Talking about poems, elaborating Barnes

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ABSTRACT: *In* Language, the Learner and the School*, Douglas Barnes recognised that intonation was important to classroom interaction but also acknowledged that his own research team did not choose to analyse it. This article presents instances of classroom talk about poetry and reflects on them using Barnes' concepts of pupil participation, exploratory talk and differentiated attentiveness. Transcripts rendered via Conversation Analysis afford attention to patterns of sound, suggesting the very particular nature of listening to poems and of pupils' responses to them. It seems Barnes' terms cannot account entirely for what occurs. Through original analysis, the author elaborates on Barnes' terms, concurrently reflecting on a domain of learning in English little considered in extant research.*

KEY WORDS: *Classroom interaction, conversation analysis, differentiated attentiveness, exploratory talk, poetry, pupil participation.*

INTRODUCTION: TALKING ABOUT POETRY AND BARNES

Here I want to explore *pupil participation* (Barnes, Britton, Rosen & LATE, 1969, p. 26) as children discuss poems they have heard in an English classroom. The interactions presented are interesting, because in their fuzziness they are fairly typical of problematic exchanges in English lessons generally. In making that claim, I draw on my involvement in initial teacher preparation, observing lessons led by beginning teachers, and on the more challenging moments in my own classroom experience. These are exchanges where it seems pupils are *sort of* engaging with the discussion in hand, but not quite. In some cases it may even be apt to consider their responses as mildly subversive. In a way, then, these exchanges are mundane and perhaps inconsequential. The teacher here finds it "difficult to achieve insight into pupils' thinking" (Barnes, 2008, p. 8). As Robin Alexander's recent work (2008) suggests, however, exchanges like these – very much akin to those identified by Barnes nearly forty years ago – remain common in English teaching and still present difficulty.

In one exchange here, pupils talk around a poem they have heard, first in Japanese, then in English translation. In another, the same group talk about John Agard's "Palm Tree King", where the voiced persona reflects on Western perceptions of his Caribbean culture. The more I have thought about these interactions, the more useful I have found Barnes' framework for considering "Language in the Secondary Classroom" (Barnes et al., 1969). Concurrently, however, I think something quite particular might be happening here that arises from the fact that pupils encountered these poems in sound as aural texts. Before coming to Barnes' work, I had rendered the exchanges as conversation analysis (CA) transcripts, conceiving of each heard poem as the first utterance or first turn in a sequence of interaction between teacher and pupils. I wanted to look at the correlation between what pupils said of the poem

and the detail of the text itself, attending precisely to the patterns of intonation employed by both. In effect, this was an enquiry into the distinctive "pedagogical invitation for learning" (Segall, 2004, p. 492) of any poem encountered in sound. By dint of this modality, they might invite different types of response and different opportunities for learning than poems encountered on the page. If pupils repeated details, for instance, would this function as quotation in writing, or would the echo have an alternative purpose?

Barnes summarised the "language of instruction" operating "when teachers are dealing with the materials and processes of learning" (Barnes et al., 1969, p. 46). This he distinguished from "how the teacher controls the personal interaction" of pupils. In this latter category, though, he remarked on intonation, stating its importance as it may be varied by the teacher to highlight items or matters, resulting in the "differentiated attentiveness" of pupils. In an English activity of listening to a poem manifested in sounds and stress, attentiveness relative to intonation has significance beyond the teacher's control of interaction: it becomes an issue of pupils' responses, their learning and of pedagogy. In the examples below, a teacher is coming to terms with these particular relationships, learning and control further entwined as she fosters *pupil participation* (p. 26), the constitutive elements of which are all relevant. In each transcript she encourages *thinking aloud* with varying success. We find instances of *pupil-initiated sequences*, but equally occasions where there is an apparent *gulf between teacher and taught*. At times it seems the teacher may have a *pre-determined end* in mind; elsewhere she *supplies a structure* to arguable benefit. Finally, the issue of what Barnes called the *demand for explicitness* deserves attention, if we understand that to mean pupils articulating understanding in some form of overt metalanguage.

