

WORKING ON UNDERSTANDING IN THE ADULT ESL CLASSROOM:
A COLLABORATIVE ENDEAVOR

by

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ABSTRACT

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Over the past several decades, research that explored various teaching-and-learning contexts has provided valuable insights into teacher-learner interactional practices in second language classrooms. Many of these practices focus on learners' language accuracy by targeting the correct answer, a worthy but perhaps insufficient goal; an additional teacher responsibility is to encourage learners to build on their understanding by reasoning through that correct answer. This current study adds to previous research by examining how one experienced teacher and her adult ESL students in a community language program in the U.S. engage in a particular type of interactive, collaborative work on understanding that moves beyond *what* is correct to *why* it is correct, which I call "digging." Based on a conversation analytic examination of 15 hours of video-recorded classroom interaction, the findings showcase two complementary types of teacher-led digging that are preceded by a critical "pre-digging" phase, during which

the teacher redirects learners' attention and constitutes a group that will work together as a collective. The first type of digging zooms in on one particular language issue which the teacher frames as a language challenge for the group and works collaboratively with the collective toward resolving it. The second type of digging, by contrast, zooms out from a specific language issue to a larger pattern in either the learners' native languages or the target language, English. In both types of digging, exploratory talk and various scaffolding techniques are employed to promote participation and learner agency. The findings contribute to the literature on classroom interaction by specifying, in fine-grained detail, the *how-to* of these teacher interactional practices during whole group work on understanding which involves the intricate work of every gaze, every gesture, every posture shift, every utterance, and every second of silence. Such specifications also enrich teacher educators' pedagogical content knowledge by providing them a common language to talk about, and illuminate the complexity of, teaching as they guide students to "see" such complexity.

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As my doctoral studies draw to a close, I am reminded of when I first learned of conversation analysis. Ten years ago, as a first-year doctoral student sitting in an Introduction to Conversation Analysis course, I became convinced that CA research could pull apart and make sense of teacher-learner interaction in language classrooms. I thought I had made an important discovery -- using CA to uncover “interactional secrets” of the language classroom, and I rushed to make an appointment with the course professor, Dr. Hansun Waring. I told her of my “important discovery” and, without showing the slightest hint of amusement, she suggested, “Yes, why don’t you speak to Drew, Catherine, and Sarah? They’re doing this kind of work now.” Dr. Waring, my dissertation sponsor, always generous with her expertise, sharp insights, and humanity, has been with me throughout this project, guiding me, asking me questions, and yes, pushing. I thank you. Special thanks also go to Dr. Sarah Creider, my wonderfully thoughtful second reader and fellow Glenn Gould fanatic, to Dr. Howard Williams for his insights as a grammar expert, and to Dr. Xiaodong Lin for their careful reading of this dissertation and their helpful comments.

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I - INTRODUCTION

The road that led me to this project has clearly been less traveled. After over 35 years in adult second language classrooms as a teacher of English as a Second Language (ESL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and Spanish, I decided to return to the classroom in the fall of 2010 as a doctoral student and novice teacher educator. I took up these new roles because of my belief that there was more to learn about second language teaching and learning as well as a desire to contribute, in some way, to my profession before retiring. As I began to work with novice ESL teachers, I felt the challenge of articulating why, when, and how teachers do what we do, and I became interested in the part that the teacher plays in promoting, encouraging, and guiding collaborative, interactive talk that would provide opportunities for learning.

In my role as a teacher educator, I have observed hundreds of hours of novice teachers taking their first teaching steps in adult ESL classrooms. I watch how these teachers manage instruction and interaction with students in their classrooms, and I see myself 40 years ago. Time and time again, as I prepare for post-observation debriefing sessions with my novice teachers, I am struck by two characteristics of their classrooms: (1) the often accelerated pace of the class as teachers and learners alike seem to move across the surface of understanding and jump from activity to activity; and (2) the emphasis that many teachers seem to place on the correct answer, the *what*, rather than on the reasoning process that supports a correct answer or explains an incorrect answer, the *why* (Waring, 2015).

One of my challenges as a teacher educator and my primary motivation for this project is to discover ways to help novice teachers first notice, and then understand the part they and their learners play in what is occurring in their classrooms. Another perhaps more difficult challenge is to show novice teachers that a focus on co-building understanding by reasoning through the why of a language issue is a priority in the classroom, and that it requires a particular type of teacher-learner interaction.

Working on understanding is a phrase taken from Douglas Barnes' (1976/1992, 2008, 2010) research on exploratory talk. He writes that teacher and learners work within a communication system, set up by the teacher, in which all participants take on roles. Within this system, when the teacher's role is *replying* (i.e., understanding) rather than *assessing* (i.e., judging), and the learners' role is *sharing* rather than *presenting*, an exploratory type of communication system is established that encourages talk that *works on understanding*. If we imagine a continuum of using talk as "a tool for trying out different ways of thinking" (Barnes, 2010, p. 7), talk that works on understanding can be placed at one end of the continuum. At the other end, we place *right-answerism* (Holt, 1964/1982), talk that focuses on seeking and providing correct answers, a worthy but insufficient goal. Although Barnes (2010) recognized that both types of talk have parts to play in the classroom, he clarifies that right-answerism may help learners memorize or reinforce information but "is not likely to advance understanding" (p. 7).

Drawing on Barnes' research, I define *working on understanding* as the collaborative work that occurs when the teacher and/or learner(s) are not satisfied with simply getting the *right* answer, but search for a deeper understanding, the *why*, of a language issue. In an effort to shed light on this type of classroom work, I observed one

experienced ESL teacher (see Methods) as she instructed, managed, and interacted with her students. My focus was on how the work on understanding was co-managed and co-built between teacher and learners as a collaborative process -- on the ground in real time.

Statement of the Problem

Currently in the United States, immigrants represent 14% of the total US population, up from 5% in 1965, and with a projected 18% in 2065 (Pew Research Center, 2015). Although the rate of increase of the foreign-born population in the U.S. has slowed since the turn of the century, immigrants represent almost one third of the population growth since 2000, and notably, 50% of U.S. foreign-born adults indicated that they spoke English *less than very well* (Pew Research Center, 2015). In addition, the Migration Policy Institute recently reported that the foreign-born accounted for 87% of the almost 22.8 million Limited English Proficient (LEP) U.S. residents (McHugh & Morawski, 2015). These numbers indicate that a large segment of the immigrant population could benefit from English language instruction, pointing to what the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) has identified as an “overwhelming need for English language instruction” (National Center for ESL Literacy Education, 2003, p. 14). To this end, CAL has called for the mobilization of a large workforce of professional ESL teachers to provide instruction for current and future English language learners (National Center for ESL Literacy Education, 2003).

The “crucial” task of expanding the professional workforce (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2010, p. ix), signals, in turn, an increased need for ESL teacher education programs and professional development resources. What is less clear is how to go about

preparing these new teachers for the classroom, the domain of second language teacher education (SLTE). As a contribution to SLTE, the Center for Applied Linguistics (2010) published a research-based list of suggested *Promising Practices* for ESL teachers' classroom instructional strategies, among which is the following:

Employ a number of different instructional approaches to match diverse learner needs, motivations, and goals, and provide opportunities for interaction, problem-solving, and task-based learning. (p. 30)

Although broad principles such as the above are helpful in charting the overall direction of teacher development, it remains unclear how they can be brought to life in the classroom or in what specific ways the various best practices may be implemented -- a daunting challenge faced by novice teachers, who may quickly acquire the necessary knowledge to *write and talk about* teaching and learning principles (skills related to academic practice) but remain unable to *do* them (skills related to teaching practice) in the classroom (Bartels, 2009). A teacher educator's responsibility, then, is to work with novice teachers to make connections from principles to specific practices, thus providing them with usable classroom knowledge, what they need to know to navigate the classroom and interact with their students effectively.

In order to address this challenge, Ball and Forzani (2009) emphasize the need for a "practice-focused curriculum for learning teaching" (p. 503) where student teachers are "seeing examples of each task, learning to dissect and analyze the work, watching demonstrations, and then practicing" (pp. 497-498). As such, one way to address the "need to expand the currently limited research base on adult ESOL instruction" (National Center for ESL Literacy Education, 2003, p. 14) is to continue to build upon the research on what teaching actually looks like in the classroom. In this current study, I contribute

to this endeavor by detailing the collaborative engagement of an experienced teacher with her students in working on understanding.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe what working on understanding can look like in the adult second language classroom and to explore *how* this work is accomplished collaboratively through the use of the verbal and nonverbal resources (e.g., gaze, gesture, facial expression, body movement) available to the participants. My focus is on making visible “*the difficult steps that guide a learner* [italics added] towards a principled understanding of both the [language] problem and its solution” (Waring, 2015, p. 82). More specifically, I seek to answer the following research question: What practices do teacher and students engage in to collaboratively work on understanding in an adult ESL classroom?

II - LITERATURE REVIEW

Although I have tied the definition of *working on understanding* to exploratory talk (Barnes, 1976/1992, 2008, 2010), there are other powerful resources that teachers and learners may use to work on understanding. This review of the literature will focus on three broad types of resources for working on understanding: (1) exploratory talk, (2) scaffolding, and (3) the management of learner contributions. I will conclude with a summary of the review.

Exploratory Talk

Exploratory talk is a particular type of talk that is used as a tool to work on understanding and promote learning (Barnes, 1976/1992; Barnes, Britton, & Torbe, 1969/1990; Barnes & Todd, 1995), and it is characteristic of a classroom with an exploratory communication system. According to Barnes (1976/1992), the teacher's control of communication determines the classroom communication system, which then sets up the relationships and discourse that may occur. As stated above, in an exploratory communication system, the teacher's role is largely *replying* (i.e., understanding) rather than *judging* (i.e., assessing), and the learners respond by *sharing* rather than *presenting* (i.e., displaying for evaluation). Exploratory talk, which includes the learner's hesitations, back-pedaling, false starts, and disfluency, is especially important in the early stages of working on understanding. This talk is often disjointed and incomplete because the learner is "sorting out his or her own thoughts" (Barnes, 2008, p. 4); when this occurs, as

Mercer (1995) notes, “reasoning is made visible” (p. 104), and the classroom becomes a “site for exploration rather than simply for evaluation” (Wells & Mejía-Arauz, 2006, p. 380).

Research on exploratory talk was primarily conducted with young learners in L1 classrooms in the U.K. and Mexico (Dawes, Mercer, & Wegerif, 2000; Fernandez, Wegerif, Mercer, & Rojas-Drummond, 2001; Fisher, 1993; Mercer & Wegerif, 1999; Rojas-Drummond, 2000; Rojas-Drummond, Mercer, & Dabrowski, 2001; Rojas-Drummond, Perez, Velez, Gomez, & Mendoza, 2003; Wegerif & Mercer, 1997, 2000; Wegerif, Perez, Rojas-Drummond, & Velez, 1999). In a series of studies using video-recordings of small groups of young learners solving nonverbal reasoning puzzles, Mercer and Wegerif (1999; Wegerif & Mercer, 1997, 2000; among others) identified three ways of talking and arguing in small-group, task-based activities. *Disputational talk* featured disagreements, individual decision-making, and lack of reasons for opinions; *cumulative talk* featured the piling up of uncontested ideas; and *exploratory talk* featured engagement with others’ ideas/opinions and giving reasons for these ideas/opinions. In their study on the intersection of exploratory talk, peer scaffolding, and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1986), Fernandez et al. (2001) built on Mercer and Wegerif’s definition of exploratory talk by proposing the following ground rules for its use:

1. all relevant information is shared,
2. participants strive to reach an agreement,
3. participants take joint responsibility for decisions,
4. participants give reasons for opinions,

5. challenges are acceptable,
6. alternatives are discussed before a decision is taken, and
7. all the members of the group are encouraged to talk by the other members. (p. 43)

The authors found that learners provided “natural scaffolding” (p. 53) for each other, which increased after they received training in the use of exploratory talk. Notably, they also found that the difficulty of the tasks determined the type of talk used; learners used exploratory talk only when dealing with problems just beyond what they could manage individually (i.e., within their ZPD). In a related study, Wegerif and Mercer (2000) found that learners who had been trained to use exploratory talk when working on nonverbal reasoning tasks were more successful when later working individually through similar nonverbal reasoning puzzles.

Based on previous research in the UK, a series of studies conducted in Mexico (Rojas-Drummond, 2000; Rojas-Drummond, Mercer, & Drabowski, 2001; Rojas-Drummond et al., 2003) found that young learners do not automatically use exploratory talk in small group work but can be trained to do so if training is of adequate length. In the Rojas-Drummond and Mercer (2003) study, the authors trained 5th and 6th-graders in the ground rules of exploratory talk over a 10-month period, which resulted in a significant shift away from the use of cumulative talk to exploratory talk. As in Wegerif and Mercer’s (2000) study, children who had been trained to use exploratory talk performed better on reasoning tasks when working individually as well as collectively. Shifting from learners’ to teachers’ exploratory talk, Rojas-Drummond (2000) analyzed transcriptions of teacher-learner talk in elementary school classrooms to examine, in part,

teachers' focus on the reasoning process rather than fact acquisition. The teacher practices shown to be most successful, such as "using 'why?' questions to justify answers or eliciting problem-solving strategies" (p. 200), were characteristic of exploratory talk.

Although the study of exploratory talk has taken place predominantly in L1 elementary school contexts, it is also a useful tool for teachers and learners in L2 adult ESL classrooms. In a recent conversation-analytic study (Boblett, 2018), exploratory talk was located within a larger exploratory episode with the following 5-stage sequential structure: (1) call for attention, (2) state the problem, (3) open and enter a thinking zone, (4) experiment with different alternatives, and (5) reach a resolution. These exploratory episodes could be either teacher- or jointly-led, and the distinct stages were supported and sustained as much by gaze, gesture, and whole-body movement as by talk and silence.

The use of exploratory talk in classroom discourse has played a role in related strands of research as well. In Wells and his colleagues' work on the relationship between dialogic inquiry and learning (Wells, 1999; Wells & Ball, 2008; Wells & Mejía-Arauz, 2006), the proposal was made that "learning is likely to be most effective when students are actively involved in the dialogic co-construction of meaning about topics that are significant to them" (Wells & Mejía-Arauz, p. 379); in other words, when learners become "meaning-makers and meaning-users" (Wells & Ball, p. 181). In a seven-year longitudinal study with teachers in Canada who were interested in adopting dialogic interaction in their classrooms, Wells and Mejía-Arauz found that, across both science and arts curricula, interaction became more dialogic when there was "exploration of ideas ... [such as] (planning, interpreting and reviewing student inquiries)" (p. 390). The positive result of an *inquiry approach* (i.e., a move away from teacher assessment to one

of teacher-student exploratory dialogue) was “the development of a disposition of respect for diversity of experience and difference of opinion” (p. 422). In a later longitudinal study with K-12 teachers in U.S. schools, Wells and Ball (2008) focused on the use of exploratory talk in dialogic interaction, and, more specifically, the teachers’ improved skills in managing inquiry and discussion, and promoting student agency. They found that as teachers created a more dialogic approach over time, there was an increase in exploratory talk, student-initiated responses, and teacher’s open-ended questions, resulting in a participative and collaborative learning environment.

A notion closely related to exploratory talk is *accountable talk* (Michaels, O’Connor, & Resnick, 2008; Michaels, Sohmer, & O’Connor 2004; O’Connor & Michaels, 1996; Resnick, Salmon, Zeitz, Wathen, & Holowchak, 1993, among others), which has been a topic of study for over 20 years. The Accountable Talk Program (Michaels, O’Connor, Hall, & Resnick, 2010), developed in the U.S. for use by teachers and learners in K-12 settings, is reminiscent of the Thinking Together Program (Dawes, Mercer, & Wegerif, 2000) used in U.K. K-12 classrooms to promote the use of exploratory talk in small group discussions. The stated aim of accountable talk research is to “examine the processes of shared reasoning” (Resnick et al., 1993, p. 347).

In Resnick et al. (1993), triads of university students were asked to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of various energy resources, and their discussions were transcribed and coded for talk that tracked the use of both facts and reasoning. Building on this initial study, accountable talk has been defined in terms of three broad dimensions of accountability: (1) accountability to the learning community, with its focus on creating

a respectful public space for explaining and trying out ideas; (2) accountability to knowledge, emphasizing a reliance on facts and accuracy of content; and (3) accountability to standards of reasoning, encouraging logical reasoning and using evidence in the reasoning process (Michaels, O'Connor, & Resnick, 2008). Much like the practices of exploratory talk, accountable talk practices are first modeled by the teacher as expected (Michaels, Sohmer, & O'Connor, 2004). Of particular importance in whole group settings is the role of the teacher and his or her "careful orchestration of talk and tasks" (Michaels, O'Connor, & Resnick, 2008, p. 284). As with exploratory talk, learners (and presumably teachers) become more adept at engaging in accountable talk with practice. The authors raise the important question of how long to let learners have inaccurate facts stand during the reasoning process before the teacher simply provides a correct answer or solution, and they propose that a middle ground can be found "where robust reasoning and the systematic organization and accumulation of knowledge can develop symbiotically" (p. 291). It is the responsibility of the teacher, in collaboration with the learners, to establish that middle ground wherein the weaving together of knowledge and reasoning (i.e., work on understanding) plays out and is made visible.

