think about, remember
38.		soldiers on Anzac Day
39.	Aim:	((turning to face Tarnee)) [°they're just greedy°=
40.	Tar:	=°wait (.) yeah (.) they want more land and [treasures°
41.	Tch:	[hold on (.) why are you
42.		girls big on that (.) why [is that important? go further
43.	Adr:	[they used to send messages on pigeons
44.	Mar:	but why they did use pigeons?=
45.	Tch:	=hang on (.) we've got a couple of different conversations
46.		happening (.) you've all got such interesting points to add (.) and
47.		great questions too (.) let's make it clearer so we all hear and get to
48.		learn what you are saying (0.3) let's follow Adrian's point first about
49.		communication (.) then come back to the reasons Aimee and Tarn were
50.		discussing (0.3) …

Extract 4: Displaying discernment and criticality

50.	Tch:	… so maybe not sending a text message (.) but there
51.		must be some form of communication between camps↑
52.	Adr:	they trained pigeons to send messages
53.	Tch:	okay::ay (.) let's explore that idea more
54.	Adr:	they trained pigeons to send messages
55.	Tch:	okay::ay (.) let's explore that idea more
56.	Adr:	it's true (.) they used to train pigeons and send messages back to
57.		home base (.) [come home like a boomerang hh::hhee
58.	Tch:	[how do you know that?
59.	Adr:	I just know (.) I just I researched it=
60.	Bre:	=mm because they had no mail service of being able to send it through
61.		to the army base (.) so they used pigeons (0.2) but I think war is risking
62.		our population and human lives=
63.	Hav:	=but we obviously now have to keep our population safe Brent=
64.	Adr:	=put messages in pigeon's legs and send them back (.) to send
65.		messages to their (.) the base to help communication (0.1) that's to
66.		help keep people (.) countries safe in the zone (.) war zone anyway=
67.	Hav:	=yeah ((nodding)) the generals need good communication systems
68.		to do their job (.) to keep everyone (.) the countries safe in the war zone

the topic. His diversion 'but I think war is risking our population and human lives' (lines 61 and 62) both shifted the topical run in the talk and disagrees with an earlier point, producing a more critical response. This turn signified a deeper level of engagement with what had been heard. His more critical response, marked by the word 'but', indicated he was listening discerningly to the conversation. Havana, in the next turn, also displayed a high level of criticality and acuity in her response directed back to Brenton 'but we obviously now have to keep our population safe' (line 63), noting her emphasis on the word 'our'. Adrian's next turn, interestingly, integrates his own previously made points with Brenton's argument (line 64) and Havana's response that included the concept of 'safety'. Havana's minimal response 'yeah' (line 67) endorsed Adrian's reasoning and her repetition of his comment about keeping 'countries safe in the war zone'. These turns by Adrian, Brenton and Havana challenged meanings offered by each other and demonstrated a more critical realm of listening. Their responses displayed listening that produced the kind of criticality in their responses reflecting a dialogic stance.

Discussion

Across these excerpts was evidence that demonstrating listening is inextricably entangled with responding. To take a turn and produce a sensible, coherent or cogently relevant next turn is, at its core, a demonstration of activeness in listening. Even if minimal, a responsive action (that may be a gesture like nodding or a minimal

vocalisation like *m::m*) signals how the responder has assessed, interpreted and displayed listening for: (i) a positionally relevant place to respond, and (ii) making meaning for oneself or contributing to it in a collective. Accomplishing meaning making through responding is listening's most recognisable but primordial function. However, data presented show how, in the flow of conversation, different realms of listening, or patterns of responsivity, were evident in the kinds of responses offered. These are not discrete or hierarchical but are pragmatically entwined across the course of exchanges.

Dialogicality in classroom discussions was shown when students' responses display listening between the sequential moment-by-moment turns of any exchange between listeners and speakers; and second, that listening was demonstrated across a series of exchange sequences that taken together constitute a classroom discussion. These displays are evident as the students and teacher interacted with one another as they heard, and responded to, each other in conversations. Across their class discussion, responses 'become part of the stock of utterances to which subsequent utterances "respond"' (Schatzki, 2017, p. 135). As the data show, listening is evident in responses that reflect back, integrate or interpret words, phrases or concepts that others (students and teachers) have heard in prior utterances. As Schatzki (2017) said, 'people quote or absorb ideas expressed in other's words and are motivated or oriented by what others have said' (p. 135). Furthermore, responses that explicitly or implicitly, refute, affirm, supplement, rely on, presuppose and take what

others say into account form indications of activeness and criticality in listening.

Extracts presented show how students and their teacher shared the responsibility for conducting the discussion, at times clarifying and repairing the relationship between listening, embodiment, responding and learning. Since comprehending what one has heard is a central goal in any conversation, building meanings between parties, being heard and being positioned in the physical space to be able to hear the speaker is a first step for listening actively. The second is more challenging for listeners (the cohort of students hearing or witnessing the talk) participating in multiparty talk (as they engage in classroom discussions). The challenge lies in the need for individual students to be able to discern interactionally relevant and topically relevant breaks in a speaker's turn (in the moment) in order to gauge the place to enter the floor, to make their contribution. This is a pragmatic function for listening. In classrooms, there is the added complexity for students who, as listeners *and* speakers in discussions, are also learning to manage interactions that are generally rapid fire and fast flowing, with some turns simultaneously produced, overlapping, schismed, interrupted or multi-topic.