Certainly these transcripts corroborate Barnes' impression of the infrequency of pupils initiating threads of discussion and a propensity of some teachers to miss opportunities for learning when they do. At the same time, if a teacher looks for the prized *explicitness* in these cases, they may miss telling aspects of response to poems that are manifest beyond the semantic information provided. The difficulty in these examples may be further compounded in that pupils are asked to talk about cultures in different ways. As diffuse, complex and nebulous entities, cultures resist easy discussion. To be explicit about them usually requires selection of iconic details, and may then be reductive and simplistic. Maybe something about the poems considered makes explicit discussion of the relationship of each text to a culture redundant. Barnes asserted that for better or worse "the language of the teacher enacts for the child the relevance of the lesson" (Barnes et al., 1969, p. 63).

I aim to extend that notion, recognising that, when a poem is heard in class as an aural text, it becomes part of the flow of speech within a lesson, similarly enacting relevance and becoming subject to what he termed the "differentiated attentiveness" of pupils. By this he meant their perceptions of what might be salient, guided in no small part by patterns of intonation and stress used by the teacher, whether deliberately or intuitively. He acknowledged too that transcripts for his own research did not record these patterns or their significance. In the immediate discussion, transcripts are rendered via CA conventions to demonstrate correlations between pupil exchanges and the poems they have heard. The apparent relationships between these texts and pupil talk support Barnes' notion of language enacting relevance,

intimating that this may be especially important when pupils are required to approach culture as an item of study through poetry.

OTHER WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT TALK

Since Barnes' initial work it has proved difficult for researchers to find a satisfying means of analysing and interpreting the complexities of classroom interaction. Conversation Analysis (henceforth CA) deals with intersubjectivity and common understandings of the world, providing access to *situated* achievements of talk. It is recognised as an emergent analytical tool in education (Melander & Sahlström, 2008, p. 3; Sahlström, 2009, p. 106), working from "the assumption that learning is constituted in interaction between people, and between people and the environment in which they are situated" (Sahlström, 2009, p. 103). An underlying principle is that the structure of talk is *oriented to* by participants; in no way is it conceived as an external structure (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998, p. 4). Instead, it concerns the embodiment of human sociality: "action, activity and conduct in interaction – as effectuated through the deployment of language and the body" (Schegloff, 1996, p. 162).

Used to scrutinise turns made by individual speakers in a conversation, especially with regard to the relationship between one turn and those that precede it, the approach has at its core an attention to what each participant hears and understands in the previous turns of participants. The transcription method (see Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998, for glossary adopted and appendix) marks changing pace, emphasis, breaths, pauses, and rising and falling intonation to varying degrees, enabling the researcher to represent and scrutinise the orality of utterances as well as their role in a greater sequence. In this it supports attention to poetry presented in the classroom to be heard. Sharing responses in the classroom is a "public and social process"; it is "socially distributed" (Melander & Sahlström, 2008). This accords with a "participationist" view of learning (Sfard, 1998; Sfard & Lavie, 2005; for an overview see Chaikilin & Lave, 1993; Rogoff, 2003), and follows studies that argue for the relationship between interaction and learning (for example, Cekaite, 2006; Macbeth, 2004; Sahlström, 1999, 2002; Tholander, 2002). From the perspective of a teacher, what pupils say constitutes the information by which their understanding and their cognition might be inferred. It is the means by which the teacher gauges the development of thought, of learning. Cognition, then, as far as it is accessible to the teacher here, is manifest – imperfectly – through a public and social process.

Mercer and Edwards' attention to ground-rules in talk (1981) is also relevant. Influenced by Grice's maxims (1975), they developed the term *educational ground-rules*. These "extend beyond gross understandings about classroom talk and the explicitness of answers, to the special domains of particular curriculum subjects and topics" (Edwards & Mercer, 1987, p. 47). For pupils, dealing with a poem with a particular teacher may require a special approach, just as an approach to a problem in mathematics might need its own orientation. Sometimes, however, pupils are not always introduced to or aware of these ground-rules, and it is not uncommon for pupils to work out their own rationale for classroom activity in the absence of explicit explanation (p. 54). Consequently

> the most profound and intransigent misunderstandings may be those about the
> underlying, implicit rules of interpretation, which define how particular bits of

classroom speech, text or language are to be "taken" and responded to. It is such things, after all, which distinguish education from mere experience. (p. 60)

For a teacher to choose to listen to a poem is a pedagogical choice, that coincides with the question "what meanings does a text make possible (and impossible) through its distinctive invitations for learning?" (Segall, 2004, p. 499). How will pupils respond to a poem, what will they tacitly infer to be an appropriate response, and what "things about their content" – poems as audio texts – do English teachers need to know "that make effective instruction possible" (Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989, p. 24)?