This brief look at exploratory talk and related strands of research shows that studies have largely been conducted in L1 K-12 classroom settings, and mainly during small group tasks. This study examines whole group, rather than small group, exploratory talk. Also, the adult ESL classroom setting presents an understudied context for research on this type of talk. Notably, in contrast to previous studies, arriving at a correct answer does not signal the end point of the use of exploratory talk, but the beginning. Due to this important difference, this current study examines how the teacher, first, opens a space for

and then uses this type of talk as a resource to build on the learners' understanding of what is holding up a correct answer. My hope is to add to the existing body of research on exploratory talk by specifying and breaking down the unfolding moment-by-moment verbal and nonverbal teacher-learners interactional work as it occurs during whole group work on understanding.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding is another valuable resource that teachers use to work on understanding. In much the same way as a scaffold provides temporary support and protection for a building under construction, scaffolding as a teaching practice temporarily supports and guides a learner's development, and then is taken away when no longer needed. Ever since the metaphorical use of *scaffolding* made its first appearance in child psychology research in the 1970s (Bruner, 1978; Bruner & Sherwood, 1976; Ratner & Bruner, 1978; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976), it has been widely employed in the field of teaching and learning to describe a way instruction is sequenced and presented, and to guide classroom interaction. Although the popularization of the term scaffolding has, at times, led to its perhaps offhanded or overgeneralized use as *any* type of guidance that is offered (Palinscar, 1998; Stone, 1998), scaffolding as a practice is firmly grounded in Vygotskian sociocultural theory of learning and development (Alexander, 2008; Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Cazden, 1988/2001; Ohta, 1995; Palinscar & Brown, 1984), and it is tied to Vygotsky's (1978) core concepts of mediation and appropriation (Lantolf, 2000b).

True to its beginnings in child psychology research, the first studies of scaffolding focused on three-, four-, and five-year olds working with tutors on problem-solving tasks. In Wood et al. (1976), the tutor's scaffolding functions were: (1) *recruitment*, or arousing the child's interest in the task; (2) *reduction in the degrees of freedom*, or using incremental steps in problem-solving to avoid overwhelming the child; (3) *direction maintenance*, or keeping the child on task; (4) *critical feature marking*, or emphasizing the focus of each step; (5) *frustration control*, or minimizing the child's unease while working on a task; and (6) *modeling*, or demonstrating how to proceed with the problem-solving task (p. 98). Cazden's (1979) study that compared mother-child game activities with young learner-teacher picture-book studies pulled scaffolding research into the classroom where it has remained.

The importance of scaffolding in learning and teaching was later incorporated into various new pedagogical approaches to teaching. *Reciprocal teaching* (Palincsar & Brown, 1984) used teacher-learner collaborative dialogue wherein the teacher modeled text-reading skills (e.g., asking questions, rephrasing) to learners with difficulty understanding texts. As the learner's understanding of texts improved, more and more of the responsibility for working through a text was handed over to him. At approximately the same time, *instructional scaffolding*, also referred to as *instructional dialogue* (Applebee & Langer, 1983; Langer & Applebee, 1986) integrated individual development and the social environment of the whole class, reflecting a move from individual to whole group scaffolding. This approach emphasized what the learner brought to the collaboration, and specific teacher scaffolding techniques were suggested, such as questioning, rephrasing, extending, praising, and correcting. *Guided participation*

(Rogoff, 1990, 1995) also incorporated features of scaffolding as part of its pedagogical approach, notably adding non-verbal interaction (i.e. gaze, hesitation, changes in posture) to the menu of scaffolding functions. Constant adjustments to the pacing and structuring of instruction were also highlighted and managed collaboratively by adult and child.

The importance and suitability of using scaffolding with older learners was first suggested by Tharp and Gallimore (1988) although their own work was with young learners. Their pedagogical approach, *assisted performance*, employed techniques that *assisted* rather than *assessed* learners' development, echoing Barnes' (1976/1992) teacher roles of replying (understanding) rather than assessing (judging). Questioning, modeling, using praise, and providing feedback were among the various ways to assist performance, but perhaps most important was their encouragement of peer assistance, which opened a new area of research on *collective/mutual scaffolding* or scaffolding among peers rather than teacher and learner(s) (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; de Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995; Walqui, 2006; van Lier, 2008). In one such study, Donato (1994) analyzed how three American students of French collectively built scaffolding for themselves, making them "individually novices but collectively experts" (p.46).

In more recent work, a detailed examination of the moment-by-moment unfolding of scaffolding in the classroom has been linked to the contingent nature of teaching (van Lier, 2000; Walqui & van Lier, 2010), emphasizing how the teacher attends to the learner's "emergent understandings and growing autonomy" (van Lier, 2000, p. 62). In its relatively recent incarnation in language teaching and learning, Walqui (2006) and Walqui and van Lier, (2010) defined three levels of scaffolding which occur simultaneously: macro-, meso- and micro-. The sequencing of an entire course

curriculum reflects its *macro*-scaffolding, the thoughtful sequencing of the tasks and activities in the lesson plan for one day of instruction reflects its *meso*-scaffolding, and the moment-by-moment unfolding of collaborative interaction among classroom participants, led by teacher or learner, reflects its *micro*-scaffolding. Currently, with the widespread use of video-recording in classroom discourse research, transcribing instances of micro-scaffolding reveals the moment-by-moment unfolding of this type of interactive talk, an important step in understanding how it works.

Over the last 50 years, the use of scaffolding has been studied in L1 tutoring interactions, L1 K-12 classrooms, and university-level L2 classrooms. The use of scaffolding for whole group work on understanding in the adult L2 classroom has remained largely unexplored. In addition, much like exploratory talk, research has typically shown the end point or goal of using scaffolding is to arrive at the correct answer. In contrast, in this study, the goal of using scaffolding is to work through and/or expand upon learners' understanding of that correct answer; in this way, its use often signals a beginning rather than an end. This current study aims to add to previous research on scaffolding by analyzing and specifying the complex moment-by-moment micro-scaffolding that occurs during whole group interaction that opens a space for and then uses scaffolding to build learner understanding of a correct answer or problematic language issue.

Management of Learner Contributions

Opportunities to work on understanding are created when learners make contributions to the ongoing classroom interaction, and the management of these

contributions has been a topic of study for decades. Prior research has shown how teachers can work on understanding as they manage student responses or questions, most of which has been conducted in the conversation-analytic framework (see Methodology) -- “the most microanalytic approach to discourse analysis” (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 21).

Teacher management of student responses is mostly done in the third turn of the omnipresent Initiation-Response-Evaluation/Feedback (IRE/F) (Mehan, 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) or *triadic* (Lemke, 1990) teacher-student exchange. It is in this third-turn that “students’ answers are evaluated, questions are reformulated, rules are enforced, and errors are corrected” (Lee, 2007, p. 193); in other words, the third turn is a site where learning opportunities are available. In the evaluation/feedback turn (i.e., the E/F of IRE/F), teachers can give positive feedback (Fagan, 2014, Waring, 2008), negative feedback (Fagan 2012, 2015a; Seedhouse, 1997), or withhold or delay feedback (Macbeth, 2004; Waring, 2015). Positive feedback can be a double-edged sword as it may, in certain contexts, limit further participation and learner questions by effectively closing down interaction with an *excellent* or a *very good* (Waring, 2008). In Fagan’s (2014) study of a teacher’s use of positive feedback, he highlighted contingency and decision-making when providing feedback, which was dependent not only upon the type of task the students were engaged in, but whether, in the teacher’s estimation, students were capable of providing self- or peer-correction. Managing the third-turn effectively (i.e., to promote learning) hinges on the teacher’s ability to take advantage of the contingent nature of classroom interaction in ways that “steer the discourse in particular directions, and explore alternative interactional trajectories” (Lee, 2007, p. 202). For example, in Lee’s (2008) study, a teacher’s use of yes/no questions (i.e., question

requiring a yes or no answer) in the third turn helped guide students to an answer based on what had transpired in the previous two turns of the exchange. In these instances, the teacher trusted the students to find their way to reaching an understanding of an incorrect response with her assistance.

Rather than give overt negative feedback, Seedhouse (1997) found that teachers use a variety of mitigation strategies, ranging from giving implicit types of feedback such as recasts, to first accepting an incorrect form before providing a correct form. In a recent conversation-analytic study, Fagan (2015a) found that an experienced teacher first made a comment of personal appreciation or foregrounded the correct part of a student's response before addressing the error, thus highlighting what students were able, rather than unable, to do. Providing negative feedback clearly calls on the teacher to multi-task (e.g., simultaneously consider type of task, students' proficiency level, how to anticipate and set students up to produce a successful response) and use creativity to defuse possible face-threatening moments.

Teachers are also handed opportunities to work on understanding when students ask questions, thus providing them with an indication of what a student is thinking. Studies that focus on how teachers respond to learner questions (Fagan, 2012, 2015b; He, 2004; Markee, 1995) show a marked difference in novices' and experienced teachers' management practices. Fagan (2012) found that a novice teacher dealt with student questions by either glossing over them or by initiating her own long turns-at-talk. In a study of three ESL student-teachers, Markee (1995) found that two of the teachers often responded to learner questions during small group tasks with a counter-question, specifically, a display question (i.e., the teacher knows the answer; the student displays

his/her knowledge). By countering with a display question, the teachers regained control of the interaction, perhaps limiting student agency. In a recent study, in contrast, Fagan (2015b) analyzed the practices of an experienced teacher, finding that in response to a student question, she avoided responding directly, but either had other students respond or, at other times, displayed a “thinking stance” (p. 83), modeling exploration and keeping the interactional space open for contributions.

This brief review of how teachers manage learner contributions points to differences between novice and experienced teacher practices as well as the high degree of multi-tasking such management calls for, presenting challenges for all teachers, but especially, for novices. Importantly, when teachers are tasked with managing learner contributions, opportunities to work on understanding are created. The relatively heterogeneous make-up of an adult ESL class presents the teacher with the added challenge of orchestrating the interaction in ways that benefit all students, regardless of individual proficiency levels. In all ESL courses, the content (English) is the medium (English), i.e., the content is the form, resulting in additional potential miscommunication and/or misunderstanding between teacher and learners. Finally, there appears to be a lack of research which specifically addresses how to bring a problematic language issue before a whole group, and how, specifically, to constitute a “bonded group” (Senior, 1997, p.3), which would work as a collective to build understanding. In this study, I attempt to describe how those gaps may be filled.

Summary of the Literature Review

This review of the literature shows that over the last 50 years, much has been learned about classroom interaction and the pedagogical practices that seem to provide opportunities for student participation and learning. Teachers have various resources for working on understanding in the classroom, such as exploratory talk, scaffolding, and the management of learner contributions. What seems to link these three teacher resources is *contingency*, an important principle of pedagogical interaction (Waring, 2016), which highlights the importance of responsiveness to learners:

... responsiveness lies at the heart of the principle of contingency, and ... becomes manifest in pedagogical encounters as one addresses the simultaneity of the moment, adjusts to the shifting demand of the moment, and preserves the integrity of the moment. (p. 141)

Although exploratory talk and scaffolding can, perhaps at times, be planned into a lesson, they also have an organic quality that requires the teacher to deploy thoughtful responsiveness -- appropriately, just in time, and with just enough guidance (Waring, 2015). In the same way, learner responses and questions may be anticipated by an experienced teacher, but they are largely unpredictable (van Lier, 1994, 1996). Experienced teachers seem more capable of managing such contingency to facilitate the work on understanding. Novice teachers, on the other hand, are likely to feel completely overwhelmed by the “multidimensionality, immediacy, and unpredictability” of classroom interaction (Tsui, 2003, p. 138). It becomes crucial then, as part of our teacher development endeavor, to document how experienced teachers contingently manage

classroom interaction in hopes that such documentation can provide useful models for novice teachers who are struggling to become more adept at working on understanding.

As stated above, much of the research on exploratory talk and scaffolding, has been conducted in K-12 L1 content-based (e.g., science, mathematics, language arts) or university English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classrooms, and often with a focus on talk during small group tasks. As Michaels et al. (2008) note, standards for reasoning and presenting evidence used in the reasoning process vary with teaching context and age of learners. Whole group interaction practices in an adult ESL (non-EAP) classroom present one such new context.

In this project, I aim to show how teachers and learners collaboratively weave together knowledge and reasoning, “pedagogy’s greatest challenge” (Michaels et al., 2008, p. 29). I do so by examining the teacher-learner verbal and nonverbal interaction that builds understanding, and more specifically, by analyzing one experienced teacher’s practices that appear to encourage and steer the group’s reasoning process as it unfolds, and thus, break this process down into *bite-sized, digestible* pieces.

III - METHODOLOGY

I begin this chapter with a description of the research site and participants. I then discuss the data collection and data analyses procedures.

Research Site and Participants

A community English program for adults, part of a larger community language program (CLP), was the site for this study. This program is affiliated with the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and Applied Linguistics (AL) program of the Graduate School of Education of a university in a large urban center on the U.S. East Coast. The ESL classes take place on the university campus, and the program has served the university community and surrounding residential area as well as the larger metropolitan area for over four decades.

The ESL curriculum offers four broad proficiency levels of English study, subdivided into 60-hour courses, plus specialized 30-hour conversation and writing courses, although each semester's offerings are dependent upon enrollment and demand. The course content at all levels is *everyday English* within an integrated skills curriculum. With the exception of the specialized classes, all the courses use a theme-based textbook series and an eclectic pedagogical approach based on principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), a topic of study in the Classroom Practices, Practicum I, and Practicum II courses in this institution's M.A. TESOL/AL program. This approach is both demonstrated and encouraged by Practica instructors.

There is wide diversity in the ESL students' nationalities, language backgrounds, and levels of education. The majority of the students speak Japanese, Korean, and Spanish, although Chinese, Portuguese, French, German, Turkish, and Russian are also represented. Approximately 90% of the students have a high school or university level education, although there is a small population of students who either have no high school diploma, or are visiting scholars at the host university or nearby educational institutions. Seventy-five percent of the students are between the ages of 24-44, and approximately two-thirds are female. As is true of many community language programs, the student body is made up of immigrants, and short-stay visitors (1-3 years) and their spouses/partners, employed and unemployed, skilled and unskilled workers, and those who wish to continue their formal education in the U.S. but need a higher English proficiency level in order to pass community college and university admission requirements. Classes are also relatively heterogeneous regarding students' proficiency levels in English. Although students take an online placement exam with an in-person speaking component, the averaging of individual skill scores inevitably leads to a mix of students' proficiency levels in each of the four skills areas (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing) and grammar.

As part of their course of studies and a requirement of their Practica courses, M.A. TESOL/AL candidates teach ESL in the CLP in order to gain experience putting into practice the ideas and theories they study and discuss in their TESOL/AL coursework. Although the majority of the teachers in the school are student-teachers fulfilling the teaching requirement for their Practica courses, there are also several Teaching Fellows, typically doctoral students, who teach ESL, serve as mentors to novice teachers, and take

on various administrative tasks and responsibilities. In addition, a very few experienced ESL teachers are hired each semester to teach specialty courses, such as intermediate- and advanced-level conversation, intermediate- and advanced-level writing, TOEFL preparation, and currently, Spanish, and Mandarin.

According to the Teachers' Guide (Fall, 2016), the ESL program has several aims, among which are "training" future ESL teachers and "serv[ing] as a linguistic research laboratory for the students and faculty of the TESOL/AL program" (p. 3). Students in ESL classes are made aware of these aims and are asked, but not required, to sign a consent form provided by the program administration that allows for video-recording the classroom proceedings. An additional, specialized consent form is distributed to students if video-recording is to take place over a prolonged period of time of several days or weeks.

The ESL classroom I video-recorded in this study was my own Intermediate Conversation course. It was not my original intention to record myself. Having failed to secure permission to record experienced ESL teachers in a sister institution, I then planned to record an experienced ESL teacher in the CLP; however, due to various delays regarding the recording start date, this teacher was no longer available as a participant. As an experienced teacher, I was often asked how I do what I do in the ESL classroom; having always struggled to respond articulately, I made the decision to video-record my own class. As part of the rationale for this decision, I was hopeful that an analysis of my own teaching would not only be beneficial to me, but also to other language teachers and teacher educators.

