Other people's voices: a reflective inquiry into power and voice within the classroom and the implications of researching one's own practice

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Abstract

The aim of this pilot case-study was two-fold: to explore the power and voice within small group interactions within a secondary school classroom and to explore the implications of researching one's own practice as a teacher-researcher. Using Bakhtin's theories of dialogism, audio recordings of one small group interactions were compared to student independent written work, in order to understand whose voices were used and how. Four main themes were identified: power and authority; positions of submission; silence and the voice of the text. The findings also highlighted how in the midst of teaching we can fail to see these power and identity dynamics; but the time and space of reflective research enables researchers to see beyond the moment and develop the capacity to see their teaching interventions and strategies anew to support the construction of new meaning.

Keywords: Dialogism. Classroom dialogue. Reflective practitioner. Voice.

1 Introduction

Learning intersects with social, political and historical spheres, constructing new texts and dialogues. Within each utterance there are different voices that lie on the "borderline between oneself and the other" (BAKHTIN, 1981, p. 293). Within the context of a classroom, there are a range of embedded voices: the teachers' voice, which is permeated with the voices of policy and assessment; the students' voices, which are filtered through power and socio-economic associations beyond

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the classroom and the texts studied, that are selected through ideological prisms (ARTILES, 2003). All of these voices in the classroom construct not only new knowledge but identities too. Bakhtin suggests that as "we reconstruct, we can resist, reshape and re-accent a speech genre, so that it becomes "half-ours and half-someone else's" thus making new meanings possible" (HAWORTH, 1999, p. 101). Therefore, the association between these speech genres can be more or less empowering for the individual.

2   Bakhtin's theories apply to different registers of the spoken and the written word

Therefore, in order to research these intersecting discourses, theories of dialogism work well in the classroom. "The true direction of the development of thinking is... from the social to the individual" (VYGOTSKY, 1962 p. 20). This position echoes the connection between Bakhtin's "account of the semiotic influences to the development of thinking" (ALEXANDER, 2008, p. 120). Because primary speech (in the form of classroom talk) is social, and secondary speech, (as written work), is individual, Bakhtin's dialogism and Vygotsky's social constructivism provide a theoretical framework to research the intersection between teaching and learning.

The application of these theories is widely used within research on talk, but less so for student writing practices. There has been a range of research exploring students' spoken voices, from Mercer's work on "ground rules for talk" (2000); Myhill's (2006) exploration of gender and participation in talk; Baxter's (2002) feminist post-structuralist analysis of talk; Sutherland's (2015) work on meta-cognition and developing student identities and Haworth's (1999) study of small group interactions. A heteroglossic clash stems from the nexus between the intention of the speaker in a narrative and the refracted dialogic intertextuality of the author (BAKHTIN, 1986) and can manifest in the clash between text, teacher, speech and written outcomes that serve to construct the identity of the student. This hybridisation creates new meaning (VICE, 1997). However, these utterances take place beyond the scope of the space and time of the classroom or a small scale research project (HAWORTH, 1999; NEWMAN, 2017). The power relations and ideology of the classroom is only a microcosm and students echo utterances beyond the classroom creating a 'mosaic of quotations' (LESIC-THOMAS, 2005, p. 1).

Students' ability to express subjective ideas of "voice" and "opinion" supports students' self-efficacy (JEFFERY; WILCOX, 2013). Student identity and

Other people's voices: a reflective inquiry into power and voice within the classroom and the implications of researching one's own practice

757

self-efficacy is shaped by gender and "classroom structures that emphasise a masculine form of discourse" (PAJARES, 2003, p. 146). Whereas Bakhtin's theories consider power and identity, they are silent on issues of gender, race, equality and democracy. This small scale study, therefore, seeks to explore how far these theories manifest within the classroom, firstly through the primary voice of social spoken interactions and then secondly through the secondary voice of individual written work. In order to achieve these aims, two central research questions constitute the focus of this study. First, what is the nature of power relationships in group talk and how does this influence student written work? Second, whose voices are reconstructed and how? Answers to these questions will further develop our understanding of how group work can be equitable and supportive and provide possible strategies to support student written outcomes.