Edwards and Mercer (1987) developed further nuanced terms to conceptualise ground rules, which elaborate on Barnes' notion of *explicitness*. They are relevant to the problems that arise in discussing aspects of culture in the transcripts to follow. *Context* is everything participants "know and understand, over and above that which is explicit in what they say, that contributes to how they make sense of what is said" (p. 3). It is mental context more than one of the physical surroundings, "a matter of perception and memory, what they think has been said, what they think was meant, what they perceive to be relevant" (p. 68). *Continuity* is "the development of such contexts through time". "Common knowledge" (pp. 160-162) is constructed through joint activity and discourse. It becomes the contextual basis for further communication – this is often unspoken and unobservable, hence the importance of *context*. Essentially mental, this can also be considered as the common knowledge invoked by the discourse. This process can prove problematic, because participants may have misconceptions about the *contexts* of others, and a disjunction in communication, overt or otherwise, can thus arise (most obviously, where teachers and pupils misunderstand each other's frame of reference). *Continuity*, being the process of joint talk, encompassing shared memory and intention, is also a process of cognitive socialisation. Ideally, the teacher will carry pupils along with them. Insofar as they guide and often dominate the progress of classroom talk, teachers create an epistemological culture. This becomes an issue of power, dependent on the extent to which pupils are able and allowed to access the discourse that is created and sustained. Educated discourse, then, requires access to implicit frameworks.

A PROBLEM OF PUPIL PARTICIPATION: WHAT KIND OF CARS DO JAPANESE PEOPLE HAVE?

The first exchange under scrutiny arose from an unusual activity in which the teacher presented to her class a recorded poem read in Japanese. Though a translation was also available, the poem was first shared in its original language via CD (Aldeburgh Poetry Trust, 2003). Prompted by their female teacher, the class of pupils (aged 12 and 13) then shared what they knew of Japanese culture, providing some context for the poem just heard. The exchange concerns an apparently innocuous question posed by a boy – "What kind of cars do Japanese people have?" – and the responses of both his peers and his teacher in whole-class discussion. What happens at the moment of this pupil's exploratory interjection (Barnes, 2008)?

To investigate what may seem a trivial example – the single question – is entirely consistent with the approach taken by Harvey Sacks, indeed is absolutely necessary; what appears "common sense" should be a topic of study for CA (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 26). It is similar to instances provided by Barnes in showing a

teacher not taking up a pupil's contribution that might have the potential a) to indicate in itself something of that pupil's existing knowledge and orientation to the topic; and b) in that very fact, to provide a foundation for learning through encouragement and further exchange. These problems are well rehearsed in *Language, the Learner and the School* (Barnes *et al.*, 1969).

1	Teacher	…so you t[hink y[ou get a] better idea of the[mood and emotion in the Japanese. That's a <u>fanta:</u>stic c[omment, well do:ne y]<u>ou</u>: , very interesting. (0.2) Danie:l.
2	Daniel	what ki:nd of cars do japanese people have?
3	Teacher	fa:st cars<u>:</u> (1.0) state of the art models
4	Pupil 1	toy ota
5	Pupil 2	mits ubishi, subaru
6	Teacher	LET's <u>STICK</u> thou<u>:</u>gh to the question I'm answering, the question I'm =
7	???	(animated response)
8	Teacher	=asking sorry, Ka<u>:</u>ty
9	Katy	erm (unclear part of time, involved response)
10	Teacher	it's more interesting to listen to<u>:</u>
11	Katy	(yeah, it's more effective)
12	Teacher	fan<u>tas</u>tic, yeah, it does, it makes you listen. Sometimes people <u>shut</u> off because they don't think they understand it <u>at</u> ↑<u>all</u>, but you've just shown me that everyone in here has not done that, (0.5) they've instead been interested by it.