This was a 30-hr course with 3-hour classes held once a week, on Saturday afternoons, over the 10-week semester. There was no set curriculum for the conversation courses, and each teacher had the freedom and the responsibility to design his or her own syllabus. Based on my knowledge of the needs of students in this program, I designed the course around particular language functions (e.g., giving, accepting, and rejecting advice, complaining, apologizing, giving excuses, giving accounts, persuading, etc.), giving formal and informal presentations, improving intelligibility, and working on interactive competence (e.g., turn-taking, interrupting, appropriate back-channeling, etc.). The course also focused on specific grammar issues, some of which were pre-selected based on my experience of learners' needs and challenges at their particular proficiency level, and some of which emerged both during and/or after the completion of a task or activity. As there was no textbook for conversation courses, I used my own materials and activities from various sources developed over my years of practice. The syllabus was finalized once the class was formed, and a needs assessment was conducted and analyzed.

As the teacher of this course, I came to the classroom with over 40 years of teaching experience, 4 years of which were spent teaching Advanced Studies (formerly the highest proficiency level) in the CLP, the site of this project. I was also an instructor of both Classroom Practices and the Practica courses in the TESOL/AL M.A. program, and I worked in the CLP as an administrator for 4 years. I believe my experience in these two teaching contexts (i.e., M.A. program, CLP) gave me a discerning eye regarding my ESL students' needs and language development as the course progressed.

Finally, as both teacher and researcher for the project, it was to be expected that I approached this study with some ideas and beliefs about teaching which would inevitably

influence what I considered important in the data. My plan was twofold: (1) to teach the class as I always did, with a focus on what my students needed to learn and practice, and (2) to carry on as if the cameras were not rolling. I was confident that, due to the hundreds of times I had been video-taped, the cameras would disappear into the background, and they would record the ongoing interaction typical of an ESL classroom taught by an experienced teacher.

Data Collection

Data for this project was collected with two cameras to capture a full range of verbal and nonverbal conduct of the participants. One camera was focused on the teacher at the front of the classroom, and the other had a wide-angle lens that captured all the students, who were seated in an open-ended rectangle facing the teacher and the board. These two views were then combined on a single screen, placed one above the other, so they could be seen simultaneously. My main concern was to place the cameras in such a way as to include the teacher and all the students on the two-frame screen so that the interaction among participants could be captured. The video-recording began the third week of the 10-week semester. This allowed time to determine where to position the cameras which were operated by a colleague who remained in the room for all three-hour sessions. Classes were filmed on five consecutive Saturdays for a total of 15 hours. The recordings were uploaded, dated, and stored on the researcher's laptop computer and then downloaded to an external drive kept at the researcher's home.

After securing approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the university that hosts the language program, additional consent was obtained from both

the program administration and the students involved in this study. All teachers are required by the administration to distribute a consent form to students asking for their permission to be video-taped during one class period for teacher development purposes as well as inclusion in the teacher's portfolio assignment for the Practica courses (Community Language Program Guide, 2016). Students could choose to be included in the video for teacher development purposes and for use in the portfolio, for one or the other, or neither of the two. For all classes, if there was a request for additional video-recording for research purposes, the researcher distributed another consent form outlining the purpose of the research and details concerning day(s) and time(s) of recording. In order to stay within CLP guidelines and respect the rights and wishes of my students regarding videotaping of class sessions, the students who did not wish to participate in the video-recording would be seated outside of camera range. All eight students enrolled in the course signed the consent forms, so there was no need for special arrangements. All student-participants were assigned pseudonyms so they would not be identifiable.

Table 1: ESL Learners' Demographic Profiles

Name	Age Band	Country of Origin	L1	Occupation/Field
Ahmet	20-25	Turkey	Turkish	Student
Ana	50-60	Italy	Italian	Business
Clara	20-25	Brazil	Portuguese	Au Pair
Di	30-35	China	Mandarin	Business
Jia	25-30	Korea	Korean	Business
Jun	25-30	China	Mandarin	Business
Masa	30-35	Japan	Japanese	Business
Pia	30-35	Italy	Italian	Visiting Scholar

Data Analysis

The data that consisted of 15 hours of video-recorded classroom interaction were transcribed following a slightly modified version of Jefferson's (2004) conventions to accommodate the timing specifications of nonverbal conduct. Detailed transcriptions included talk as well as notations on gaze, gestures, facial expressions, body position, and movement, which were analyzed using a conversation-analytic (CA) framework. The usefulness of CA, as Hall (2004) explains, is that "[it] makes visible the systematic nature of interaction and the myriad ways in which individual actors make use of its resources" (p. 608). As the current project focused on the contingent nature of working on understanding, this seemed to be the most appropriate framework to use.

As I recorded my own ESL classroom, I was especially concerned about keeping my hunches and intuitions outside of the analysis of the data. By choosing to video-tape myself, I made the assumption that my tacit knowledge of classroom teaching practices and my deep-seated belief in the importance of working on understanding would be revealed in the analysis of the data. Using a conversation-analytic framework helped me maintain the discipline needed. As in its parent discipline, ethnomethodology, in CA the participants' treatment of one another's talk reveals how "aspects of the interaction are made relevant to the participants themselves" (Kahn, 2012, p. 93). The only contextual features that can be included in an analysis are those that the participants themselves are orienting to (Seedhouse, 2004). In other words, CA takes an emic, data-driven, bottom-up approach to the data. It is the participants themselves who make sense of and *do* interaction as the researcher watches over and records them, and as Robinson (2007) assures us, "people are irremediably making sense all the time" (p. 65). In my dual roles

as both researcher and participant, my analysis focused on how my students and I oriented to each other as revealed in the details of the data. With this in mind, taking off the teacher hat and putting on the researcher hat required that I analyze and write about my own verbal and nonverbal behavior in the third person, as “teacher.” Keeping the analysis free of the researcher’s intuitions and opinions concerning the ongoing classroom interaction reflected the basic principles of CA methodology. In this way, the “teacher” stays out of the researcher’s head, and the “researcher” stays out of the teacher’s head.

Questions of validity and reliability in CA rest, first and foremost, on high-quality video-recordings and the production of detailed, highly accurate transcriptions as well as whether the “description of the practices based on the data are convincing to the reader, who has equal access to the data” (Waring, 2016, p. 48). In order to ensure accurate data, the transcription process is highly iterative. There is continuous checking and rechecking of the transcriptions against the recordings in order to add detail, ensure precise timing, and, in whole group camera views, add more verbal and nonverbal reactions by more learners. Reliability will further depend on whether the findings are upheld by other researchers and a wider audience (Peräkylä, 2004). With this in mind, I shared my data and analyses on numerous occasions in two contexts: (1) doctoral seminar sessions where my fellow doctoral students and our advisor share and analyze data, and present preliminary findings, and (2) regularly scheduled data sessions of the Language and Social Interaction Working Group (LANSI), where professional CA scholars and graduate students meet to analyze data shared by its members. In both contexts, video-recordings and their transcriptions are presented to the group, individual members engage

in line-by-line analyses, and corrections, additions, and comments are discussed.

Each particular teacher and her particular students come together with their particular goals within a particular institution to create a unique classroom micro-climate for learning. With this in mind, rather than seek the generalizability of research findings, CA's focus is on possibilities, or "descriptions of what interactants *can* do [italics in original]" rather than what they must or should do (Peräkylä, 2004, p. 96). As Erickson (2012) explains, the findings will reflect "patterns and processes within the case" and will answer to "internal ... rather than external generalization" (p. 687). In other words, general, systematic patterns of interaction may be found within this particular classroom with this teacher and these students, but generalizing to other classrooms or teaching contexts and/or producing a list of best practices for other teaching/learning contexts was not the intent of this study.

In the following chapters, I examine how the teacher and her learners collaboratively work on understanding. In Chapter IV, I examine the "pre-digging" phase wherein the teacher opens a space and prepares learners to do this type of group work. Chapters V and VI examine two complementary types of digging. Chapter V analyzes "zoom in" digging, which focuses on teacher practices that place a particular problematic language item under a magnifying glass and then dissect it. Chapter VI, in contrast, presents "zoom out" digging, which takes one problematic case of a language issue and examines how the teacher works with learners to position it within a larger L1 (learner native language) or L2 (English) pattern. In Chapter VII, I summarize the findings of the study and offer theoretical and pedagogical implications of the study.

IV - PREPARE FOR "DIGGING"

Introduction

This chapter focuses on teacher practices that prepare the ground for focused whole group work on understanding, or what I call "digging." Through an analysis of 12 representative excerpts, I present interlocking and interrelated teacher practices that prepare the learners for this type of classroom work. These practices are implemented through both verbal and non-verbal means, often occurring simultaneously or within seconds of each other. The analyses will reveal the complexity of these teacher practices and how the learners' attention is guided toward a sharp focus on a language issue that has been identified and singled out by either teacher or learner.

All of the interaction described occurs in a whole group setting, group endeavor being a feature of digging. All the language issues that such interaction revolves around emerge organically from the ongoing teacher-learner talk and often appear mid-task; they are not planned but perhaps anticipated by this experienced language teacher. In each excerpt, we watch as the teacher seizes upon or anticipates a learner language problem (e.g., lexical item, grammar point, spelling or pronunciation difficulty) to prepare for digging.

My objective in this chapter is to start at the beginning of the digging process: to break down and pull apart the teacher-learner interaction that creates an opening for this type of classroom work. An analysis of the data reveals that there are three constellations of discursive practices that lay the groundwork for digging: (1) stop the flow and recruit attention toward a language focus; (2) encourage learner (non)contributions; and (3)

gauge learner understanding. These three sets of practices are tightly connected and directly support and reinforce each other. In what follows, I analyze excerpts that highlight the teacher practices in each of the three groups. I conclude with a discussion of the practices and how they work together to form the solid starting point required for teacher and learners to proceed with their collective work on understanding.

Stop and Recruit Attention toward Language Focus

In this section, I examine a first set of teacher practices that lay the groundwork for digging, which involves deliberately recruiting learner attention away from what they are doing in the moment to what the teacher is now directing them to consider, the language focus (i.e., an error, a specific learner question/comment or general confusion, or an issue the teacher alone chooses to problematize). Below, I present analyses of 3 representative excerpts from a collection of 44 cases from the data set.

The following excerpt is from the third class of the semester, and the students are still getting to know each other. They have just engaged in a pair-work speaking task to find out what makes their partner unique and to ask follow-up questions for details. The objective of this task is to practice question formation. Before starting, students are told that they will be asked to share with the group what they learn about their partner. The excerpt begins as the teacher asks Clara to share what her partner, Ana, has told her. The teacher is seated in front of the blackboard, facing the students, and the students are seated around tables that form an open rectangle facing the teacher and the blackboard.

Excerpt 4.1 cook? cooker?

01 T: okay.
 02 (1.0)
 03 ((*gaze at Clara with quick point to Ana*))-tell me

04 about (.) Ana. what ((*index up*))-the one
 05 thing th- one one of the two but one thing that makes
 06 her different and the most interesting response.
 07 Cla: ah, she's a good cooker. °cook? cooker?°
 08 T: → she's a good (.) ((*index up and hold, scans group*))-AH::
 09 → ((*nods*))-that's a strange thing in English.
 10 (0.5)
 11 {(*gets up*))-because how do you say in English}
 12 a person who teaches.

The excerpt begins with the teacher's call for Clara to present what she learned about her partner, Ana. Clara responds, *she's a good cooker*, but immediately expresses uncertainty about the correct noun, °cook? cooker?°. Without pausing, the teacher repeats the beginning of her response, *she's a good*, possibly the start of a recast, but then stops herself (line 08). What follows is the teacher's simultaneous use of both verbal and nonverbal resources to stop the flow of the ongoing interaction and recruit the learners' attention to the language focus.

The teacher's *AH::*, a "response cry" (Goffman, 1978) or involuntary "blurting," is one of a large class of interjections which "make a claim ... on the attention of everyone ... that [the speaker's] inner concerns should be theirs, too" (p. 814). At the same time, the teacher raises her index finger and holds the position. The raised finger, along with the *AH::*, creates a focal point for the learners' attention at the front of the classroom. This *layering* of verbal and nonverbal resources amplifies the effect of one on the other. Simultaneously, adding a third layer, the teacher's gaze sweeps the group (line 08), suggesting that all members of the class are included and their participation is expected. Teacher scanning may reinforce the learners' already heightened level of attention and direct attention away from Clara; *cook? cooker?* is made an object of interest to the whole group, not just to Clara.

The three resources used to recruit attention (i.e., response cry, raised and held index, scanning) are now *bundled* with a fourth, a teacher utterance designed to highlight the newsworthiness of what is to be focused upon, *cook vs. cooker: that's a strange thing in English* (line 09). After all, not everything in English is labeled “strange” by the teacher, so some curious explanation may be forthcoming. The combination of verbal and nonverbal resources stops and recruits attention towards the language focus in seconds. We see a remarkable efficiency and economy in the teacher’s *layering* (simultaneous actions) and *bundling* (joining actions) of these resources.

In the next excerpt, we see variations in the teacher’s use of verbal and nonverbal resources to stop the flow and recruit learner attention to the language focus. In the prior excerpt, the teacher moves immediately from one learner’s expressed confusion to group-directed gaze, gesture, and talk; in the next, the teacher first attends to the individual’s confusion, thus beginning with individual-directed practices before shifting to group-directed practices. In addition, the teacher indicates newsworthiness by announcing the language focus as the upcoming lesson focus. Below, the teacher is recycling the form, meaning, and use of *used to*. Minutes earlier, learners completed a dictation with embedded negative and interrogative forms of *used to*, one student was asked to write her version on the board, and then whole group corrections were made. In an effort to focus on the meaning and use of *used to*, the teacher asks the group if *used to* can be expressed in the present tense and what that would look like. The students do not respond, so the teacher begins to explain.

Excerpt 4.2 used to vs. be used to

- | | | |
|----|------|---|
| 01 | T: | ((<i>looks around group</i>))-no verb exists so we say ‘usually’. |
| 02 | SS: | ((<i>staggered voices, nodding</i>))-[usually. yeah.] |
| 03 | Pia: | [I usually do.] |

04 T: that's how we do it.
 05 (.)
 06 there's no verb. [we don't] like take off the ((writes air-d))-d
 07 Pia: [but]
 08 T: and say, now it's the present. it doesn't [exist.]
 09 Pia: [no I- I-]
 10 I thought 'I'm used to.'
 11 T: → AH:: ((gaze at, point to Pia)) mm but that's dif[ferent.]
 12 Pia: [°okay°.]
 13 T: → it's a different thing. today what we're gonna do is
 14 → we're gonna ((big pull-apart gesture and hold))-separate
 15 → [those] completely. ((quick group scan, holds gesture))
 16 SS: [okay]-((some nodding))
 17 T: mkay?
 18 (0.2)
 19 we- we'll try to.

Initially, the students seem to follow the teacher's explanation that *used to* does not exist in the present. Pia offers an example, but then expresses confusion when she manages to gain the floor during the teacher's explanation-talk. The source of her confusion becomes clear when she states, *I thought 'I'm used to'* (line 10) as the present of *used to*. In line 11, we again see the teacher's *AH::* that stops Pia and perhaps attracts everyone's attention; it is immediately followed by an attention-getting point and sustained gaze at Pia layered with *mm but that's different*, a one-to-one moment with Pia, which also suggests newsworthiness. Continuing to talk to and gaze at Pia, the teacher repeats *different* in *that's a different thing* (line 13), announcing the language focus. Then, the whole group is included in teacher-talk although the teacher's gaze remains on Pia; the subject pronoun *we* is used twice in *today what we're gonna do is we're gonna separate those completely* (lines 13-15). This statement is layered with an attention-getting two-handed gesture that dramatizes pulling apart *used to* and *be used to*. It is a theatrical move that simultaneously attracts attention and announces that this *different thing* is newsworthy enough to be the upcoming language focus. With a quick group scan (line 15), the teacher

checks on the effectiveness of her layered verbal and nonverbal work; the students seem to be with her, with their “okay” and nodding (line 16). In this case, the teacher’s *AH::* recruits all learners’ attention although she gazes at, points to, and addresses Pia; in addition, the exaggerated *pulling-apart* gesture is seen by all but performed while gazing at Pia. The teacher’s gaze is then extended to the group with her quick scan while holding the big gesture (line 15). She thus meets the multiple demands of responding to an individual student while gathering all learners’ attention toward the chosen language focus, contrasting *used to* and *be used to*. The group can now proceed to digging.