In carrying out this study, we acknowledge its potential for helping to improve practices (BAXTER, 2002; HAWORTH, 1999; Myhill, 2006; SUTHERLAND, 2015). This recognition informs the emergence of a subsidiary research question: what are the implications of researching one's teaching practice in this context? Answers to this question will lead to a greater understanding of ourselves as teacher-researchers and the consequences of what we do, so that we can act more wisely (KEMMIS, 2006).

3   Theoretical framework

Several studies have explored the relationship of dialogue, the voices embedded within it, and the learning process. These include the exploration of cultural-historical activity theory and linguistics (WELLS, 1999), dialogic theory (MATUSOV, 2009; PHILLIPSON; WEGERIF, 2017; SKIDMORE; MURAKAMI, 2016) and argumentation theory (SCHWARZ; BAKER, 2016). Others have explored the complexity and diversity that manifests in the field (HIGHAM; BRINDLEY; POL, 2014; HOWE; ABEDIN, 2013). However, most of these studies have merely provided relevant theoretical and empirical accounts without really providing comprehensive conceptual structures or framework through which dialogue and its attendant products of talk and voice can be analyzed (CALCAGNI; LAGO, 2018). This approach is typified by Harumi (2010) who identified silence in the voices from a Japanese EFL classroom as a potential voice with meanings from a sociocultural perspective and which can be an indication of "conflict between students and teachers and even among students themselves" (p. 260).

There have been calls for the development of "a general framework for dialogic interactions among students and between students and teachers across disciplines" (KHONG; SAITO; GILLIES, 2017, p. 8; CALCAGNI; LAGO, 2018, p. 1). For

example, Fletcher-Wood (2018) explored the notion of students' voice in the context of peer tutoring and partnership in learning, while Dean and Murdock (1992) explored it within the framework of attitude towards learning.

One outlet that has been taken in studies around this area is the integration of the analysis of dialogic study within a broader theoretical framework of teaching and learning. An often used framework in this regard is the concept of constructivism. "In social constructivist classrooms collaborative learning is a process of peer interaction that is mediated and structured by the teacher" (UCD DUBLIN, 2018). But this anchor to a generalized framework has not sufficiently provided a tool for an in-depth analysis of voices within dialogic encounters in the classroom in the context of teaching and learning.

A framework for remedying this gap is provided by Calcagni and Lago, (2018), who identified the need to "build an integrative framework", because of the expanding dimension of a field which currently "lacks a common vocabulary and means for integrating and comparing available approaches" (p. 1). There are three key domains in dialogic teaching: "Teaching-learning, Instruments and Assumptions" (p. 1). Within this framework, we suggest that the focus can be transferred interchangeably in any analysis of dialogic interactions depending on the goals of such an analysis. For this study, the important domain is the teaching and learning domain, as our goal is to explore the impact that different voices might have in the learning of a group of students.

The teaching-learning domain refers to 'what takes place in lessons, considering the teacher, teaching assistants and learners as the main actors' and has integral elements including types of talk, relationships and knowledge building (CALCAGNI; LAGO, 2018, p. 3). Interactions within this domain can vary across lessons, topic and time of delivery. The framework, therefore, allows us to recognise that talk and dialogic interactions within the class cannot have a simple predictable impact and will, therefore, have different impacts on learning depending on whose voice and which learner is involved.

Typology of talk focuses on aspects such as form, function, patterns and sequences. It helps to distinguish elements of talk "that are productive for learning from those that are not" (CALCAGNI; LAGO, 2018, p. 4). This is crucial for this study, as our goal is to identify which element of talk and voice contribute to and manifest in the written work of learners in the study. Relationships, refers to the classroom ethos that a class establishes, considering power distribution, the emotional climate and the quality of relationships (CALCAGNI; LAGO,

Other people's voices: a reflective inquiry into power and voice within the classroom and the implications of researching one's own practice

759

2018, LEFSTEIN, 2010; McLAUGHLIN, 2005). It can provide an explanation for learners' affiliation to, and preference for particular voices in the dialogic interaction. The third component, knowledge building, refers to the topic being addressed. Knowledge building is important because of its 'social nature, in that "the ways that knowledge is created and shared are seen to be shaped by cultural and historical factors" (HOWE; MERCER 2007, p. 1). It identifies the importance of content, and speaks to the different forms of engagement of learners to different contents. Moreover knowledge is typically shared in students' written outputs, but within this study will also be observed in the student dialogue.