Table 1. Transcript A

We see Daniel's attempt (A2) to initiate a new tangent of discussion. It draws attention on several counts. First, within this transcript and across the lesson this is the *only* instance of a pupil asking a question. In CA terms, it is the sole instance of a pupil making a turn that could act as the first part of an adjacency pair (that is, a pair of turns which form a unit, such as question/answer, greeting/greeting or offer/acceptance). In doing so, the pupil is engaging in "exploratory" rather than "presentational" talk (Barnes, 2008). Second, it is the only example in which the pupil actively moves himself – or *position shifts* (Gibson, 2003, p. 1336) – from target to speaker role, hence shifting towards a position where he might direct the progress of the conversation. In respect of Barnes' terminology, the pupil adopts an exploratory stance. The question appears to be asked to the group and not just the teacher, or at least this is how it is understood, because other pupils offer responses – second parts to this first of the adjacency pair – acting to further the exploration. Third, that a number of pupils choose to respond to this question signals a degree of engagement and animation. The question is deemed to be one *worth* answering, and suggests that the speaker's interests and those of the group (teacher excepted) correspond. Finally, despite the reaction of others, the developing tangent of the conversation does not align with the interests or intent of the teacher, who only haltingly takes up the question, not consenting to pupils taking the floor, instead overtly reassuming the authoritarian speaker role, which entails providing first parts of adjacency pairs which

are invariably questions or formulations (8, 10, 12). In this respect, the teacher acts to delimit the boundaries of exploration.

This is a "critical moment" (Alexander, 2008, p. 110), where Daniel considers his input entirely legitimate within the established rules and roles of classroom conversation, with this teacher. In this respect he understands the educational ground rules, has the requisite ritual knowledge (Edwards & Mercer, 1987, pp. 160-162), knows the game. He has signalled to the teacher, non-verbally, that he wishes to speak, and does not speak until invited to do so. That he has followed the rules is clear in the teacher's invitation for him to speak, addressing him by name. Because he has acted according to procedural rules in conversation, we might also surmise that Daniel considers both the type and topic of his turn to be entirely permissible, insofar as he displays no deliberate attempt to transgress. He asks: "What kind of cars do Japanese people have?" (A2), having been granted permission to make a turn by the teacher (A1), and it would seem that recent reference to the Japanese language, together with earlier discussion about aspects of Japanese culture, make this question for Daniel one that is orderly and relevant to this sequence. What follows (A4 and A5) indicates that some pupils have an interest in this question though the teacher acts to close this line of discussion (A6), reorienting to "the question I'm asking". At issue, then, is the *relevance* of Japanese cars, a relevance which is implicitly contested by pupils and teacher. The respective *contexts* (Edwards & Mercer 1987, pp. 63-68) of pupils and teacher are not aligned, and *continuity* is thus disrupted.

Daniel's interest in *Japanese cars* represents the locus at which Daniel's "lifeworld" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 15-17) and that of the heard poem overlap. For Daniel, *Japanese cars* are especially relevant, exemplifying for him Japanese culture as fully as any of the items cited and apparently permitted by the teacher earlier in the lesson (sushi, for example). It is possible to view these earlier items as more obviously exotic. Ungenerously, we could consider these items to be theme-park Japanese, glib stereotypes obviously other to the Western eye. Considered on a shared continuum with these very same examples, Daniel's item is nearer the mundane end – he may find *Japanese cars* in the school car park. Consequently his association could be regarded as more subtle, not as readily usable by the teacher (from the teacher's perspective) for methodic consolidation of a shared understanding of "Japaneseness". However, the question is the publicly manifest point of Daniel's engagement with the text, his means of connecting the poem (saliently Japanese) to what he knows and that which stimulates him (cars).

The teacher's next acts are to lead conversation away from *Japanese cars*, first with an imperative ("LET's STICK thou:gh to the question I'm answering") uttered stridently and relatively assertively with atypical volume and emphasis, and then with an invitation for another pupil to speak ("Katy?"). This occurs despite the animation of a number of pupils in response to Daniel's question. She may do this for reasons substantive (she does not perceive the topic as relevant or useful), for reasons of authority, or due to exigencies of time. Her actions at this moment in the sequence show her initiating questions, providing adjacency-pair first parts (turns A8, A10, A12), as if to begin a new Initiate-Respond-Evaluate sequence (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 58-59). There is no agreement negotiated between teacher and pupils as to the legitimate *principled knowledge* (Edwards & Mercer, 1987, p. 160-162) of the exchange. The teacher's acts have an effect consistent with Barnes' "forces against

exploratory talk", "excluding the pupils' action knowledge by making them dependent on the teacher's sense of relevance" (Barnes, 1976, p. 127). The "Japanese car" comment indicates that pupils respond with reference to details the teacher may not value, but which are apparently important to the pupils in making sense of the text from their perspective. As a consequence, opportunities for genuinely exploratory talk led by pupils may be limited, and such talk is less frequent than teachers suppose.