The last excerpt in this section presents an interesting case, and far from unique in the data set. Rather than a result of an expressed learner error, inquiry, or confusion, it is an example of a *teacher’s choice* language issue, where the teacher seems to anticipate learner difficulty, and she takes a proactive stance. There is a lexical item of interest to the teacher on the group’s worksheet labeled “Emotion Verbs.” Curiously, it is an adjective, not an “emotion verb,” that is plucked from one of the sentences. After a lengthy pre-activity phase focusing on pronunciation and meaning of the emotion verbs, learners work in pairs to complete the worksheet (insert the words in sentences). This spate of talk occurs at the beginning of the whole group answer-check.

Excerpt 4.3 there's a word there that I like

- | | | |
|----|----|---|
| 01 | T: | ((holds up worksheet, looks around group))-did you have |
| 02 | | any difficulty: (.) putting the right things here? |
| 03 | | (3.0) |
| 04 | | ((point to/touch upheld worksheet))-putting the right verbs here? |
| 05 | | (.) |
| 06 | | I’m sure you have it right. |
| 07 | | (0.4)-((looking down at page)) |
| 08 | → | ((looking down))-I want you to look at number |
| 09 | → | ((looks up at group))-six. because there’s a word |
| 10 | → | there (.) ((to group, leans forward))-that I <u>like</u> . |

11 → ((*looks around group*))-that i- it's it may be new for you.
 12 → ((*looks down at paper*))-do you see the word?
 13 Cla: upset?

As the interaction begins, the teacher is about to start the whole group answer-check following pair-work. Instead of the orderly work of starting with the first sentence, the teacher directs learners to jump halfway down the worksheet, *I want you to look at number six* (lines 08-09); stopping the flow and recruiting learner attention is accomplished by jumping down the worksheet, holding the worksheet up to the group, and pointing to number six. The teacher then continues, *because there's a word there (.)* *that I like* (lines 09-10). Learner attention on the anticipated language focus, something in number six, is maintained as the teacher expresses *liking* a particular word; this is layered with gaze and gesture (line 10) and designed to boost newsworthiness in a new way -- does the teacher have words she *likes*? When the teacher's personal opinion (verbal) is combined with leaning forward and continuing to gaze at students (nonverbal), it closes the distance between teacher and students, literally and figuratively. She then reinforces newsworthiness by revealing an additional reason for choosing the word, *it may be new for you* (line 11), as she gazes at the group, signaling their expected participation. This is followed by the teacher's challenge to students to find the word she has in mind as she returns her gaze to the worksheet (line 12), modeling where students should place their gaze. It is left to the learners to discover the focus word, *do you see the word?* (line 12), thus changing the participation framework; Clara identifies the word (line 13), and *upset* is tagged for digging.

The three excerpts above reveal the remarkable efficiency of the verbal and nonverbal *stop and recruit attention* practices, which are layered (i.e., performed

simultaneously) or bundled (i.e., tightly sequenced) for heightened effect and weight. The use of response cries, pointing, large gestures, gaze, and comments that suggest newsworthiness work together to recruit learner attention and to set aside the space and time needed for digging into a language issue.

Encourage Learner (Non)contributions

In this section, I present two groups of practices that further prepare, perhaps soften, the ground for digging by encouraging learners' (non)contributions: (1) appreciate risk-taking, and (2) legitimize language difficulty. Below, I analyze 4 excerpts from a collection of 38 cases in the data set.

Appreciate Risk-taking

The practices described below show how the teacher demonstrates her appreciation and support of the learners' risk-taking. This is especially important for digging as it maintains a welcoming classroom environment even when learners respond incorrectly or inappropriately, express confusion, or are silent, all common occurrences in second language classrooms.

In the first excerpt, I examine an exchange that occurred during the whole group answer-check of a preposition worksheet. No one has volunteered to give his or her answer for one of the sentences, *What did you dream ____ last night,?* so the teacher asks students to vote for one of two choices, "dream *of*" or "dream *about*."

Excerpt 4.4 What did you dream ____ last night?

09	T:	so ((<i>raises hand, holds</i>))-how many people put 'about'.
10		(0.4)-((<i>some SS raise hands</i>))
11		how many put 'of'.
12		(0.6)-((<i>other SS raise hands</i>))

13 → ((*turns to Masa, hand down*))-ooo: you were very creative,
 14 → you put another one.
 15 Masa: ((*reading*)) I put 'at'.
 16 T: → ((*to Masa*))-that's very creative.
 17 SS: (0.4)-((*smiling, light laughter*))
 18 T: I- I- no that's fine.

All but one of the students have voted for either *about* or *of*. The teacher turns to Masa, seated to her immediate left, who has not voted, thus singling him out (line 13). A possible face-threatening moment for this student (Brown & Levinson, 1987) is defused by the teacher when she praises him for his creativity, *you were very creative* (line 13), a personal appreciation comment (Fagan, 2015a). Masa's incorrect choice of *at* (line 15) is spotlighted twice as being *creative* (lines 13, 16); his peers are alert to this short exchange, evidenced by their smiling and light laughter (line 17). Throughout the data set, the teacher uses “creative,” “original,” and “brave” to describe learners and their incorrect or inappropriate responses, and the students seem to be aware that these words are code for *your answer is not correct, I appreciate the risk you have taken, and thank you for trying*; this explains the smiling and appreciative laughter (line 17). Rather than give an explicit *no* to Masa's incorrect preposition, the teacher provides assessments on two levels. First, the learner is labeled a *creative* person (line 13), which allays any potential discouragement or embarrassment, and second, the incorrect choice of *at* is called *creative* (line 16), which mitigates the implicit negative assessment.

Bestowing praise on students does not end the story, however, and errors still need to be addressed. In the following excerpt, the teacher appreciates Jun's risk-taking by first, delivering a personal appreciation comment for the correct parts of a multi-part response, and second, making clear the need for further work, digging. In this spate of talk, the group is working through another preposition worksheet, a daily task. Following

the normal routine for preposition worksheets, students complete the worksheet individually, then compare their answers in pairs, and finally, engage in a whole group answer-check. This excerpt begins midway through the answer-check, just after Jun self-selects to offer his preposition choices for one of the sentences.

Excerpt 4.5 I loved three of them

8. He arrived ___ Rome ___ 10 a.m. and ___ the Conference Center ___ 11 a.m.
 04 Ju: ((reading))-ah he ah he arrived at Rome at 10 a.m. and
 05 at ah the conference center at 11 a.m.
 06 T: ((to group))-how many are there?
 07 (0.8)-((looks at paper, raises hand, palm out))
 08 ((counting))-one, two, three, there's four.
 09 → ((looks up at Jun, holds up 3 fingers))
 10 → I liked three of them. I lo:ved three of them.
 11 say it again.
 12 (0.2)
 13 ((gaze at group, index sweeps group and holds))-and see if you
 14 ((index up))-can find the one: ((hand over hand gesture))-that
 15 we need to change, ((gaze at Jun))-okay?

As the exchange begins, Jun has volunteered to give his answer, and he reads the sentence with his four preposition choices; three of the four are correct. First, the teacher slows the pace by asking the group how many blanks there are. She gives students time to check by holding her hand up, which physically holds the moment, so everyone can count. After she herself counts the number of blanks out loud, she looks at Jun, holds up three fingers representing the three correct prepositions, and gives an appreciative assessment, *I liked three of them. I lo:ved three of them* (line 10). The upgrade from *liked* to *lo:ved* and the elongated vowel perhaps emphasize her appreciation. The teacher layers verbal and nonverbal resources (i.e., *I lo:ved three of them*, raised fingers) to highlight the three correct answers. As she then moves on, Jun is left with praise for taking the risk of offering answers, and the whole group can proceed with digging, the identification and correction of the remaining preposition in the sentence. By responding directly to Jun,

both verbally and via gaze, and emphasizing the positive (i.e., the correct parts), the teacher sends a message to the group that risk-taking is appreciated. If students are made to feel heard and their contributions valued, they may continue to participate and digging can be the group endeavor it is meant to be.

In order to soften the ground for digging, it is essential to maintain a high level of participation, and this can be encouraged by letting learners know their risk-taking is appreciated. Key to appreciating risk-taking is devoting time to it and focusing on the individual learner. The class pace is deliberately slowed by allowing pauses and gaps, and the teacher directs her attention, gaze, and talk to one learner; it is personal and the interaction is one-to-one. This teacher often uses positive *code words* (e.g., “original,” “creative,” “brave”) that praise the individual student and the contribution, easily identified and overheard by the group as appreciative. She also may salvage and praise the correct part(s) of a response while addressing the problematic part(s) later. The emphasis is on the positive and the personal, attending to the individual via layered gaze and talk.

Legitimize Language Difficulty

In this section, we observe how the teacher attempts to reassure learners that they experience difficulty for good reason: because language learning is difficult, and English is “weird” (McWhorter, 2015). This may seem obvious to all, but perhaps students are comforted by the teacher’s explicit acknowledgement of this fact. If learners are given evidence that the teacher understands their difficulties, perhaps the ground can be further readied for collective work on understanding, and group participation will be more

forthcoming. This is yet another example of a teacher's responsibility to care for the well-being of learners (Wright, 2005).

The following spate of teacher talk occurs as students engage in whole group answer-check of a preposition worksheet. There is a call for volunteers to complete the sentence, *What did you dream _____ last night?* The teacher scans the group, but no one self-selects in response to the teacher's nonverbal elicitation.

Excerpt 4.6 a very confusing thing

02		(1.0)-((T scans group))
03	T:	((continues scanning))- <u>oh</u> -oh. ((puts up 2 fingers, holds))
04		(0.8)
05		<u>technically</u> -((thumb-index together))
06	→	there are ((hand down)) (.) two possibilities.
07	→	(0.4)-((eyes up, then to group))
08	→	((hand up, palm out))-this is a very confusing thing.
09		so ((raises hand, holds))-how many people put 'about'.
10		(0.4)-((some SS raise hands))
11		how many put 'of'.

When the teacher receives no response to her gaze-prompt for a volunteer to give an answer, she provides further encouragement to students to contribute. Her encouragement, however, may also support the reasonableness of their reluctance as there are two possibilities, a potential minefield for learners, thus implicitly legitimizing difficulty. When this *help* is followed by a (0.4) second silence, the teacher moves to explicitly legitimize language difficulty. She holds up her hand, much like a stop sign that signals *let's stop here*, as she states to the group that the preposition choice is *very confusing* (line 08). Labeling the preposition choice *confusing* may comfort students who are unable or unwilling to answer; in other words, they may feel justified in not responding *because there are two possibilities* (line 06), and *this is a very confusing thing* (line 08). The teacher's implicit and explicit acknowledgement of this difficulty signals to learners that

she understands their reluctance and it is reasonable, which paves the way for an upcoming digging episode that focuses on the difference between *dream of* and *dream about*.

Prepositions are again the language focus in the next excerpt; however, the focus is on the bigger picture, prepositions in general and not just the specific preposition for this specific sentence. Just prior to this spate of talk, the students focused on *made of* + *material*, and they are about to move on when Ana asks about the use of *made+by*. This leads to another learner question about the use of *made+in*; the following excerpt begins as the teacher gives examples of what usually follows *made+in*.

Excerpt 4.7 prepositions are difficult

08 T: ((to all, sing-song voice))-made in (.) Ma↑laysia. made in
 09 ((quick point to Pia))-↑Italy. made in ↑Spain.
 10 (0.4)
 11 usually that's gonna be (.) the country. ((points way up))
 12 ((pulls finger down, to group))->so have you got all those?<
 13 → so ma:de is tricky. ((soft clap))-it depends. it's so funny
 14 → because prepositions are (0.2) ((turns and walks to BB))-
 15 difficult.
 16 ((faces BB))-because sometimes
 17 ((writes 'I'm responsible ___'))-°lemme see°
 18 (1.0)-((writes 'the mess'))
 19 (0.6)-((looks at BB))
 20 let's take one of these examples. ((writes 'it's'))

The teacher begins by responding to the learner's *made+in* inquiry by addressing the whole group, using a sing-song voice, perhaps to highlight the pattern. First, she provides examples of what follows *made in*, and points to Pia as she offers *Italy* as an example. Then, the teacher makes several references to the complexity of *made + preposition* combinations: *ma:de is tricky* and *it depends* (line 13), quite unhelpful comments unless they are addressed later; and finally, *prepositions are difficult* (lines 13-15), the focus of

the digging episode which follows. All of the comments, which slow the pace by staying on the difficulty issue, are addressed to the group rather than to Ana, who raised the issue. The teacher's soft clap that accompanies *it depends* (line 13), may have further commanded learner attention on her. As the teacher walks to the blackboard, the pace slows slightly, allowing learners a moment to prepare for the upcoming digging episode.

The teacher is not telling students anything they do not already know (i.e., prepositions are challenging), but she takes time to explicitly acknowledge the difficulty of pairing *made* with an appropriate preposition, and the preposition choices that *depend*, thus helping to lay the groundwork for further work on why, in part, prepositions cause learners so much misery.

In sum, the teacher explicitly appreciates risk-taking and legitimizes language difficulty via talk and gestures. Throughout the data set, for example, incorrect answers are *creative*, learners are *brave*, and difficult language issues are *tricky*, *confusing*, or *difficult*. We also observe a number of short pauses, gaps, and gestures (e.g., upheld hand) that help slow the pace slightly, providing space for doing such appreciating and legitimizing. Notably, *individually-directed* gaze and personalized teacher comments are used to appreciate risk-taking, and *group-directed* gaze and comments legitimize language difficulty. Both can help students feel encouraged, perhaps understood, in preparation for digging.

Gauge Learner Understanding

I now turn to the final set of practices which involve another important aspect of laying the groundwork for digging -- gauging how much the learners already seem to

understand, thus determining an appropriate starting point for digging. The 5 representative excerpts below are from a collection of 22 cases in the data set. In order to engage in digging, the teacher needs to meet the learners where they actually *are* in their understanding, not necessarily where she (or the textbook or the curriculum) may *want* them to be. I now examine three practices that help the teacher gauge the learners' understanding.

Survey Understanding

An efficient way to gauge learners' understanding is to simply ask them, and this can be done in various ways. The first excerpt takes us back to *dream about vs. dream of*. Just before this strip of talk, the students were reluctant to complete the sentence; no one offered a preposition for the sentence "What did you dream ___ last night?" The teacher first tries to *help* learners (see Excerpt 4.6, legitimize language issue) and then tries a different approach.

Excerpt 4.8 Group survey

What did you dream ___ last night? *about* or *of*?

05 T: technically-((thumb-index together))
 06 there are ((hand down)) (.) two possibilities.
 07 (0.4)-((eyes up, then to group))
 08 ((hand up, palm out))-this is a very confusing thing.
 09 → so ((raises hand, holds))-how many people put 'about'.
 10 (0.4)-((some SS raise hands))
 11 → how many put 'of'.
 12 (0.6)-((other SS raise hands))
 13 ((turns to Masa, T puts hand down)-ooo: you were very creative
 14 you put another one.
 15 Masa: ((reading)) I put 'at'.

After legitimizing the difficulty of the language issue in line 08, and without waiting for students to contribute, the teacher moves on. First, she raises her hand to indicate that a silent hand vote is sufficient; then she asks students to vote for their choice -- *how many*

people put 'about' (line 09), followed by *how many put 'of'* (line 11). In other words, she suggests two possible answers for the blank by embedding them in questions, thus taking the mystery out of which prepositions are the *two possibilities*. The teacher forces the issue by asking students to commit to a choice, but she asks the students to respond only non-verbally, which is perhaps less face-threatening than voicing their choice. The students vote (lines 10, 12). This group survey *does* two things: it (1) spurs participation and (2) makes learners' understanding (or at least their claimed understanding) visible to the teacher. It is important to note that the teacher has not simply provided the correct answer and moved on; refraining from *doing the work* herself and shifting this responsibility to the learners is another trademark move of this teacher and of the digging process, in both the pre- and during-phases.

In the next example, the teacher surveys understanding in a different way -- by checking in with each individual learner. The learners' task is to find out what makes their speaking partner unique and explain it to the whole group. In the course of giving her answer about Pia, Jia needs help with the word, "scholarship." The teacher seizes upon Jia's difficulty as a lexical item of potential interest to the group and proceeds to take an individual survey of learners' understanding of the word.