These components provide an avenue for analyzing and recognizing the complex nature of classroom processes and echoes Lefstein's (2010) identification of elements that are key to characterize dialogic teaching. Indeed, it is the recognition of the complexity of dialogic interaction in teaching and learning and the varied impact that this might have on various learners in different contexts that recommend Calcagni and Lago's (2018) framework as an effective vehicle for analyzing talk and the attendant voices that go with it.

4 Methodology

4.1 Sample

The sample of students was taken from a class of year 10 students (15 years old, equivalent to grade 9 in the USA) preparing for their General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) in English Literature, with a study of Macbeth by William Shakespeare. This class and year group was selected as they had begun their GCSE preparation: thus, the discourse of examination and assessment was relevant. The class was officially classified as being of middle ability based on the school streaming system and the school had prioritised finding strategies for improving the group's performance. It was a multi-racial and mixed-gender group in the South East of England. This makes it a fair representation of similar groups and students in similar institutions in the region.

In line with the requirements of voluntary participation in research (BERA, 2018) all students in the class were invited to participate and provided with written information. Five students completed the parental consent form and therefore, only these five participated in the study. The sample consisted of two girls (one white: one black) and three boys (one mixed-race: two white). In a sense, the sample group was essentially self-selecting. This small number immediately raises the issue of representativeness, as it will be difficult to make any generalisations on the basis of our findings (FLICK, 2014). However, because reflective research

of one's practice is one of the focus of this study, we felt that the small sample would provide insights into issues around researching one's practice, as one of the authors teaches the group directly.

Second, our goal in this study as researchers was to be immersed in the research field with the ultimate goal of establishing and furthering the course of a fruitful relationship with respondents and through theoretical contemplation to address the research problem in depth. In such a situation, "concept formation through induction and analysis aims to clarify the nature of some specific situations in the social world, to discover what features there are in them and to account, however partially, for those features being as they are" (CROUCH; McKENZIE, 2014, p. 483). We, therefore, see our investigation as scrutinising a dynamic and continuously developing situation and our findings as potentially constituting instalments in knowledge development.

4.2   Research design

The study was designed as a qualitative case study. Data were collected during a lesson that followed a departmental sequence of learning on Shakespeare's Macbeth. Students had previously studied the social context of the play and natural order of the time period. Students worked in small groups studying a previously unseen extract, where minor characters discussed events highlighting Macbeth's disruption to the natural order. Students were asked to explore the language and themes in the extract and link to their prior knowledge of other scenes in the play. Students then completed a short writing task in a similar style to examination questions (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance – AQA). The question was: Starting with this conversation, explore how Shakespeare presents ideas about the disruption to the natural order in the play. The plan for the delivery of the lesson was not adapted to support the research. Rather, a suitable lesson was selected from the departmental planning and the lesson was a natural progression within the sequence of learning and preparation for terminal examinations.

Pre and post-lesson-delivery, data were collected through audio recording using the school approved IRIS Connect software and the students' written work. To address the problematic teacher's self-observation (MASON, 2012), video recording software was used to allow the space and time to transcribe student talk, reflect and listen. The permanence of the data of the video recordings and the written work, allowed for fine-grained analysis. Because IRIS Connect software for recording lessons is used regularly in the school, the process of data collection appeared to be normal.

4.3 The lesson

All data were collected within a one one-hour lesson. During the lesson, all participant and non-participant students were given an exam style question on an extract from the play. They had 10 minutes to work in groups and discuss how the extract linked to the play as a whole. Students were required to make annotations. During the rest of the lesson, students wrote an individual GCSE essay style written task in response the question. They were not given instructions about the need to use a range of voices.