It was found that criticality in a dialogic classroom requires both *listening critically for* and *speaking critically about* matters that form issues and concerns. This kind of listening has the potential to 'assist to develop student's logical thinking abilities and capacities for persuasion and argumentation; and develop questions for further investigation' (Edwards-Groves, Anstey & Bull, 2014, p. 93).

Results have implications for teachers' knowledge and understandings about listening and its role in classroom meaning making. A focus on its scope, functionality and practical enactment in a dialogic classroom highlights a pressing need for more nuanced understandings about the patterns of responsivity as interactive practices that more fully demonstrate active listening in a classroom conversation. In particular, this means teachers valuing and promoting response-*ability* among students as they learn to participate in and manage their interactional conduct in lessons. Thinking dialogically about multiple simultaneous listener-responders in classroom discussions may prompt teachers to act differently as they work to provide opportunities for student talk and as they seek evidence about how listening actively is demonstrated in their class discussions. Added to this, it may be useful for teachers to support the development of strategic ways for students to become attuned to the complexities surrounding listening, as identified in this study, as they respond and take response-*ability* in classroom discussions.

Conclusion

Closely analysing classroom transcripts revealed the multidimensionality of listening experienced in classroom discussions. CA, through its fine-grained focus on partiedness and turn-taking, delineated five *listening response practices* that demonstrate activeness in listening in the realms of interactivity, reflectivity, integration, interpretation and criticality. In talk-in-interaction, these different realms of listening show different turn patterns that ask for different kinds of responses and response-*ability* to be occasioned in by teachers *and* students. On occasion, these responses are minimal or embodied actions like gestures. Noticing these in their own discussion practices may assist teachers to support students to integrate and interpret information, respond to and build arguments, offer counter arguments, pose questions or to challenge the thinking or reasoning of others – all key features of talk *and* interaction in a dialogic classroom. The focus on listening and its intricate connection to response-*ability* reported in this article, thus, contributes to the comprehensive body of work investigating dialogic pedagogies in primary classrooms. We argue it is important for proponents of dialogic teaching to more explicitly foreground listening as participatory action, demonstrated through different responding practices.

To conclude, findings contribute to understandings about activeness and response-*ability* in listening. Listening (by teachers and students alike) requires recognising and attending to the local exigencies at work in the moment, including how it works and displayed in the turn-taking organisation of classroom conversations. Studying student responses in classroom discussions delineates the multidimensionality of this. In this article, the complexity of listening in a dialogic classroom is established; findings highlight the need for teachers to develop a more fulsome understanding of the dimensions of listening. Furthermore, the implication of these findings is for educators in schools, in particular for classroom teachers, language and literacy teachers, curriculum advisors and dialogic researchers whose remit is to examine, understand and develop educational practices. Here, the critical importance of more overtly noticing different and nuanced listening response practices in the everyday indispensable listening situations which permeate the day-to-day, moment-by-moment lives of students in schools is warranted.

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Christine Edwards-Groves is Associate Professor (Literacy Studies) at Charles Sturt University, Australia. Her research focuses on literacy education, dialogic pedagogies and professional learning. Christine is a key researcher for the international Pedagogy Education and Praxis Research Network. With Christina Davidson, she was lead investigator in the inaugural nationally funded research (PETAA), publishing *Becoming a meaning maker: Talk and interaction in the dialogic classroom* (2017).

Christina Davidson is Associate Professor (Literacy Studies) at Charles Sturt University, Australia. She is a conversation analyst whose research focuses on children's social interactions in school classrooms, preschools and homes. She is co-editor of *Digital Childhoods*, (Springer 2017), and has authored numerous articles on transcription in research.

Appendix A: Transcription conventions

The following transcription symbols used in the transcripts have been adapted from Jefferson's notation system (Atkinson, J.M. & Heritage, J. (1984)).

[[	Utterances that begin at the same time
[	Overlap in speakers' talk
]	Point where simultaneous talk finishes
=	Talk between speakers latches of follows without a break
( )	Indicates length of silence e.g. (0.2)
:::	Indicates that a prior sound is prolonged e.g. li::ke
-	Word is cut off e.g. ta-
> <	Words enclosed within are said at a faster pace than surrounding talk
?	Rising inflection
¿	Rising inflection but weaker than?
.	Stopping fall in tone
,	Continuing intonation
!	Animated tone
↑	Marked rising intonation
↓	Marked falling intonation
<u>no</u>	Underline indicating greater emphasis
CA	Upper case indicates loudness
°	Softness e.g. It's a °secret°
hhh	Aspiration or strong out-breath
(it is)	Words within are uncertain
( )	Indicates that some word/s could not be worked out
(( ))	Verbal descriptions e.g. ((sits down))