Excerpt 4.9 Individual survey

04	Jia:	Pia? she lived in N Y C for ((4 fingers up))-4 months
05		(0.2) because of a:: schola?
06	T:	a scholarship (.)
07	Jia:	yeah [scholar]ship.
08	T:	[isn't it.]
09	T:	a scholarship.
10	Jia:	yeah.
11	T:	((looks around at group))-do you know how to spell that?
12	→	you know what that is? ((gets up))
13	Cla:	yes.
14	T: →	((looks around)) do you know what a schola-

- 15 yes?-((*points to Clara*))
 16 Cla: ((*nods*))
 17 T: → ((*to Jia*))-you know what a scholarship is?
 18 Jia: uh yeah
 19 T: → ((*Ana nods, T looks at Ana*)) yeah, ↓Ana you know
 20 ((*hand indicates Clara and Pia*))
 21 → ((*scans group, hand slow sweep around group*))- [scholarship?]
 22 Mas: [((*nodding*))]
 23 T: → do you know [what that] is?
 24 Mas: [I know]
 25 T: → ((*gaze at Di*)) Di, do you know what that is?
 26 do you know what a scholarship is?
 27 Di: ((*shakes head*))-I don't know.

After deciding to address *scholarship* as a new vocabulary item, the teacher moves from a sitting to a standing position (line 12). She then starts on her right-hand side of the semicircle of students to check for understanding, using both verbal and nonverbal cues. She repeats the question directly to Clara, adding *yes?* coupled with an index finger point (lines 14-15), which is designed for a positive response; Clara nods (line 16). The teacher shifts her gaze to Jia and repeats the question (line 17); Jia responds *yeah*. At this point, Ana, who is seated on the teacher's far right, nods, and the teacher gazes at her and acknowledges her nonverbal response to the question, *yeah, Ana you know* (line 19). Then, the teacher extends her hand to both Pia and Clara; just after this, she utters, *scholarship?* as she scans the group. As she scans, the teacher's hand makes a slow sweep around the group to include students on her left-hand side (line 21), starting with Masa. The teacher then settles both hand and gaze on Di and asks her directly, *Di, do you know what this is? do you know what a scholarship is?* (lines 25, 26); Di answers that she does not (line 27), and that is sufficient for the teacher to proceed to digging into the meaning of *scholarship*. Engaging in this individualized, one-by-one survey, allows the teacher to verify that at least one student does not know the word, and she may suspect

there are others. As a final note, there is layering of gaze, gesture (i.e., slow arm sweep), and talk (i.e. repetition of *scholarship* and *do you know*), and the teacher's attention is focused squarely on each individual student during the *group sweep*, commanding heightened engagement.

Elicit Learner Examples and Explanations

In addition to surveying learners' *claims* of understanding, the teacher also gauges learner understanding by asking for learner examples and explanations that *display* their understanding. In the following excerpt, the group is exploring the meaning and use of the word, "upset." This strip of talk begins just after the teacher asks learners if anyone uses the word in their everyday conversation, and Pia says she does.

Excerpt 4.10 tell us a story

01 Pia: I use [the word.]
 02 SS: [()] -((nodding))
 03 T: ((to Pia, surprised look))-oh you u:se this. oh good.
 05 [then you can tell us about it.]
 06 Pia: [hhh. ((breathy laughs))]
 07 T: → give us ah: give us maybe a ((hand gestures))-tell us a little
 08 → story or a- paint us a picture. when you (0.4) when you (.)
 09 → give us an example of a time ((checks paper)) you feel upset.
 10 (0.4)-((Pia tosses head))
 11 Pia: °oh°
 12 T: → ((to Pia)) can you think of one?
 13 (0.2)
 14 → can [you think of one?]
 15 Pia: [I don't know because] I use really often because it's
 16 a word that I learned and very soon mm it fixed my mind=
 17 T: =AH. ((touches forehead))-it fixed in your [mind.]
 18 Pia: [yah]=
 19 T: =it got fixed in your [mind.]
 20 Pia: [in this] moment it's difficult
 21 ((laughing))-[to think.]
 22 T: ((to group))-[I like] this I like this word.

Once Pia informs the group that *upset* is in her active vocabulary, the teacher asks her to start putting together an understanding of how this word is both defined and used. Rather than ask Pia for a definition, often a difficult challenge for learners and not helpful without context, the teacher asks Pia to *give us maybe a tell us a little story or a- paint us a picture* (lines 07-08); the *maybe* perhaps mitigates some of the abruptness of the request and slightly softens the tone. The teacher then adds, *give us an example of a time you feel upset*. (line 09). Perhaps Pia will find it easier to give an example of when she feels upset instead of telling a story or painting a picture. In lines 10-19, we see that Pia is experiencing difficulty coming up with an example despite the teacher's prompting, and the teacher proceeds to a whole group digging episode that focuses on the meaning and use of *upset* (not shown).

In the next example, we observe the interaction that occurs as the teacher ends a survey of learners' claims of understanding of “scholarship” (see Excerpt 4.9, individual survey). We see that a learner’s previous *claim* of knowing what the word means is followed by the teacher’s call for her to explain it to a colleague, a *display* of her understanding. The exchange begins as one student, Di, states that she does not know what a “scholarship” is.

Excerpt 4.11 explain that to Di

26		((<i>gaze at Di</i>)) Di, do you know what that is?
27	T:	do you know what a scholarship is?
28	Di:	((<i>shakes head</i>))-I don't know.
29	T:	→ ((<i>points at Di, gaze at Jia</i>))-explain that to to Di, what that is.
30	Jia:	ah:: [scholarsh]
31	T:	→ [if you can]
32	Jia:	ah (0.4) °it's like a° (0.4) when we:
33		(0.8)-((<i>T crosses arms, one hand to chin</i>))

When Di admits that she does not know the word *scholarship*, the teacher returns to the student who first brought the word into the group discussion, Jia. With a quick point to Di, the teacher gazes at Jia and asks if she will explain what a *scholarship* is to her classmate. Jia's first reaction, *ah*:: (line 30), is followed by the teacher's hastily added, *if you can* (line 31), in overlap with Jia's *scholarsh* (line 30). As in the previous excerpt, the teacher seems alert to learners' difficulty responding to an abrupt, presumably unexpected, call for a display of understanding; *if you can* (line 31) works to mitigate this potentially face-threatening moment. Jia does falter in her explanation at this point, and the whole group then proceeds to a digging episode focusing on the meaning of *scholarship*.

Animate Learner Thinking

The final practice of gauging understanding is quite different from the previous two and calls for teacher understanding of where learner mistakes may originate. By animating learner thinking, the teacher voices her own understanding of what that learner is thinking. Cazden (2001) calls this trip into the learner's head, "understanding student understanding" (p. 51). As a fluent speaker of Spanish, this teacher has insight into errors made by speakers of Spanish and other Romance languages like French, Italian, and Portuguese. In the following excerpt, the class is once again engaged in whole group answer-check of their daily preposition worksheet. Pia, an Italian speaker, self-selects and comments on a sentence that has just been successfully completed with the preposition *about*. Pia does not question the preposition, but instead, raises another language issue she finds in the sentence. The excerpt begins with Pia's comment

Excerpt 4.12 I'm thinking about looking/to look

01 Pia: ((to T)) I used to say ((big arm gestures))-I th-
02 I think about uh: something?=
03

03 T: =((to Pia))-mm-hmm?=
 04 Pia: =but I didn't like 'I'm thinking about
 05 ((hand emphasis))-looking.' the i-n-g \$is horrible.\$
 06 T: → ((raised index finger, to Pia))-ah: [and you know what?]
 07 Pia: [.. don't sound]
 08 Jun: [AH::]
 09 SS: [((overlapping talk))]
 10 T: → ((to Pia, pointing, T-voice emerges)) it doesn't sound right.
 11 → I'm thinking about to look.
 12 Pia: =ye(h)[s]] ((laughing))
 13 T: → [is] that what ((points to ear))-sounds good to you?
 14 → ((looks around group))-this is another problem.
 15 Jun: yes.-((nodding))

After the group has correctly completed the sentence on the worksheet but before they move on, Pia self-selects and expresses a personal opinion about how *horrible* the correct sentence sounds to her. She begins by stating what she is *used to* saying. She says that, for her, *think about* is followed by *something* (line 02), a common or proper noun rather than the gerund (i.e., the noun form of the verb). The teacher acknowledges the comment, and Pia adds that she does not *like* the sound of *I'm thinking about looking*, specifically, that *the i-n-g \$is horrible\$* (lines 04, 05). The use of two “ing” forms, *I'm thinking* (present participle *ing*) and *about looking* (gerund *ing*), are perhaps jarring for this Italian speaker, borne out later in the teacher's response. After Pia's good-humored laughter and comment, the teacher stops the flow and recruits learner attention with a familiar raised index finger and an *ah:*. She continues with *and you know what?* in overlap with Pia's continued explanation, and the other students' overlapping talk (lines 06-09). In addition, the teacher's *you know what?* secures an additional teacher turn-at-talk for an explanation of the *what* (Sacks, 1992).

The teacher is aware that Spanish and Italian share many grammatical features, and her understanding of Pia's understanding uncovers the reason behind the comment

that “\$the i-n-g is horrible.\$” – an infinitive always follows a conjugated verb in Romance languages. The teacher *animates*, or voices, Pia’s presumed understanding and suggests what probably *sounds good* to her as a native speaker of Italian, a preposition followed by an infinitive, *thinking about to look* (line 11). Pia agrees that *I’m thinking to look* is better for her (line 12). The teacher checks, *is that what sounds good to you?* (line 13), then shifts her gaze from Pia to the whole group and points out that Pia has uncovered *another problem* (line 14). This new “problem” will be the focus of a subsequent digging episode, prepositions followed by gerunds.

The data reveal that there are several ways to gauge learner understanding: (1) conduct surveys of learner claims of understanding; (2) elicit examples and explanations of learner displays of understanding; and (3) animate learner thinking to pinpoint sources of learner understanding. Claims of understanding can be less face-threatening (e.g., voting in a group survey), or more face-threatening (e.g., individual survey). A group survey gives learners an opportunity to vote by hand-raising for one option or another (e.g., how many put X? how many put Y?). In an individual survey, however, the teacher layers direct gaze, gesture (e.g., pointing, hand sweep), and talk (e.g., repeated focus word and/or prompt) to check in with each individual, creating one-to-one moments for teacher and individual learner. Requesting a display of learner understanding (e.g., eliciting an example or explanation) is clearly more face-threatening and may be unsuccessful. Like the more face-threatening individual survey, one-to-one teacher-learner interaction is sustained throughout the elicitation process via individual-directed gaze and talk (e.g., prompts, repetitions, and recasts). The intensity of the interaction can be mitigated, especially if the learner has difficulty responding, by

adjusting the difficulty of the request (e.g., *tell us a story about when you were upset* → *a time when you felt upset*). Animating learner understanding comes with the risk of an incorrect interpretation; the teacher's expressed understanding of what the learner is thinking is therefore followed by a confirmation request (e.g., *is this what sounds good to you?*), and the learner can accept or reject the teacher's thinking. This set of practices help guide the teacher to the appropriate place to start a digging episode, where the students actually *are* in their understanding.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, I described three sets of teacher practices that lay the groundwork for digging into a language issue. Each addresses equally important areas of teacher-learner preparation during the “pre-digging” phase.

The first set, *stop and recruit attention towards a language focus*, stops the forward progression of the lesson in order to target one language issue and set it apart for focused study by the whole group. An important goal of these practices is gathering learners into a unit, so that what starts as an individual student's inquiry, error, or area of confusion becomes a group problem or issue, necessitating a shift from individual to group involvement. The second set of practices, *encourage learner (non)contributions*, involves reassuring the learners that their risk-taking is valued, and that the language difficulty they are experiencing is a worthy object of study due to its importance or complexity. When the learners' issues are explicitly valued by the teacher, perhaps they are more willing to participate in “digging.” The last set of practices, *gauge learner*

understanding, helps the teacher build on what the learners already know, or claim to know, during a digging episode.

An analysis of the data suggest that the preparations for concerted group work on understanding are invariably teacher-orchestrated. In order to prepare the ground for digging, there are a series of shifts that are set in motion by the teacher once a problematic language issue has surfaced or is anticipated by the teacher, and the cooperation of the students is essential. There are shifts (1) from the ongoing lesson to one specific focus, (2) from the individual to the group, and (3) from the lesson plan to a teachable moment.

What becomes clear is the complexity of the teacher's work. The efficiency and compact nature of *layering* and *bundling* verbal and nonverbal resources, noted in the analyses, is also reflected in the direct and unadorned style of much of the teacher's talk. Aside from the expected disfluencies of spontaneous talk, there is little extraneous teacher talk. In addition to the direct style of teacher talk, gaze and gesture are revealed to be powerful resources; they manage much of the work of laying the groundwork for digging as they can gather learners into a group or isolate individuals for one-to-one moments.

With such pre-digging, the learners are primed and ready for the digging to begin: the ongoing task has been stopped, the learners' attention is recruited towards a particular language focus, their (non)contributions encouraged, and their understanding gauged. It is time to proceed to digging.

V - ZOOM IN

Introduction

In this chapter, we move beyond the pre-digging phase by looking at the teacher practices that generate, engineer, and guide whole group digging now that an opening for this type of collaborative work has been co-created. An analysis of the data reveals that there are two types of digging; this chapter focuses on the type that “zooms in” on one particular language issue and addresses it as an isolated problematic case. The second type of digging, “zoom out,” is presented in Chapter VI.

As described in the previous chapter, pre-digging is most often born of an individual learner’s error, question, or confusion, although it may also be a teacher’s choice item. Below we see how the teacher then converts one learner’s difficulty or an anticipated problem into a challenge for the whole group to tackle collectively; simply put, the process of digging is the work of co-building understanding as a particular language challenge is considered and resolved.

In each digging episode, an interactive dynamic is co-built by teacher and learners, which creates an environment that encourages, supports, and transforms members of the group into a *community of diggers*. The active involvement of learners in this type of classroom work is essential to its success, and the teacher shoulders the responsibility for managing the classroom interaction as the digging process moves forward.

My objective in this chapter is to break down “zoom in” digging, one type of digging that follows the initial “pre-digging” phase. An analysis of the data reveals that

there are three groups of discursive practices that are integral to digging: (1) pose a language challenge, (2) mount multiple attacks on a single language issue; and (3) engage learner perspective. In what follows, I analyze 9 excerpts from a larger collection of 43 cases that focus on teacher practices in each of the three groups. I conclude with a discussion of how these practices mutually support each other as the teacher and learners work through a problematic, confusing, or intriguing language issue.

Pose a Language Challenge

In this section, I use 3 representative excerpts from a larger collection of 43 cases from the data set to analyze how a language challenge is posed through moment-by-moment teacher-learner interaction. The analysis reveals that the teacher uses two broad approaches to posing the language challenge: (1) direct and (2) indirect. The much more frequent direct approach accounts for 39 cases, while the indirect approach is used in only 4 cases. Below I examine the verbal and nonverbal teacher practices that are deployed in each approach.

Direct Approach

In a direct approach, the teacher poses the language challenge by asking learners a clear, direct question after which the collaborative work begins. The first excerpt comes from interaction that occurred during group answer-check of the daily preposition worksheet. As described previously (see chapter IV), ten random sentences are completed with appropriate prepositions chosen from a word box. The worksheet is first completed individually, then partners compare preposition choices, and finally, the whole group

engages in a teacher-led answer-check. This spate of talk begins as students are considering the item: *We've been in NYC for over a month. Let's go _____ this weekend.*

We begin as the teacher gives feedback on Jun's contribution, *let's go for this weekend.*

Excerpt 5.1 go away vs. go out

We've been in NYC for over a month. Let's go _____ this weekend.

02 T: ((*index finger to mouth, gaze at paper, glance to SS, Jun*))-I ↑think
 03 I see what you're saying. let's go (.) but we still need
 04 another preposition there and then 'for the weekend'
 05 is good. ((*point to Jun, then hand up-placeholder gesture*))
 06 ((*to group*))-but we do need another preposition. let's go::
 07 Ana: away or out? ((*T point to, gaze at Ana*))
 08 Cla: away or out.
 09 T: → ((*gaze at Clara*))-but are they the same?
 10 Cla: both work?
 11 SS: ((*staggered voices*)) no
 12 (0.4)-((*T group gaze, then turns, starts walking to B*))
 13 Cla: °but I think () for?°
 14 T: → ((*final steps to B, facing B*))-let's see if they both work.
 15 (1.0)- ((*grabs chalk, writes "go away," then "go out" underneath*))
 16 ((*turns to SS, points to phrases on B*))-ok they're both good
 17 Ana: both?
 18 T: → they're both really good combinations but (.) let's
 19 look at the meaning here. what's the first sentence.
 20 Ana: yeah, because they they talk about New York Ci:ty.
 21 T: they're talking about New York City.

The teacher first clarifies that Jun's preposition choice, *for*, is incorrect. (lines 02-05).