4.4 Data analysis

Data collected from student talk were transcribed and digested by the researchers. A simple semantic denotation was used in classifying and colour-coding the data. Using the existing theoretical engagement with talk, a simple process of content analysis was applied. This allowed the semantic groups that have emerged to be classified thematically. An analysis of the themes was then carried out, mapping across the students' verbal comments with their writing. Research into student talk often use recordings of transcripts, (MERCER, 2000; MYHILL, 2006; SUTHERLAND, 2015), as it is the voices of students that are of interest. As this research was also interested in the nexus between group talk and written outcomes, students were required to make notes on an assigned text during their group talk session. The talk activity was followed by a GCSE style written task which was analysed for thematic and linguistic links to the student talk. Each student's work was coded individually and then recurring themes were explored.

5 Findings: What can we learn about power relationships in group talk and how does this influence student written work? Whose voices are reconstructed and how?

5.1 The voice of power and authority

Power relationships between the students were demonstrated through who controlled the direction of the discussion; who asked the questions; who took on the roles of authority and who expressed knowledge. Ray spoke the most and he also often managed the group by asking questions such as "What do we have then?" and "Has anybody mentioned…?" or by highlighting specific scenes 'link it back to act two scene three and act one scene seven.' He provided the most extended utterances on a greater range of topics (chaos, weather, the old

man, the heavens, darkness, Duncan and the supernatural). He also offered a modern "translation", providing a position of knowledge and power. Although Ray demonstrated a depth of knowledge during the discussion, this was not fully demonstrated in his writing, which was the shortest in length. In his writing Ray considers one theme he had picked up on during the discussion and had spent some time exploring: the significance of the old man. Whilst the other students used a range of ideas and voices from the discussion in their writing, Ray only explores one idea in depth – his own. His speech implies he was interested in this idea through his awareness of how it was "significant" and how it "made sense that they [Shakespeare] got an old man to comment", suggesting his thought process regarding the requirement to explore methods, according to the GCSE mark scheme (AQA).

5.2   Discussion

The dissonance between Ray's verbal utterances and his extended writing is interesting. Does his authority in the discussion suggest a confidence in himself and a disregard for the contributions of the others? Why then was his written response so short? Perhaps further student interviews might shed more light on these issues and his thinking about the learning and writing process. One further issue is the way in which a more able peer is often used to support and scaffold the work of students in a group. While other students used and adapted other people's utterances, Ray did not. Therefore, although the group work did not benefit Ray in terms of the sharing of knowledge, it may have supported the development of his own ideas through thinking aloud. This resonates with the claim that students will "contribute through extended turns, by reasoning and building on their own and each other's ideas and positioning themselves in a cumulative exchange" (CALGANI; LAGO, 2018, p. 4).

5.3   Positions of submission

A second emerging theme is positions of submission. Unlike Ray, Marianne was quiet during the discussion. A normally gregarious character, it was interesting that she remained quiet during the recording. Evidence from the written work suggests that Marianne mostly echoes Ray's comments.

> R: he basically says that in all of my life like he's an old man so would be very wise that's what they'd see at the time. he says I've seen some dreadful things and some strange things but nothing at er compared to this.
> M: to show how bad it is.

In her writing, Marianne wrote: they use an old man to say these things Shakespeare also presents ideas about disruption to the natural order in the play… This is good because an old man is wise and have lived long way back and if he has never seen anything like what is going on then (sic) its telling us that killing Duncan was a very bad decision.

She echoes the language of "wise" and incorporates her own words of "bad" but develops these into her writing, although her expression lacked sophistication. Marianne's voice in the group task differs to her usual voice in class. What was it about the power dynamics of the group that induced this? Whilst there is no conclusive evidence to support such generalisations, ethnic and socio-cultural identities shape our voice and our silences and should not be ignored in further research (COOPER-STOLL, 2013), even though they might be challenging to explore and unpick.