NEW PROBLEMS: SINGING IT

The two transcripts in this section represent the same class responding to a CD recording of John Agard performing "Palm Tree King". A single sequence of interaction is separated into two transcripts to explore two different issues. Throughout, pupils had printed copies of the text to hand. The first part shows the teacher providing a *structure* (Barnes *et al.,* 1969) for exploration, inviting comment from pupils on aspects of the poem that drew their attention. The relevance of CA becomes very apparent, supporting attention to how the poem and their comments relate, the text prompting *differentiated attentiveness*. The second part displays traits of each of the other transcripts presented in the paper, suggesting that pupils may embody or enact their cultural knowledge rather than state it. Again, the immediate difficulty of the relevance or otherwise of the pupil contribution is presented to the teacher.

1	Teacher	Let's ta:lk about how we <u>read</u> certain <u>parts</u> of the po<u>em</u>: (2.0) hands <u>up</u>: don't shout out (4.0) can someone tell me one particular bit that caught their atten<u>tion</u>: (0.2) and <u>how</u> it was <u>read</u>: (0.4) Dan<u>i</u>el
2	Daniel	on the (0.2) erm side where (y<u>know</u>:) it begins (.) the third column down (you've got) him sing si:ngs <u>soft</u>ly.
3	Teacher	which bi<u>:</u>t's that?
4	Daniel	on the first side whe<u>:</u>re it's <u>at</u>: (0.2) third column d<u>own</u>:
5	Teacher	right so:: (0.2) they're called - the gr<u>ou</u>:ps of lines are ↑stanzas is it the third one dow [n?] =
6	Daniel	yeah
7	Teacher	= this one here and he sort of ↑<u>sings</u> it =
8	Daniel	= ∘sings it softly∘=
9	Teacher	=sort of↑<u>sings</u> it softly what ↑sort of eff<u>e</u>:ct do you think that ha<u>:</u>s on the listener?
10	Pupil	(unidentifiable gutteral exclamation)
11	Teacher	(1.0) yeah – do you think it makes him >kind of rela::xed kind of nice way to sort of bring them into a po<u>em</u>: <(0.4) ye<u>a</u>:h (0.2) yeah? (0.2) other things people have things to <u>say</u>:
12	Pupil A	um (0.4) um *(interruption to recording)*
13	Teacher	ag<u>ai</u>:n why do you think he sings it?
14	Pupil A	(unidentifiable comment, though next teacher turn seems to repeat one of the items – "it sort of gets people involved")
15	Teacher	yeah and the <u>song</u> sor<u>:</u>t of ge<u>:</u>ts people in↑volved as well doesn't it? <u>Jason</u>

16	Jason	erm in the last paragra:ph he-he sort of like erm he says like like all the sentence apar:t from one jus one wor::d and he says one word sort of like s::low::: by himse:lf as if it's it's in a new sentence ∘↓sort [of∘]
17	Teacher	perfect what's that doing?
18	Jason	it's like emphasising it=
19	Teacher	=EMPHASISING it making it very CLEAR (0.2) and what are those what do those three things three words at the end of those sentences do:
20	Jason	they'erm sort of rhyme:
21	Teacher	they sort of rhyme don't they? (.) is that a nice sort of way to close a poem?
22	pupils	um
23	Teacher	yeah: (.) sounds good doesn't it sort of brings it to a close, does ↑reggae music just stop?
24	Jason	no

Table 2. Transcript B

Responding to the teacher's initial open invitation to comment on a detail that caught their attention, the first pupil (B2) refers to where the "singing" occurs, demonstrating sensitivity to a shift in the manner of performance. The position of this contribution, as the first volunteered item, implies the absolute salience of this perception from the pupil's point of view. The teacher then asks a pupil why the poet "sings it" (B13), and though the pupil's reaction is difficult to make out, the teacher's apparent repetition of his contribution suggests that it was that "the song sor:t of ge:ts people in↑volved" (B15). If we accept that this was indeed the pupil's remark, it allows for an inference beyond its overt expression of a possible characteristic of singing *per se*, that the pupil *himself* finds the singing engaging. Turn B16 is the very embodiment of engagement and attentiveness, the pupil locating an individual word exemplifying Agard's manipulation of sound. Note his elongation of the initial "s" sound and the "ow" vowel sound in "slow", as if to embody the qualities of "slow" in his utterance. As with the previous example, this illustrates awareness of very specific variations of sound in the performance. Turn B18 confirms understanding of the function of such variation: "it's like emphasising it". It is clear in this example that pupils can attribute meaning to the manipulation of sound in response to heard poems, taking an interest in the "slowness" of the performance at times to reveal interpretations of the mode of presentation within the frame of their own knowledge. Their attention has been directed by sound: *differentiated attentiveness* is a matter of learning, not just control.