Both Ana and Clara then offer correct preposition choices, *away or out?* (lines 07-08), but the teacher withholds confirmation, praise, or any other type of assessment. She responds, instead, by gazing at Clara as she asks a probing/thinking question with an emphasized contrastive *but*, *but are they the same?* (line 10). Clara responds, *both work?* (line 10) with rising intonation, which could prompt the teacher's simple *yes* or *no* but does not. Instead of accepting or rejecting Clara's suggestion that *both work*, ending the suspense, the teacher again withholds assessment, leaving the challenge in place. The teacher's silence allows an exploratory space to open and permits others in the group to

weigh in (Boblett, 2018); some students do so with *no*, and Clara seems to question or perhaps offer support for Jun's *for* (line 13). The teacher once again withholds acceptance or rejection of these various learner contributions as she gazes at the group; she then responds nonverbally by walking to the blackboard. The teacher has had several opportunities to simply satisfy the students' doubts but does not do so, thus keeping the *go away vs. go out* problem in the air, alive and unresolved. As she steps to the board, she announces that the group will problem-solve together, *let's see if they both work* (line 14); by using *let's*, she frames her initial question to Clara, *are they the same*, as a problem to be solved collectively. In addition, the teacher uses Clara's words, *both work* (line 10), in her call to group action, *let's see if they both work*, a direct nod to Clara's contribution (Goodwin, 2013). The challenge is then staged officially by writing *go away* and *go out* on the blackboard (line 15), which I call "anchoring." In a final nonverbal move, the teacher points to the visual support on the board, the anchoring, (line 16), which reinforces the verbal challenge and creates a focal point at the front of the room. Although the teacher appears to answer the challenge with *they're both good* (line 16), *they're both really good combinations* (line 18), the initial challenge remains, *are they the same* (line 09). In this case, the two preposition combinations are possible, *go away/go out*, but that is not the challenge that has been posed.

Several verbal and nonverbal teacher practices are deployed as the challenge is posed: (1) withhold assessment, (2) ask a probing or thinking question followed by a call to group action, and (3) officially stage the challenge (i.e., anchoring). The teacher seems to maintain a connection with students as she withholds assessment by directing her gaze

to individual students to acknowledge their contributions (lines 07, 09, 12), which appears to encourage learner exploration.

In the next excerpt, there are variations in the order and timing of these teacher practices. In this spate of talk, the group has just finished a lengthy paired speaking task about memorable travel experiences. During whole group follow-up, Ahmet is reporting what his partner, Pia, told him about her most memorable experience.

Excerpt 5.2 how do we say that?

- 01 T: ((*turns to, points to Ahm*))-what do you remember.
 02 Ahm: ah (.) I remember (.) her (0.2) most f (.) ((*scratch neck*))-um
 03 her favorite trip was the Mexico.
 04 T: AH: (.) her favorite trip was ((*index makes forward arc*))
 05 [[(*repeats arc gesture*))]
 06 Ahm: [to Mexico]
 07 T: ((*T nods*))
 08 Ahm: and they g- it's (.) taken time f- to time
 09 f- five weeks, (.) [()]
 10 T: ((*to Ahm*)) [AH] it um=
 11 Ahm: =her friends
 12 T: → ((*gaze snaps to group, hands up, palms out*)) >how do we
 13 say that. how do we say that.<
 14 → everybody work on that.
 15 (0.4)
 16 → ((*emphasizes each word*))-it (.) took (.) time (.) five (.) weeks.
 17 ((*both index fingers make circles*))-I understand. I understand.
 18 [but]
 19 Ahm: [taken?]
 20 Jun: °take f- by ()°

Ahmet begins by stating that Pia's favorite destination is Mexico. He then has difficulty expressing his next thought, *and they g- it's (.) taken time f- to time f- five weeks* (lines 08-09). The teacher keeps her gaze on Ahmet and seems to catch his meaning, *AH it um* (line 10), but stops herself short, withholding assessment or reformulation. She then snaps her gaze to the group and executes a hands up stop-gesture (see pre-digging in Chapter IV) to secure the students' attention (line 12). As in Excerpt 5.1, the teacher

poses the challenge in two parts: first, a repeated, inclusive (i.e., *we*) probing/thinking question, *how do we say that* (lines 12-13), followed by a call for the whole group to work together, *everybody work on that* (line 14). In this case, however, the group may not understand what Ahmet is trying to express. In order for the group to begin their work, the teacher emphatically states the building blocks of Ahmet's message, *it (.) took (.) time (.) five (.) weeks*. (line 16), which represent his key ideas. If the teacher had not *cleaned up* Ahmet's utterance, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for group members to access his message (Seedhouse, 2004). Again, the language challenge is posed as the teacher withholds assessment, asks a probing/thinking question followed by a call to work together, and then officially stages the challenge. There are, however, two variations: (1) rather than allow space to open after the thinking question, the question and the call to work together are stated in quick succession (lines 19-20); and (2) rather than anchor the challenge on the blackboard, the teacher verbally anchors the lexical components the group will work with, much like laying out the individual pieces of a puzzle on a table; each word is emphasized via stress and pauses.

Indirect Approach

In the following exchange, the teacher uses an indirect, rather than direct, approach to pose the challenge. Although posing the challenge is again teacher-led, she does not ask one clear, direct thinking or probing question as in the previous excerpts. In contrast, she asks learners a series of easily answerable questions that allows them to arrive at and then pose the language challenge to themselves.

This spate of talk occurs during whole group follow-up to a paired speaking activity about what makes individual members of the group unique. Clara is recounting what makes her speaking partner, Ana, special.

Excerpt 5.3 how do you say in English a person who teaches?

07 Cla: ah, she's a good cooker. °cook? cooker?°
 08 T: she's a good (.) ((*index up and hold, scans group*))-AH:
 09 ((*nods*))-that's a strange thing in English.
 10 (0.5)
 11 → ((*gets up, to group*))-because how do you say in English
 12 a person who teaches.
 13 SS: teacher.
 14 T: → how do you say a person who ((*to group, mime driving*))-drives
 15 SS: ((*staggered responses*)) driver.
 16 T: → a driver (.) so: how do you say (.) a person who (0.2)
 17 ((*to group, arms bent, hands out*))-cooks
 18 ANA: cooks
 19 (0.2)
 20 S?: °cook°
 21 S?: °cooker°
 22 SS: [((*various low responses*))]]
 23 T: [that's logical, right?]
 24 → ((*to group*))-but ((*finger up, turns to BB*))-uh-uh, so we have
 25 ((*walks to BB*))-a problem.
 26 (0.2)
 27 but this e-r? (.)-((*writes "-er" on BB*)) (.) happens a lot.
 28 ((*faces SS*)) it's the person who:
 29 S?: °mm°

As the excerpt begins, we witness Clara's confusion as to whether a person who cooks is a *cook* or a *cooker*. Rather than pluck out Clara's correct answer, *cook*, from her longer utterance (line 07), the teacher executes various pre-digging practices (lines 08-09). She then stands and directs a series of questions to the whole group. Rather than toss out a probing/thinking question, as observed in previous examples, the learners are pushed to collaborate via a call-and-response pattern the teacher initiates and which ultimately makes the challenge clear. The questions, *how do you say in English a person who*

teaches (lines 11, 12), and *how do you say a person who drives* (line 14), are easily answerable by the learners and push them, perhaps trick them, into participating in the teacher's project of working towards a punchline that reveals the difficulty of this language challenge. After learners' choral responses of *teacher* (line 13) and *driver* (line 15), they arrive at the crucial teacher question, *so how do you say a person who cooks* (line 16); the drill-like question-and-answer pattern and the teacher's *so*, implying a reasoned result, have positioned the learners to respond with *cooker*; some do and some do not (lines 18, 20-22), which only seems to accentuate both their confusion and their need for a resolution. The teacher has employed an indirect way of posing the challenge by setting up a pattern of constructing *-er* profession nouns (lines 11-17). By answering the teacher's questions, the learners themselves help to put into stark relief the pattern that makes the *cook-cooker* choice problematic. Does *a person who cooks* follow the pattern set by *teacher* and *driver*? Once the problem has been made clear to learners, the teacher goes to the board. With a familiar attention-getting raised index finger, the teacher announces, *uh-uh so we have a problem* (lines 24-25), including learners, *we*, as co-problem-solvers. The challenge is officially staged when *-er* is anchored on the board (line 27), providing visual support for further digging which follows (not shown).

In sum, it is not surprising to see a teacher's call for work on a specific language issue; this teacher, however, withholds assessment, and the responsibility of working through the issue shifts to the learners. The analysis reveals that there are direct and indirect approaches to posing the challenge, and though seemingly quite different, they include the same components, and they end with a clearly staged challenge. Key to both approaches is the teacher's reluctance to *fix* or correct the issue by herself. In the direct

approach, the teacher poses the challenge by asking a probing/thinking question, open-ended and exploratory, and then issuing a call for collective problem-solving (i.e., *let's* and *we*). The teacher allows learners' think-space to open after the probing/thinking question; alternately, that space can be opened after the call for collective action. In the indirect approach, the teacher sets up a pattern of learners' choral responses to easily answerable teacher questions that reveal the challenge. In this way, the whole group is engaged with the issue from the start, so collective work is already occurring. In both approaches, the challenge is ultimately staged by the teacher, either by anchoring on the blackboard, or by clearly and emphatically laying it out verbally.

Mount Multiple Attacks on a Single Language Issue

In this section, I describe a group of tightly-bundled teacher practices that promote and guide group digging by launching a multiple-attack offensive on a single language issue. In each offensive action, the teacher engineers and cues up the attacks, and the attacks themselves are carried out via teacher-learner collaboration. Mounting multiple attacks allows the teacher to simultaneously keep group focus on the issue, slow the pace of the interaction, and create more opportunities for learners to participate.

Below, I analyze 3 representative excerpts from a larger collection of 33 cases.

In the first excerpt, the group is about to begin an answer-check of a vocabulary-building worksheet they have completed. Before beginning, however, the teacher focuses on a lexical item that appears in one of the sentences on the worksheet. The stated official group challenge (not shown) is to put together a definition of this word, *upset*, and the teacher prompts learners to co-build a collection of appropriate responses. Ana self-

selects and tells the group that she feels *upset* when her daughter does not clean her bedroom. The excerpt begins as the teacher aligns with her by mentioning her own daughter.

Excerpt 5.4 It's kind of a mixture

32 T: ((to Ana)) I remember those days. my daughter ((point up))
 33 is now ((push up))-a million [miles] away, she's in France
 34 Ana:: [upset]
 35 T: but I do re[member] those (.) ((turning to group))-upset. it's
 36 Ana: [heh heh]
 37 S?: ° heh heh°
 38 T: ((big circle to hand clasp))-it's it's kind of a mixture of (.)
 39 ((gaze at groups of SS, to her left, mid, rt, stops at Ana))-a lot of
 40 different [emotions right?]
 41 SS: [((murmurs, low talk))]
 42 Di: angry.
 43 Masa: ah::
 44 T: → ((turns to Di))-and maybe anger?
 45 Di: angry.
 46 T: → ((to group))-so what else? ((to Di))-you're angry?
 47 SS: [((murmured responses))]
 48 Pia: [surprised?]
 49 T: → ((turns to Pia)) maybe maybe surprised?
 50 Clara: sad?
 51 T: → ((turns to Clara)) maybe sad?
 52 Ana: ((hand up)) tired?
 53 : → ((turns to, gesture to Ana))-maybe tired?
 54 Mas: ((nodding))
 55 T: → if you mix all these things
 56 so it's ((to Ana))-a little angry,
 57 a little tired a little (.) a little
 58 (0.2)-((looks around group))
 59 uh: ((to Jia))-surprised?
 60 all those things together? (.) ((scans to Ana))-you get upset.
 61 ((to group))-it's really a good
 62 kind of ((both hands make circles))-all purpose (.)
 63 ((smiling, looks around))-negative [uh:: (h)adject(h)ive.]
 64 SS: [((scattered laughter))]

Prior to the exchange above, the challenge has been posed (not shown), and Ana has given an example of when she feels upset, which could have closed the segment but does

not. The officially stated challenge of building a definition of *upset* resurfaces in lines 38-40, it is addressed to the whole group, and it is presented as inclusive and open-ended through both nonverbal and verbal means. Posing the challenge as having multiple acceptable answers opens the floor to multiple attacks on the meaning of the word (lines 38-40) and seems to encourage several students to take aim and shoot. The open call for multiple contributions is layered with teacher-gaze which lingers on three distinct clusters of students -- first, the group to the teacher's left, then those seated front and center, then those to the right. These gaze shifts slow the pace and allow space for the offensive. It is the students who now open fire with the ammunition (i.e., ideas) they each have.

Di begins by offering *angry* (line 42). The teacher acknowledges her contribution verbally, *and maybe anger?* (line 44), layered with gaze, which is followed by Di's repetition of *angry* (her original adjective) (lines 44-45). The teacher then shifts to a group gaze and utters her sole verbal prompt, *so what else,?* and glances briefly at Di as she repeats *you're angry?* (line 46). This verbal prompt layered with group gaze keeps the floor open to wider participation (i.e., a more robust offensive). Amidst group murmurs, Pia's voice emerges, *surprised,?* (line 48); the teacher turns to her with a *maybe surprised,?* Beginning with Di's contribution, *angry,?* continuing with Pia's *surprised?* and on to Clara's *sad?* and Ana's *tired?*, the teacher establishes a pattern of turning to each contributor and uttering *maybe* before repeating each of their contributions (lines 46-53). This repeated pattern of *maybe* + learner adjective with rising intonation accomplishes various management tasks simultaneously: the rising intonation keeps the collaborative space open and encourages participation in the offensive by accepting all contributions, and the repetition of contributions acknowledges each

learner's attack-word and broadcasts learner contributions so they are heard by all. In addition, repetition of the pattern *de-clutters* the talk, keeping it focused on the various attack-words. Once the learners have carried out these multiple attacks, the teacher pivots to a summary of the learners' vigorous offensive in a "constructive recapping" move (Sharpe, 2006, p. 227). During the summary, the teacher establishes another repeated pattern, *little* + adjective, (lines 56-57), paralleling the earlier *maybe* + adjective pattern. In addition to slowing the pace and de-cluttering the talk, this repeated pattern officially highlights each individual contribution to the group offensive and creates "cadence stress pulses" (Erickson, 1996, p. 38) that help to draw learners' attention to what is important, the individual attack-words that build the definition. An analysis of the data reveals the following teacher practices: (1) scaffold learners' offensive actions, (2) accept all learner attempts to participate in the attacks, and (3) repeat individual attacks to reinforce and broadcast the group offensive.

In the next excerpt, there are two important differences in the manner of attack: various modalities (e.g., verbal, written, gestural) are used as different weapons in the attack, and both teacher and learners use abundant gestural as well as verbal repetition to present a powerful offensive. This spate of talk begins as teacher and learners engage in whole group follow-up after paired brainstorming about why native speakers are difficult to understand. Ahmet states that native speakers often swallow their words, and the teacher seizes upon *swallow* as worthy of attention and exploration.

Excerpt 5.5 swallow

6	T:	((<i>index finger up, shift gaze to whole group</i>)) d- y- right
7		((<i>point to Ah with gaze to group</i>))-he just used an interesting
8		verb that maybe: you <u>don't</u> <u>know</u> .
9	T:	((<i>minimal point to, gaze at Ahm</i>))-say it again
10	Ahm:	((<i>T stands up</i>))-°swallow°

- 11 T: → yes. ((walks to board))-can you spell it for us?
 12 Pia: ah: ((mimes swallow for Di))
 13 Ahm: yes.
 14 T: ((waits for each letter))-[((writing on B))]
 15 SS: [s, w, a, l, l, (0.4) o, w.]
 16 T: → ((turns to whole group)) good. do you think it's regular? (.) or
 17 irregular. [just looking at it.]
 18 Jun: [((shakes head))]
 19 Ahm: regular.
 20 T: ((hand and gaze to Ahm))-good.
 21 Ahm: ° syl syl°
 22 T: ((gaze shift from Ahm to group))-you 'ave good intuitions.
 23 S? °swallow°
 24 T: → ok, so, what is ((turns to Ahm))-swallow. can you do it
 25 {{{hand to neck}}}-for us? [phy} sically?]
 26 Ahm: [{{{hand to neck}}}]
 27 [{{{hand on neck, nods}}}]
 28 SS: [((murmuring))....]
 29 Ahm: [((demonstrates swallow with hand on neck))-this...]
 30 T: [{{{to group-mimes swallow, exaggerated arms/elbows flared up}}}]
 31 ((one more exaggerated body-forward swallow))
 32 Ana: ((hand to throat))-°when you°
 33 T: yeah when you (.) ((mimes swallow)) °wo↑o°
 34 [{{{hand down gesture}}}-when it goes down.]
 35 SS: [ah::/oh::]
 36 Ahm: bread stuck on my throat? in my throat?
 37 T: \$ye(h)ah the bread kind of sticks-((hand to throat, hold))
 38 [in your throat \$]
 39 Ahm: [I- I couldn't swallow.]
 40 T: ((to Ahm, keeps holding hand to throat))-yeah, right. so this
 41 ((turns to class with holding gesture))-closes up.
 42 (0.4)
 43 you can't swallow. ((release one hand to point to Ahm))-and w-
 44 tell us >that sentence again. because that was very
 45 descriptive< what you did. that was nicely:
 46 Ahm: [° what part? °]
 47 T: [expre]ssed.