5.4   Discussion

Marianne deferred to positions of power within the group, in particular Ray's knowledgeable authority. This is arguable when the scaffolding of groups working with a more able peer works to support students within the Zone of Proximal Development. Again there was a divergence between the written and the spoken word with Marianne arguably writing more in terms of quantity, but in a less academic voice. Is this because she, unlike Ray, does not fully rehearse her expression through informal speech? As a passive recipient of knowledge, has she not yet transitioned between primary (spoken) and secondary (written) speech? Additionally it raises questions of "divergent normative perspectives upon whose knowledge is held valid, who can participate and how" (CALGANI; LAGOS, 2018, p. 6). Further interventions could explore how the teacher could harness these powerful voices to engage and support collaboration to support students like Marianne. Is Marianne's written work empowered by her connection to Ray or is her spoken voice disempowered by his authority?

5.5   Silence

The third emerging theme is silence. Glen spoke only three times, and only after Ellie's prompting. However, although his utterance appears vague when he says, "with that triangle thing with the animals are quite low," it refers to the historical context of the play and the "Great Chain of Being", which had been explored in previous lessons. He brought in the voices of teacher explanation and the context of the play. Although Ray uses inclusive language "What do we have?" unlike Ellie he does not attempt to include individuals and instead uses these questions

to structure his own talk and in fact undermines Glen, with "OK let's get on with this then," reasserting his position of power. Despite his silence, Glen was able to complete the written task, although his written response was predominantly his own ideas. He uses five quotations in his response, two of which were suggested by Sam: he also uses quotations, ideas and terminology (oxymoron, symbolism) that had not been discussed. However, Glen is able to formulate his own explanations and, therefore, develops his independence and written voice from his silence. This internalisation and independence is a requirement of his GCSE examination. Whilst the data comparison of spoken and written work did not help explore the research question regarding how voice is reconstructed, it does highlight difference between Glen's silence and Marianne's, and would be worthy of further research.

5.6   Discussion

These findings would suggest that Glen's silence is neither a lack of confidence with the knowledge, nor in his own abilities. His written work was expressive and informed. Why then was he so quiet during the discussion? The argument that speech allows a rehearsal of ideas may not be applicable to Glen. Although he did not speak much, his written response is academic in style. Speech does not seem, therefore, to be a prerequisite for good writing. Would greater active participation in the group have allowed Glen to develop his ideas further or at least support others? Ollin (2008) argues that although talk has become a shorthand for learning and silence is passive, there is a "process of maturation in which cognitive development is internalised" (p. 267). His writing may be a demonstration of an internalisation of learning over time. There may be other reasons why a student remains quiet, including personal, internal and external conditions that contributed to Glen's silence. For example, Glen is a student in receipt of free school meals. How far does this contribute to his confidence and lack of authority? Again further research could go some way in exploring this. Lastly, it could be argued that due to the individual and silent nature of the written task, all students actually were allowed a voice and the opportunity to express their ideas through the written word. It is worth considering the ways in which written tasks are worded and structured to allow this to fully unfold.

5.7   The voice of the text

Although students used each other's utterances, references to prior learning and the Teacher's voice, they also used the source text - Macbeth. Sam spoke frequently and often. However, of his 18 utterances 9 are direct quotations from the text. He explains his understanding of these quotations only 4 times. Sam

demonstrates both his knowledge and his deference to the voice of the text. His knowledge of the text however was mostly focused upon the extract and only once refers a quotation from the whole play – one that had been studied thus bringing in the voice of the teacher and his previous learning. Sam's other utterances were positive agreements with the other students. This was interesting as Sam appears to lack confidence in written tasks as he is dyslexic, yet in the discussion he spoke with self-assurance. Marianne's comments were the most intertextual with a reference to fairy tales: "so its like what its like fairy tales that have that one source of light." This linking to classic texts helps Marianne to conceptualise her understanding of the play. This also provides a voice from outside the space of the classroom. Although, this reference was ignored by the other students as potentially irrelevant, it is interesting to note the difference between how the students viewed some utterances for their functional purposes and how a researcher with a theoretical perspective views the same utterances.