Transcript C (Table 3) represents an immediate continuation of the same sequence of interaction, that is, Table 2 (hence numbering from turn 25). A further exploratory example is initiated by a pupil, but this time without the initial invitation of the teacher. It appears around turns C26 and C27 that Richard may have been heard mumbling by the teacher, or perhaps that he feels his comment may be considered transgressive in some way. The recording does not capture whatever Richard has said previously, though it is clear that he has said something, because he explains: "I said it sounded s:toned". This meets enthusiastic agreement from one pupil, with marked emphasis and an increase in volume in his utterance "TOTa:lly". The interest of a small group of pupils in this aspect of the reading is sustained following the teacher's

enquiry into the Rastafarian religion, which gives rise to a minor dispute, one pupil contending, "I think they smoke canna<u>bis</u>:" (C33), another responding "(they <u>didn't</u>) they sm<u>ok</u>ed <u>ganJ</u>:" (C34). The teacher seems happy to sanction this exploration (she repeats, C33) but wishes to defer the topic (C35), though Richard immediately returns to the same point (C38). Richard's turn seems a sensible elaboration of the purpose of cannabis in Rastafarian convention; it appears a mature effort to discuss the topic in reference to the "holy herb", the declining pitch the converse of sensationalist or attention-seeking use of the term. The teacher, however, though she appears to consider the discussion valid, wishes to reorient the conversation again (C39), but once again interest in the cannabis thread is apparent in a further remark – repeating Richard – about taking "the <u>ho</u>ly <u>her:</u>b" (C40). This is an especially rhythmic utterance, with emphasis on the first syllable of "holy" and a mannered decline in pitch on "herb", possibly intended to represent the effect of the narcotic and echoing the embodiment of "slow" in the previous utterance of that word itself. This particular pupil has manipulated sound to offer a different meaning from that shared by Richard.

25	Other pupils	no	
26	Teacher	kind of sort of y'know brought to a close isn't it? (0.2) it slows down a bit it (0.2) empha<u>si</u>:ses the last few w<u>or</u>:ds (0.2) nice way to finish it, Ric<u>hard</u>:	
27	Richard	I said it he sounded – sounded stoned (a bit)	
28	Teacher	r::ight okay so you<u>:</u> thought he sounded s:toned	
29	???	<u>TOTa:</u>lly	
30	Richard	.hh hhihh	*Noise of agreement*
31	Teacher	okay (0.2) who can tell <u>me</u>: anything about the Rastafar:ian religion?	
32	???	(I think) they smoke canna<u>bis</u>:	
33	Teacher	they <u>smoke</u> cann<u>abis</u><u>:</u>	
34	???	(they <u>didn't</u>) they sm<u>ok</u>ed <u>ganJ</u>:	
35	Teacher	>we'll come back to that in just a minute<, <u>Noo</u>la	
36	Noola	they (normally) had (.) really (.) young lead<u>ers</u>:	
37	Teacher	young lead<u>ers</u>: (.) thank you N↑oola, Richard<u>:</u>	
38	Richard	they take cannabis as a h<u>o:</u>ly h<u>er:</u>b	
39	Teacher	thank you Richard , we'll come back to that in a second, anyone else got anything to say about [it?=]	
40	???	take the <u>ho</u>ly h<u>er:</u>b	*Rhythmic speech*
41	Teacher	= Noola?	
42	Noola	dr<u>ead</u>locks	
43	Teacher	<u>dreadlocks</u> okay:: excellent, RIGHT let me just tell you a little thing about the Rastafarian religion…	

Table 3. Transcript C

The exchange conveys the boys' interest in cannabis use relative to Rastafarianism and its further pertinence to the poem. It seems that Richard may doubt the teacher's response as to the legitimacy of the topic at the point of its introduction, for he pauses and repeats a word, rather hesitantly. Yet this teacher does sanction the discussion, where she did not around "japanese cars" (Transcript A). In this instance, pupils' utterances result directly from how the poem sounded, and it appears the boys take pleasure (C38, C40) in replicating sound patterns apparent in the poem through their own speech. They seem to be *enacting* their understanding of the culture embodied in the poem's voice instead of articulating it in any explicit way.