After the pre-digging phase (lines 6-8), Ahmet is asked to repeat the teacher's-choice focus word, *swallow* (line 9), a verbal reinforcement. As the teacher walks to the board, she sets up the first attack by asking Ahmet if he can spell *swallow* (line 11). The teacher writes the letters on the board only after Ahmet and other students utter each one (lines

14-15), displaying the focus word in written modality. Shifting away from the board and from Ahmet, the teacher turns and asks the whole group if they think the verb is regular or irregular, another attack. This cued elicitation is designed as a binary choice which makes it more easily answerable; the teacher even adds the caveat, *just looking at it* (line 17), an explicit acknowledgement that learners may be guessing, which perhaps stimulates learner participation and risk-taking. After Ahmet responds, *regular*, the teacher cues up a gestural attack by asking Ahmet if he can *do* swallow; he mimes it (lines 24-29), moving into a third modality. The teacher repeats his gesture twice in an exaggerated fashion, making it visible to all and demonstrating “strong co-participation” and a “show of understanding” (Majlesi, 2014, p.33). Ana now joins the offensive, repeating the gesture by putting her hand on her neck as she utters, °when you° (line 32), layering gestural and verbal contributions. The teacher repeats Ana’s *when you*, miming *swallow* once more and adding, *when it goes down* (line 34), layering gestural and verbal-example attacks. Ahmet then self-selects with his own verbal-example attack, *bread stuck on my throat? in my throat?* (line 36), followed by *I- I couldn’t swallow* in partial overlap with the teacher’s reformulation of Ahmet’s verbal-example attack, *the bread kind of sticks in your throat* (lines 37-38). Finally, the teacher reformulates Ahmet’s *I couldn’t swallow* (line 39) with a partial repetition, *you can’t swallow* (line 43).

In this interaction, we observe a complex dance of reinforced multiple attacks on the meaning, form, and use of *swallow* through employing various multimodal resources -- verbal, written, and gestural, which appears to create an elevated level of learner involvement and co-participation (Majlesi, 2014). Notably, this *tripling* of modalities results in repetition “of the same message [which] provides additional support for the

learner” (Sharpe, 2006, p. 213). As in previous excerpts, the multiple attacks in this offensive are cued up by the teacher, learner participation is stimulated by asking easily answerable questions, and there is abundant teacher as well as student verbal and gestural repetition. The teacher’s reformulations are partial repetitions which again support the students’ attacks. This collaborative, multi-pronged offensive highlights different facets of the focus word (e.g., orthography, simple past form, physical demonstration, example for meaning), which fleshes out this lexical item (Nation, 2005; Seedhouse & Walsh, 2010). Notably, the pervasive use of repetition helps the teacher maintain a slowed pace and *stay with* the attack rather than quickly return to the (interrupted) follow-up of the paired task.

In the last excerpt in this section, multiple attacks are again engineered and cued up by the teacher, robust participation is encouraged, and the offensive actions are carried out by learners and supported by the teacher’s use of repetition. However, rather than cue up, field, and package multiple learner attacks (i.e., contributions) as in Excerpt 5.4, or set up and use various modalities to execute multiple attacks as in Excerpt 5.5, the teacher uses a different weapon to involve learners in the multiple-attack sequence. In this case, the attack is surgical in its precision: the offensive is set up via a narrow, partially-repeated pattern of usage, and learners are cued up to respond in drill-like fashion to easily answerable questions.

In this exchange, the group is working through an Emotion Verbs worksheet containing several sentences with blanks to be filled with an appropriate word from a word bank at the top of the page. The students first worked individually and then compared answers in pairs; now they are engaged in whole group follow-up. Jia has just

completed the sentence, *When you want to show agreement, you might _____*, with the correct response, *nod your head* (not shown). As the excerpt begins, the teacher seizes upon a lexical item embedded in Jia's correct answer.

Excerpt 5.6 nod your head

06 T: °mkay°? now, ((*points to page*)) you see that 'your'?

07 < nod your head?> (.) ((*smiles at group*))-that 'your' changes

08 Clara: °mm°?

09 T: all the time.\$

10 (0.2)

11 you ((*gaze at Pia*))-see?

12 ((*scan group, vertical palm marks words*))-nod (.) your (.) head?

13 ((*to group, closes hand*))-you see that 'your'?

14 (0.2)-((*Di nods*))

15 → ((*raises hand, to group*))-but what if it's my brother.

16 (0.2)

17 Clara: [his]

18 T: [that] would be nod ((*nods to Clara*))

19 Clara: his [head.]

20 T, SS: [his] head.-((*slightly staggered*))

21 Di: his head.

22 T: → or (.) what if it's (.) ((*to group, index circular motion*))-all of us.

23 Pia: [°our°]

24 T: [we] nod=

25 SS: =((*staggered*))-our

26 T: our

27 SS: ((*staggered*))-°our°

In this spate of talk, the teacher first deploys pre-digging practices to gather and then shift learners' attention to the chosen language focus; she then creates intrigue and poses the language challenge < *nod your head* > *that 'your' changes all the time* (lines 07-09). Now that the group is alerted to the challenge, the possessive adjective must change to match the subject (e.g., *you nod your head*), the teacher cues up the attacks -- two cued elicitation (Edwards & Mercer, 1993). These narrowly-focused cues enable the teacher to tightly calibrate the scope of the language issue (subject-possessive adjective agreement), thereby providing very specific target practice.

The offensive action begins in line 15 as the teacher raises her hand, which simultaneously keeps learners' attention on her and suggests the expectation of a learner response; she layers this nonverbal move with the setup of the first attack, a cued elicitation, *but what if it's my brother* (line 15), a change-of-subject cue which is easily answerable by learners. This is followed by a short (0.2) second silence, opening a response-slot for learners which invites them to collaborate in the process instead of sitting back (Edwards & Mercer, 1993). Clara fills the slot with the correct response, *his*, in partial overlap with the teacher's *that would be nod* (line 18), a designedly incomplete utterance (DIU) (Koshik, 2002), addressed to the group. Upon receiving the teacher's nod, Clara repeats her correct response, *his head*, (line 19) in partial overlap with teacher and learners' *his head* (line 20). This short, compact interaction (lines 17-21) has resulted in broad learner participation in the attack. In the second attack, a parallel cued elicitation presents a pattern as the teacher repeats *what if it's*, and then substitutes *all of us* for *my brother*, layered with an inclusive circular gesture indicating the whole group (line 22). Pia's correct response, °our° (line 23), is uttered in overlap with the teacher's second DIU, *we nod* (line 24), after which several learners respond, *our* (line 25). By setting up two attacks via partially-repeated, easily answerable cued elicitations (lines 15-21), joint construction is almost guaranteed, and the scope is limited to matching the possessive adjective to the subject, the language issue under attack. In addition, learners are cued to provide the possessive adjectives *his* and *our*, which may stimulate participation by tapping into language knowledge they already possess and allowing them to make incremental advances collaboratively, key features of digging.

In all three excerpts in this section, the teacher takes time to engineer and cue up the attacks in a learner-friendly way (e.g., asking easily answerable questions, suggesting that there are multiple acceptable responses), so learners are encouraged to collaborate in the offensive action. By relying on learners' collaboration, the teacher presses them to become active, responsible players in the digging process. One learner's correct response to a posed challenge does not appear to be sufficient for this teacher to simply move on or circle back to the ongoing interaction (e.g., Ana's appropriate example of the meaning of *upset*, Clara's correct response, *his*, to *what if it's my brother*); instead, the whole group is invited to take part in the attacks. Finally, repetition plays a key role in supporting and broadcasting the content of each attack, so individual efforts are acknowledged as learners work through a language challenge. In particular, repetition, both verbal and gestural, helps to keep the group focused and allows the time and space needed to work on understanding, thus creating a much-needed "space for learning" (Walsh & Li, 2013, p. 262).

Engage Learner Perspective

In the final section in this chapter, I show 3 representative excerpts from a larger collection of 25 cases in the corpus that reveal how the teacher engages learner perspective by embedding their lived experiences in the digging process and positioning them as protagonists in the storyline. The teacher practices described below help to make a language issue *come alive* for learners, and help to connect their classroom work on understanding English to the language they use in their everyday lives outside the classroom.

In the first excerpt, the teacher explains that her brother, a photographer, is coming to the city for a visit. After brainstorming in small groups about areas of the city he might like to photograph, students offer their ideas to the teacher during whole group follow-up, using previously studied expressions and modals to make polite suggestions. Jun offers, *why don't you bring your brother to [tourist destination]*, which leads to a *bring vs. take* digging episode. We join the interaction after a lengthy pre-digging phase (not shown). The teacher is at the blackboard, and she has turned to face the group after having written *why don't you*, Jun's suggested polite expression. She now turns back to the board to continue writing.

Excerpt 5.7 you have to ask yourself

41 T: ((turns to face BB))-why don't you
 42 (0.4)-((writes 'bring' above and 'take' below))
 43 take ((write 'yr. b. '))-your brother ((writes 'to'))-to
 44 (0.4)-((writes [tourist destination])
 45 S?: [tourist destination.]
 46 (0.2)
 47 → okay-((turning to group, hand up)) you always have to
 48 ask yourself when you're gonna make this decision,
 49 → ((moving hands, scan group))-where are you now.
 50 → ((looks around group))-where are we now.
 51 (0.2)-((continues to look around group))
 52 we're ((pull-in gesture))-here (.) ((mark beat))-at [school] (.)
 53 ((repeat emphasis gesture))-we're at [school].
 54 (0.3)-((slow group scan))
 55 anything that isn't [school] (.) is ((extend arm))-take.
 56 (0.4)
 57 Jia: [°mm°]
 58 Jun: (((nodding)))
 59 T: → but if it is [school] ((hands out, scans))-we're here,
 60 I would say ((hands reach out))-why don't you (.)
 61 S?: bring
 62 T: ((pull-in gesture, look around group))-[bring] your brother to=
 63 SS: [bring]
 64 SS: =to
 65 T: → ((move hands, scan))-to [neighborhood], to [school],
 66 to [school], ((circular gesture))-anything that's (.) here.
 67 a big here or ((bring hands in, looks around group))-a little here.

68 why don't you bring your brother to room i- g- in room
69 four sixty-five in [school building].
70 Jun: ((*chuckle*))

First, the teacher finishes anchoring Jun's suggestion on the board; she writes *bring*, Jun's incorrect verb choice, and *take*, the correct verb, on top of one another. She then utters *take your brother to [tourist destination]*, providing the correct choice, as she writes (lines 41-45). Rather than end the exchange after uttering the correct choice, however, the teacher continues to pull apart *bring* vs. *take*. After a (0.2) second gap, the teacher's *okay* both ends the blackboard work and signals a new move (Beach, 1995), layered with a raised hand that maintains learner attention at the front of the room. The teacher then supplies learners with a way to think through the *bring* vs. *take* choice. She scans the group as she gives them a specific question to ask themselves, *you always have to ask yourself when you're gonna make this decision, where are you now*. (lines 47-49). The teacher then works through the process that learners can use (Christoph & Nystrand, 2001) and includes herself, *we*, in a partial repeat, *where are we now* (line 50). This question, a real question, is followed by a short (0.2) second gap that gives learners a moment. Without waiting for a response, the teacher then gives real, here-and-now answers to her question, *we're here (.) at [school] (.) at [school]*, layered with group gaze and large metaphorical and beat gestures (McNeill, 1992), first pulling in her arms and then emphasizing the held position twice (i.e., to me). She then looks around the group before providing a contrasting statement, *anything that isn't [school] (.) is take*, layered with a contrasting deictic-plus-metaphorical gesture, an extended arm and finger point (i.e., away from me). Two students make minimal contributions (lines 57-58), after which the teacher finally ties Jun's suggestion, *bring your brother to [tourist destination]*,

to the key question she posed to the group, *where are we now*. The teacher first answers the question, *we're here*, and continues to work through the process, *I would say why don't you* (.) (lines 55-56), layered with an arms-out gesture. The micro-pause invites one student's correct choice, *bring*, and as the teacher nonverbally prompts with a repeated pull-in gesture, she and learners utter *bring* in overlap. The teacher adds, *your brother to*, with the learners' latched *to* (lines 62-64), and she ends with specific examples of *here* (*[school]*, *[neighborhood]*) (lines 65-66). She makes an additional point that *here* can be *big* or *little*, it is relative, and then suggests that their specific classroom, *room four sixty-five in [school building]* (lines 68-69), is an example of a *little here*.

The language issue is thus practiced by placing learners in a real, *here-and-now* situation and their current location (e.g., neighborhood, school, classroom) is their point of reference for making the bring/take choice. The teacher provides learners with a *how-to* strategy, a question to ask themselves, *where are you now*, which positions the learners as protagonists in the example. Gaze and gesture are layered throughout the interaction and play supporting roles of attention-getting (e.g., gaze shifts from individual to group) and attention-keeping (e.g., large gestures, group gaze); in addition, gaze-prompts, gesture-prompts, micro-pauses, and gaps seem to encourage participation, and help move from monologic teacher explanation to dialogic collaborative talk (lines 61-64). Teacher practices that emerge are: (1) position learners as protagonists in examples and explanations, and (2) use *here-and-now* scenarios familiar to learners.

In the following excerpt, learners are again positioned as protagonists, but this time they are asked to imagine they are in a restaurant, a setting familiar to all. This interaction occurs shortly after the talk examined in the previous excerpt; the teacher

explanation of the bring/take distinction seems to be coming to a close, and the teacher is standing near the blackboard.

Excerpt 5.8 if you're sitting in a restaurant

- 76 T: but anything that isn't here (0.2) is
 77 (0.4)-((rt arm extended, index point, looks around group))
 78 take (.) because it's in it's in another direction. kay,
 79 (0.2) so bring is ((arms out, pull into body))-to me (.) take is
 80 ((rt. arm-flick indicates away))-to there.
 81 → ((to group))-so, ((index points))-if you're sitting in a restaurant
 82 and you'd like coffee ((looks around))-what do you say.
 83 ((scans group))-bring me coffee?
 84 Ahm: bring my=
 85 T: → =or take my coff=
 86 SS: =((slightly staggered))-bring
 87 T: → bring ((scans, repeat arms out, pull into body))-bring me right?
 88 to ((emphasize each word))-where I am
 89 when I'm (.) sitting in the (.) booth.
 90 and what if you have your dirty plates there?
 91 ((sits down))-in the restaurant? ((to group))-and you could say
 92 to the waiter ((rt. arm repeated 'away-gesture))-bring the plates?
 93 (.) no.
 94 Ahm: take [the]
 95 T: → [take] ((extended arm away-gesture, scans group)) the plates
 96 SS: ((staggered))-take the plates
 97 T: ((to Jun, then group))-so it's kind of a general rule.
 98 Jun: ((nodding))

In lines 76-80, the teacher summarizes the direction difference between *bring* and *take*, layered with previously-used gestures (e.g., pull into body, extended arm flick away). Rather than move on with the task at hand (i.e., polite suggestions of places the teacher's brother could photograph), she stays with the *bring/take* focus and presents another example of usage, presenting a scenario that learners are likely familiar with in their everyday experience. The teacher begins with an emphasized discourse marker, so, signaling topic development (Johnson, 2002), and she positions learners as protagonists in a restaurant setting; the use of present continuous lends immediacy to the situation, *if you're sitting in a restaurant* (lines 81). Learners are now *in* the example, in a setting and

a role familiar to all -- a customer in a restaurant. The teacher asks students a direct question, *what do you say in this situation, bring me coffee?* (lines 83), at which point Ahmet responds, *bring my=*, before the teacher completes her question, *=or take my coff=*, latched with various students' *=bring* (line 85-86). Again, we see the teacher ask a binary choice question and provide the two possible responses. In this example, her use of such a familiar phrase, *bring me coffee*, and such a familiar setting invites learners to respond, since they presumably have the language needed. The teacher then reinforces the correct choice, *bring, bring me, right?* followed by the explanatory, *to where I am when I'm sitting in this (.) booth* (lines 88-89), placing the teacher in the restaurant booth and transforming the classroom into a restaurant for a moment. A contrasting example is then proposed, *what if you have your dirty plates there? (line 90) in the restaurant? (line 91)*. Students are asked directly (e.g., *you have; your dirty plates*) what to say to the waiter, either *bring* or *take* the dirty plates, the same binary choice, which is again layered with the repeated pull-in and extended arm gestures (lines 90-92). Learners are the protagonists, *you could say to the waiter*, and they are made the reference point for understanding the *bring/take* direction difference. The *here-and-now* factor is present as they sit in the restaurant booth and talk to the waiter, making the scenario *real* for just that moment.