5.8   Discussion

Each of the students played a different role within the group discussion and each student provided utterances with different purposes – Glen's context, Sam's quotations, Marianne's intertextual references, Ray's explanations and Ellie's supportive questions. Sam's responses with the text at the heart of his utterances are the first steps towards an exploration of the text as a construct and the importance of the author's voice. However, this was not fully explored. Students incorporate different voices in different ways: students who appear verbally confident are able to develop and explore their own ideas in writing in more depth and use the discussion time to explore their own thinking rather than build on the voices of others. However, silence does not necessarily indicate that students do not have understanding, as they are able to draw on a range of utterances to develop their own written voice. Voices within the classroom are not just limited to the time and space of any assigned group work, but can emerge from students' own contextual knowledge, the text and previous lessons. This raises questions of how to research this and collect data for future analysis.

The data suggest that learning does intersect with social, political and historical spheres and that each utterance is reconstructed to shape new meaning and new understanding from a range of voices. The students' voices may be filtered through power and socio-economic associations beyond the classroom, which influence the ways in which students respond: "we reconstruct, we can resist, reshape and re-accent a speech genre so that it becomes "half-ours and half-someone else's" thus making new meanings possible" (HAWORTH, 1999, p. 101), with the direction of learning from the social to the individual.

6   Discussion – What are the implications of researching my own teaching practice?

In terms of the methodology and concerns over power as a teacher/practitioner, these didn't seem to have a significant bearing upon the research. Mortari and Harcourt (2012) ask whether it is clear that students who give their consent have done so in an unrestricted and self-determining way or if they felt pressured because of inequalities in power. Yet the five students all returned their consent forms promptly and without reminders. Relationships with students can create bias and subjectivity in interpretation or in the classroom shape the interactions of participants. However, the relationships with the students provided a context beyond the space and time of the data collection that cannot be eliminated. An outsider would have recorded data on Marianne and Sam, without a greater understanding of their personalities and made different inferences. However, as their classroom teacher, Marianne's silences were significant. Why did she not speak up? Is there a dissonance between her confident persona and her self-efficacy in English lessons?

Accusations of bias could be levelled at practitioner researchers, but the distance of time and space of transcription and analysis allows for this to be lessoned to a degree. Moreover, we need to consider the purpose of research to improve our own practice: through the observation of Marianne and Glen it is now possible to plan an intervention to support their contributions to group discussions and therefore hopefully support their learning. Through the reflections on socio-economic identities, it is possible to understand student needs beyond the influential sphere of the classroom and place their needs within wider society. Thus supporting Kemmis' (2006) argument for action research and suggesting that the research is valid because there is something to learn and that action research should make a better world and change histories (Kemmis, 2010). Furthermore, in the midst of a lesson, it is perhaps easy for a teacher to be beguiled by articulate verbal responses and biased in judgements about student's academic abilities, yet there was a dissonance between Ray's extended verbal contributions and his short written response. This research has opened up questions regarding this, as I have been more able to track the links between the verbal and the writing. Often written work is marked sometime after the initial discussion, but through this research the two utterances are placed next to each other in time and space allowing for greater reflection.

Lastly, Warmington (2008) considers what it means to point to race in the classroom and Cooper-Stoll (2013) argues that by creating colour-blind classrooms we deny social constructs. With this in mind, the radical listening and looking (CLOUGH;

Other people's voices: a reflective inquiry into power and voice within the classroom and the implications of researching one's own practice

767

NUTBROWN, 2012) and the reflective noticing (MASON, 2012) provide scope to see colour more clearly and grapple with the complexities and subsequent reflections associated with this as a teacher who aspires for equality and inclusion. This may be uncomfortable but as a practitioner-research I must be emotionally receptive (POSTHOLM; SKRØVSET, 2013). It is important socio-cultural issues are explored, but O'Leary (2014) argue the the more entwined a research becomes with the subjects of their research, the more meaningful the data generated. However, this entangling increasing the challenges in navigating the data.

Because we miss so much of the depth and the detail of student learning, there are inevitably new questions about students and their learning and experiences, which can be opened up by practitioner-research. If the data generated is more meaningful, then it could be argued that the more we see the easier it becomes to navigate and respond to students' needs. Moreover, it should be more fruitful for the students to be seen as individuals rather than as a homogenous group. Finally, Mason (2012) argues that the skill of noticing is a discipline that requires practice, thought and time to develop. As such, a conscious step towards developing the skill of noticing can and should be anchored to the development of teachers' reflective practice.