CONCLUSION

Considered together, the transcripts presented here suggest the tendency of these boys to avoid *explicitness* as it might normally be understood. Placing emphasis on the architecture of interaction, CA shows their responses are understood by the teacher to have only limited relevance. In the structure of talk, their contributions may then be called tangential, though the sequences suggest they offer them with no subversive intent, expecting them to be legitimate. Where CA affords attention to sounds, we see the boys appear to convey response to the culture embodied in the voice of "Palm Tree King", but that this is overlooked because it is mediated by means other than explicit description.

These disjunctions are consistent with acknowledgement that the "poetic event" (Rosenblatt, 1978) of classroom discussion around literary texts differs from solitary response to literature presented in print. Confirming Barnes' remarks, it seems that exploratory talk is extremely difficult to foster and that the exploratory act of a pupil initiating a strand of inquiry poses challenging dilemmas for the student-teacher, momentarily shifting the locus of control, sometimes in a manner at odds with the specific learning objectives the student-teacher might have in mind. The dilemma, as Cazden puts it, is one of "how to validate a student's present meaning, often grounded in personal experience, while leading the child into additional meanings, and additional ways with words for expressing them that reflect more public and educated forms of knowledge" (2001, p. 22). I want to qualify that, in relation to the specific activity of listening to and responding to poetry. Transcript B shows that these pupils do have a sensitivity to sound, that "differentiated attentiveness" exists in a way not described by Barnes. Transcript C suggests that they do draw on resources to respond to intimations of culture in a heard poem. Indeed, these are resources – as manipulations of sound – that complement the modality of the text encountered and which are available in a public, collective interaction, where they *cannot* be in isolated reading of print. In this they have a way with words that is novel and therefore difficult for the teacher to deal with. The conflation of these matters, I suggest, makes *pupil participation* in such listening and response activity very particular, and in ways not quite accounted for in Barnes' illuminating discussions of classroom language.

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APPENDIX

Transcription Glossary

CA transcripts and associated commentaries relate to the following transcription glossary (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998: vi-vii):

(0.5)   The number in brackets indicates a time gap in tenths of a second.

(.)   A dot enclosed in a bracket indicates a pause in the talk of less than two-tenths of a second.

=   The "equals" sign indicates "latching" between utterances.

[ ]   Square brackets between adjacent lines of concurrent speech indicate the onset and end of a spate of over-lapping talk.

.hh   A dot before an "h" indicates speaker in-breath. The more h's, the longer the in breath.

hh   An "h" indicates an out-breath. The more h's, the longer the breath.

(( ))   A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity. For example ((banging sound)). Alternatively double brackets may enclose the transcriber's comments on contextual or other features.

-               A dash indicates the sharp cut-off of the prior word or sound.

:   Colons indicate the speaker has stretched the preceding sound or letter. The more colons the greater the extent of the stretching.

!   Exclamation marks are used to indicate an animated or emphatic tone.

( )   Empty parentheses indicate the presence of an unclear fragment on the tape.

(guess)   The words within a single bracket indicate the transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance.

.   A full stop indicates a stopping fall in tone. It does not necessarily indicate the end of a sentence.

,   A comma indicates "continuing" intonation.

?   A question mark indicates a rising inflection. It does not necessarily indicate a question.

*   An asterisk indicates a "croaky" pronunciation of the immediately following section.

↑↓   Pointed arrows indicate a marked falling or rising intonational shift.
                      They are placed immediately before the onset of the shift.

<u>a</u>:   Less marked falls in pitch can be indicated by using underlining
                      immediately preceding a colon.

a<u>:</u>   Less marked rises in pitch can be indicated by using a colon which is
                      itself underlined.

<u>under</u>   Underlined fragments indicate speaker emphasis.

CAPITALS   Words in capitals mark a section of speech noticeably louder than that
                      surrounding it.

°°   Degree signs are used to indicate that the talk they encompass is
                      spoken noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk.

Thaght   A "gh" indicates that the word in which it is placed had a guttural
                      pronunciation.

> <   "More than" and "less than" signs indicate that the talk they
                      encompass was produced