6.1 Questions of practitioner research

Although this study was a small scale exploration of the power dynamics of a group discussion and the subsequent written outcome, it was also an avenue for testing of methodology and in particular the complexities of researching one's own practice. Arguably, research is as much about individual development as contributing to the body of knowledge. However, there are a number of issues with regards to researching one's own practice, particularly with regards to bias and subjectivity - indeed these issues are true of any research within the interpretative paradigm. Within any research "stands the personal biography of the researcher, who speaks from a particular class, gender, racial, cultural and ethnic community perspective" (DENZIN; LINCOLN, 2008, p. 28). For one of the researchers, who is a white teacher in a mixed, multi-cultural comprehensive school in South East London, these issues play out daily, although it is evident that it is easy to miss the depth and subtleties of student interactions (MASON, 2012), whilst in the midst of problem solving and delivery. It is also possible to be ideologically blind to students' identities (COOPER-STOLL, 2013): as researchers and practitioners we need to learn that impartiality starts with ourselves and reflective practice (including the use of reflective logs or journals) is an important part of any qualitative research.

It could be argued that the same questions could have been answered by researching a different school, a different teacher and a different group of students, but Kemmis (2006) argues that action research leads to a greater understanding of ourselves and the consequences of what we do, so that we can act more wisely. However, Mortari and Harcourt (2012) argue that even the most interesting or fascinating question for research is not sufficient to legitimise involving children in a research project, let alone the use of video for data collection). Arguably, it is only through improving ourselves as teachers that we can improve the education and equality for our students. Research encourages us to listen, look, read and question radically (CLOUGH; NUTBROWN, 2012). Researchers need to 'develop the capacity to see their topic with new and different lenses in order to look beyond and transform their current knowledge' (CLOUGH; NUTBROWN, 2012, p. 26). Despite questions of power and agency in research being done to children, O'Leary (2014) argues that research should empower the marginalised, by providing a voice. Finally, there is the "known adult" which "makes the research conversation more meaningful (and increases the likelihood that the children's views might have impact… rather than being 'simply' data for the research study" (CLOUGH; NUTBROWN, 2012, p. 32).

Therefore, the arguments and problems with researching one's own practice can be legitimised because of the value for the practitioner and ultimately for the students, by improving not only the quality of education they receive; but also to empower. Subsequent research would aim to include these voices more.

7   Conclusion

The research set out to answer two questions: 1) What can we learn about power relationships in group talk and how this influences student written work? Whose voices are reconstructed and how? and 2) What are the implications of researching one's teaching practice in this context? Question one has been answered in part – there is clearly a relationship between students' spoken and written utterances, however these relationships differ. Some students are provided with voices of power and conversely others are silenced. How these voices are constructed can be described but not yet fully explained. The second question has begun to explore some of the implications from a theoretical and ethical perspective, but the reality of practitioner research has shed light to the significance of space and time and knowledge of students to add greater depth and richness to the data.

Returning to the theoretical frame work of Calcagni and Lago (2018) there were three domains: the first of which was the teaching-learning domain, where

Other people's voices: a reflective inquiry into power and voice within the classroom and the implications of researching one's own practice

769

perhaps much of this study can be placed. Understanding these power dynamics helps to distinguish the elements of talk "that are productive for learning from those that are not" (p. 4). Furthermore it is clear that there is a multiplicity of potential voices that vary across time and space and there is no one predictable impact; however understanding in greater depth these influences will help to support and develop interventions. The second domain suggested by Calcagni and Lago (2018) allow us to consider power distribution as presented through the transcripts, in particular as we see preferences for different voices – Marianne's preference for Ray's and Glen's for the teacher's. The final domain considers the ways in which knowledge is shared within the group, as each student had different knowledge to express with each other but also within their varied written outcomes.

As a pilot study that has considered theory, practice and methodology, it would be a valid and worthy of further study. A Bakhtinian framework has allowed a mapping between speech genres. However, for it to be more fruitful and worthy of generalisation, the research would need to be extended across space and time, as students construct different identities within the classroom and their learning is not limited to the sphere of the school. Because of the multiplicity of potential voices, interactions can vary across lessons, topic and time of delivery (CALCAGNI; LAGO, 2018). Newman (2017) suggests a Bakhtinian framework should be used to explore collective talk and "chains of dialogue" created over time. The significance of space and time is seen in the utterances of Marianne in her non-academic persona and her references to other texts; in the utterances of Glen and his own interpretations of utterances from previous lessons; in the utterances of Sam and his use of the text (itself a construct/voice in time). Moreover, a full action research project would benefit from this methodology in order to develop an intervention, compare student work across time and even compare interventions and impact across groups.

With regards to practitioner research, whilst there are challenges, these can be acknowledged and explored reflectively in order to improve knowledge and teaching. Mason (2012) advocated the use of keeping a reflective log to help practitioner-researchers to notice. There are benefits in terms of relationships with students and a known-adult for minimising any effects of observation. However, it is acknowledged that these difficulties may be exacerbated during any interview process.

A single data set is insufficient and further research would potentially be triangulated with student interviews to understand student perspectives. Nonetheless the data

offer some insights into the relationship between the spoken and the written word; the dialogism within the classroom; how students learn from each other and the implications and value of researching one's own practice. Action research should be done with students, rather than to students and students could be involved in designing the methods, analysing data or planning an intervention. A further area for study would be the benefits of participatory action research: this way student's voices really are heard and they are given agency within the process – after all it is their stories we are telling, in their voices.

Other people's voices: a reflective inquiry into power and voice within the classroom and the implications of researching one's own practice

771

Vozes de outras pessoas: uma investigação reflexiva sobre o poder e a voz dentro da sala de aula e as implicações de pesquisar a própria prática

Resumo

O objetivo deste estudo de caso piloto foi duplo: explorar o poder e a voz dentro das interações de pequenos grupos dentro de uma sala de aula de uma escola secundária e explorar as implicações da pesquisa da própria prática como professor-pesquisador. Usando as teorias de dialogismo de Bakhtin e um quadro sugerido por gravações em áudio de interações de um pequeno grupo, foram comparadas com o trabalho escrito independente do aluno, a fim de compreender as vozes usadas e como. Quatro temas principais foram identificados: poder e autoridade; posições de submissão; silêncio e a voz do texto. Os resultados também destacaram como, no meio do ensino, podemos deixar de ver essas dinâmicas de poder e identidade; mas o tempo e o espaço da pesquisa reflexiva permitiram aos pesquisadores ver além do momento e desenvolver a capacidade de ver suas intervenções e estratégias de ensino novamente para apoiar a construção de novos significados.

Palavras-chave*: Dialogismo. Diálogo em sala de aula. Praticante reflexivo. Voz*

Las voces de otras personas: una investigación reflexiva sobre el poder y la voz dentro del aula y las implicaciones de investigar la propia práctica

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio de caso piloto fue doble: explorar el poder y la voz dentro de las interacciones de grupos pequeños dentro de un aula de escuela secundaria y explorar las implicaciones de investigar la propia práctica como docente-investigador. Utilizando las teorías de Bakhtin del dialogismo y el marco sugerido por las grabaciones de audio de un grupo pequeño de interacciones se compararon con el trabajo escrito independiente de los estudiantes, para comprender qué voces se usaron y cómo. Se identificaron cuatro temas principales: poder y autoridad; puestos de sumisión; el silencio y la voz del texto. Los hallazgos también resaltaron cómo en medio de la enseñanza podemos fallar en ver estas dinámicas de poder e identidad; pero el tiempo y el espacio de la investigación reflexiva permiten a los investigadores ver más allá del momento y desarrollar la capacidad de ver sus intervenciones y estrategias de enseñanza para apoyar la construcción de un nuevo significado.

Palabras clave*: Dialogismo. Diálogo en el aula. Practicante reflexivo. Voz.*

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Other people's voices: a reflective inquiry into power and voice within the classroom and the implications of researching one's own practice

773

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Other people's voices: a reflective inquiry into power and voice within the classroom and the implications of researching one's own practice

775

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