In the final excerpt, in contrast, one student's life experience is singled out, and she becomes the protagonist in the teacher's explanation. This interaction occurs near the end of the course, and students have learned many details about their classmates. Di, the mother of a two-year-old, has often exchanged parenting advice with others in the group during class sessions. The teacher and five of the eight students are also parents, and one

is an au pair, so raising children has sometimes been a topic of discussion. In this task, students share examples of phrasal verbs they find in the magazines they are reading (an ongoing class assignment), but they appear quite confused by the meaning of *up* particles (e.g., speed up, speak up, back up); below, the teacher focuses on one of its meanings, using *Di* in the example.

Excerpt 5.9a does your son drink tea?

02 T: look at this-((*gaze at Cl, stands up, index up*))
 03 lemme give you one more example
 04 and I think you'll get it.-((*turns, walks to BB*))
 05 ((*at BB, turns to group*))-I say to my
 06 (0.2)
 07 → ((*gaze at, point to Di*))-I say to your son who is 2 years old
 08 Di: ((*nods*))
 09 T: → I say (1.0)-((*turns to BB, writes 'drink up your tea'*))
 10 ((*turns to gaze at Di*)) does he drink tea?
 11 Di: mm hm?
 12 T: → ((*turns to BB, points to words, reads*)) drink up your tea.
 13 Di: °drink up your tea°
 14 T: → ((*underlines 'drink up,' turns to gaze at group*)) this is a
 15 ((*points to 'drink up'*))-phrasal verb.
 16 Di: °ah°
 17 (0.4)-((*SS murmur*))
 18 T: and it's got the ((*two fingers up*))-two parts right?
 19 Di, Jia: ((*nod*))

((47 lines omitted; the teacher explains three meanings of 'up' in phrasal verbs, focusing last on verbs where *up*=*completely*, as in *drink up, eat up, finish up*..))

66 T: a- eh- these are all good phrasal verbs and it just means
 67 completely.
 68 (0.2)
 69 → ((*gaze at Di*))-now is it possible (0.2) for you to say
 70 to your son 'drink your tea'?
 71 Di: yeah, [yeah.]
 72 T: [is that ok?]
 73 ((*T waves hand, Di nodding*))-that's perfectly ok
 74 → but if you say drink up,
 75 (0.4)-((*thumb-index twisting gesture, high humming sound*))
 76 it's special.
 77 (0.2)
 78 it means ((*emphasis beat for each word*))-drink (.) completely.

include the whole group via gaze (line 14) and by anchoring the example sentence on the board; she then underlines and points to the phrasal verb, reinforcing the focus of attention. Additionally, the group already knows about Di's son's daily routine from previous class discussions, so with this example, everyone is *in the know*; all are included rather than excluded in the talk.

The teacher briefly explains the different meanings of the *up*-particle (47 lines omitted), ending with those phrasal verbs where *up* means “completely” (e.g., drink up, finish up, eat up). She then pivots back to Di and her son, picking up that thread in order to contrast *drink your tea* and *drink up your tea*. The teacher gazes at Di and asks if it is possible to simply say to her son, *drink your tea?* (lines 60-70). Di says, *yeah, yeah*, and the teacher agrees and points out that *drink up* is different (lines 74-79), it means *drink (.) completely* (line 78). The teacher then positions Di as the reference point for understanding the difference in meaning, *if you say* (line 74), *you're being*, and *you're being clear* (line 79). After this attention to Di and her son to make this point, the teacher scans the group. This is followed by the teacher voicing what Di might say directly to her son, thus demonstrating what *drink up* means in a *here-and-now* enactment, a bit of theater in the classroom. The teacher takes on Di's mother-voice as she points a scolding finger and utters in emphatic speech with micro-pauses, *drink everything (.) I don't want (.) any (.) liquid (.) left* (lines 81-82). The teacher then shifts out of Di's voice and into her own, *and that's my choice* (line 83) pointing to herself; she completes her talk with more self-references, *if I say* (line 84), and *I say* (line 86), taking attention off Di and addressing the whole group before moving on. This bit of *here-and-now* play-acting

places the teacher-as-Di in the role of protagonist and demonstrates how *drink up* is used by presenting an everyday scenario that is familiar to parents and care-takers.

In sum, bringing the language focus to the learners' everyday life experiences and placing learners within scenarios suggested by the language foci appear to drive these teacher practices. An analysis of the data reveals that the following teacher practices engage learner perspective: (1) position learner as the protagonist in explanations and examples, and (2) use *here-and-now* scenarios that are familiar to learners (e.g., bring me coffee vs. take the dirty dishes; drink vs. drink up). By using the learners as the point of reference for making meaning, they become the subject and object of their own work on understanding. This, in turn, may both enhance motivation and make language study more relevant to their needs, reducing the distance between learners and what they are studying.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, I described three sets of teacher practices that set up, guide, and push learners to engage with troublesome grammatical and lexical issues once they have been identified and isolated. Each of these groups of practices plays an essential part in one broad type of *digging*, and more specifically, teacher-led collaborative group work on understanding that features “zooming in.”

The first set, *pose a language challenge*, includes both verbal and nonverbal practices that set up a group challenge designed to help learners reason through a learner error, learner confusion, or a teacher's-choice issue. Once the challenge is posed, the collaborative work of digging begins in earnest. The second set of practices, *mounting*

multiple attacks on a single language issue, involves various types of teacher-designed group attacks that steer learners to a response to the challenge. By deploying numerous attacks, the teacher is able to bring about the following: the pace of the interaction slows, the learners' attention remains sharply focused on the target, and group participation is boosted. The third set, *engage learner perspective*, sets up learners and their lived experiences as the reference point for making meaning, as such work may be more meaningful to learners, through *here-and-now*, personalized examples and explanations. These sets of practices enable the teacher to (1) keep learner attention on the target; and (2) push learners to *do the work*.

The teacher constantly focuses and refocuses learner attention on the chosen language issue during digging. Staging the official group challenge and calling for learners to work together frame the interaction as a group mission, and it appears to heighten learner attention. The use of multiple attacks on the language target necessarily keeps forcing learner attention on the target; additionally, the extensive use of repetition refocuses attention and acknowledges each step taken toward achieving a response to the challenge. Finally, engaging and prioritizing the learners' perspective ensures their continued attention as they are made the reference point for meaning-making.

The teacher's push for learners to *do the work* is evident throughout the process of zooming in on the target. Rather than simply correct and explain an error or point of confusion, this teacher pushes learners to take part in the work by presenting them with a challenge instead. The challenge may come in the form of a direct question (e.g., *are go away and go out the same?*), or it may involve the teacher asking a series of questions that leads learners to a momentary impasse (e.g., *cook? cook+er?*). The pressure to *do the*

work remains high as learners carry out various teacher-designed attacks on the targeted issue in their effort to respond to the challenge. Learners are largely successful in doing this work because the teacher sets them up to succeed -- guiding teacher questions are designed to be easily answerable as they call for knowledge the students already possess, and learner guesses are encouraged and accepted. In addition, *doing the work* is encouraged by the teacher using learners' lived experiences in examples and explanations to address the challenge. The teacher is entirely responsible for engineering and bringing this type of group digging into play: she creates and announces the challenge, she designs and cues up the learner-executed attacks, and she positions students as referents for clarifying meaning.

In sum, this chapter focuses on sets of teacher practices that place an error or a troublesome item under a microscope and then "zoom in" to deconstruct it. This, however, is only one of two broad types of digging. The second type features teacher practices that "zoom out" and search for connections between a specific error or problem and a larger pattern or principle. Thus, teacher and learners can further their work on understanding by standing back, zooming out, for a broader view of how one case fits into a larger language picture.

VI - ZOOM OUT

Introduction

This chapter describes teacher practices that encourage and guide the digging process that features “zooming out.” Isolating and bearing down on a specific issue for focused work (e.g., a lexical item, a grammatical structure) is key to the digging that “zooms in.” However, teacher and learners can also *zoom out* and consider a specific target from a greater height; using a wider lens offers a new vantage point from which learners can trace connections to L1 and L2 patterns and principles beyond the specific item being examined. As will be shown, it is the teacher who invariably highlights and clarifies the connections although the ensuing talk is collaborative, and the work on understanding is co-built. An analysis of 6 excerpts from a total of 39 cases in the corpus reveals various teacher practices that bring to light (non)connections between (1) the learners’ native languages and the target language, and (2) the specific error or troublesome issue and a general structure or pattern in the target language.

Zoom out to Inter-language (Non)Connections

In this section, I analyze 3 representative excerpts from a collection of 19 cases in the data set that show teacher and students addressing learner errors or confusion by exploring if and how learners’ L1s differ from each other and from the L2, English. Although this collaborative work is mainly teacher-led, learner initiatives do occur and are welcomed and shaped by the teacher.

In the first excerpt, the group is once again working through a preposition worksheet. At the top of the page is a word box containing seven prepositions, and below, there are ten sentences with blanks for slotting in the correct preposition(s). After comparing answers with a partner but before group-check, the teacher asks learners to circle the numbers of sentences where they are simply guessing which preposition(s) are correct. She then asks for those numbers; the students mention numbers eight, one, and two, and then Pia speaks up.

Excerpt 6.1a 3. Problems at school are often related ____ problems at home.

01 Pia: number three also
 02 T: and number three?
 03 (1.0)-((holds up paper to read, looks away, slow shrug, cocks head))
 04 Pia: I can't decide between two.
 05 T: → ((to Pia))-yeah and you know why? because ((closes one eye))-
 06 it's italian. I think you're doing a translation.
 07 Pia: ((nods))-probably.\$

This short exchange begins as Pia adds number three to the list of sentences where students are guessing which prepositions to slot in. The teacher refers to her worksheet, presumably to quickly read number three, *Problems at school are often related ____ problems at home*, and Pia adds, *I can't decide between two* (line 04). The teacher neither waits for Pia to tell her the *two* she is considering, nor does she ask for them. Instead, she takes the floor and, being a fluent Spanish speaker, she ventures a guess as to why Pia, an Italian speaker, may be deliberating *between two* prepositions. She then asks and answers the question, *and you know why?* (line 05), followed by closing one eye as she answers, *it's italian. I think you're doing a translation* (lines 05-06). The teacher appears to be using her knowledge of Spanish to provide Pia with a reason for her confusion; smiling, Pia responds that, indeed, she is *probably* translating. This short exchange previews what occurs later, approximately two minutes into the group-check. Below, the teacher directs

learners to focus on number three, the sentence Pia had identified as challenging; Pia's confusion now resurfaces, and the teacher addresses it.

Excerpt 6.1b it's your first strategy

- 01 T: let's look at number three.
 02 (0.8)-((*leaning to one side, gaze at group*))
 03 might be a little tricky for people.
 04 what do you think. anyone feeling brave?
 05 (0.4)-((*sits back*))
 06 Masa: ((*half raises hand, to T*))-yeah. ((*T turns to Masa, quick nod*))
 07 ((*looks at paper, quick glance at T, back to paper*))-yeah.
 08 ((*reading*))-pro- eh problems in school ah of- often
 09 related to problems at home.
 10 T: ((*to Masa*))-↓brilliant.
 11 SS: ((*quiet chuckling*))
 12 Pia: ((*to T, quick index point*))-and not with.
 13 T: ((*gaze shift to Pia*))
 14 Pia: it's impossible to say ['with'?]
 15 T: [related] with?
 16 → {((*eyes up*))-I think} that's the::: like the
 17 ((*to Pia, big rt. hand back and forth gesture*))-spanish i[talian]
 18 Pia: [okay.]
 19 T: → french th- (.) I think that's where that's coming in. it sounds
 20 like a it sounds like a translation to [me.]
 21 Pia: [°okay.°]
 22 (1.5)-((*T looks down at paper, then up at Pia*))
 23 T: → but it's ((*nodding*))-your first strategy.
 24 → ((*arms out, shrugs to group, half-smile*))-it's not a bad strategy.
 25 (0.5)
 26 → ((*to Pia*))-§because sometimes [it works.§]
 27 Pia: [((*laughter*))]
 28 ((*T looks down at paper*))-okay.
 29 (0.8)
 30 What about number 5. ((*looks up at group*))

This spate of talk begins with the teacher asking for volunteers to complete sentence three; Masa correctly completes the sentence with *to* for the collocation, *related to* (line 09), and the teacher closes the exchange with an explicit positive assessment (EPA) (Waring, 2008). Pia, however, keeps the issue alive by self-selecting, and asks, *and not 'with'?* (line12). The teacher shifts her gaze to her, and Pia again asks, *it's impossible to*

say '*with*'? (line 14), which the teacher repeats in overlap, echoing Pia's stress on the incorrect preposition, *related with?* (line 15). Apparently, *with* is one of the two prepositions Pia was considering earlier as a slot-filler (see Excerpt 6.1a). Rather than give a direct *no* to Pia, the teacher once again pivots to Pia's presumed reliance on her L1, Italian, and adds French and Spanish, two additional examples of Romance languages that may also use *with* in translation. Although the teacher hedges her account of the L1-L2 (non)connection with *I think* (lines 16, 19), she simultaneously emphasizes it by performing an attention-getting back-and-forth hand gesture as she addresses Pia. Curiously, the teacher does not speak Italian, but Spanish, and appears to be making an educated guess, which may or may not reflect an accurate Italian translation. The teacher adds that '*with*' *sounds like a translation* to her, which Pia appears to accept two times, once halfway through the teacher's explanation, *okay* (line 18), and once more at the end, °okay° (line 21), both in overlap with teacher utterances. This limited teacher-student exchange is followed by a (1.5) second silence during which the teacher looks down at her paper and then up again at Pia; she then revives the issue with a comment to Pia, *it's your first strategy* (line 23). She then uses layered verbal and nonverbal resources to gather learners together. First, she shifts her gaze to the group and, with a half-smile and a playful tone, gives advice to all learners layered with a shrug and outstretched arms, *it's not a bad strategy*; she follows this with a (0.5) second silence, perhaps for dramatic effect, and shifting her gaze back to Pia with a smile, she delivers the punchline, *\$because sometimes it works\$* (lines 24-26), followed by student laughter. Attention is then directed back to the interrupted group-check.

In this teacher-driven interaction, Pia self-selects to initiate the exchange but then plays a very limited role -- she does not question or expand on the teacher's explanation, and she displays quite subdued acceptance of the explanation for her confusion. The teacher suggests that Pia's Italian-to-English translation has led to her confusion. Perhaps more interesting is the advice the teacher gives students in lines 24-26; although L1-L2 translation does not help in this instance, she presents translation as a viable tool each learner already possesses and can try, *it's your first strategy because sometimes it works*. Although the teacher seems to promote L1-to-L2 translation in a playful way, it can perhaps encourage students to exercise agency in their own learning. Although the verbal exchange is quite short, or perhaps because of it, nonverbal teacher practices stand out: (1) gaze at/address individual when accounting for/checking in with his/her L1 as the source of error/confusion; (2) group-gaze for summary and advice; and (3) offer dramatic highlighting via gesture and/or talk for emphasis.

The next excerpt occurs at the beginning of a lesson, and only three students are present -- Ana, Pia, and Jia. As in Excerpt 6.1b, the teacher first gives her own account for a learner's error based on that learner's L1, but additionally, she checks in with each learner, seeking information or confirmation about what *happens* in their L1s. The teacher has just asked students where they might go to spy on people in conversation in order to observe listener back-channeling, a topic from the previous class. Ana responds that a bar would be a good place because on public transport *people doesn't talk*; the teacher then seizes upon this classic error, *people* + third person singular verb.

Excerpt 6.2 people doesn't talk

08 Ana: yes yes, ((*Jia, Pia gaze at her*))-because if you (0.4) travel
09 with bus or subway people doesn't talk.

- 10 T: ((to Ana))-ah: people don't talk. ((to group))-[did ↑you]
 11 Ana: [°don't talk°]
 12 Jia, Pia: [((gaze shift to T))]
 13 T: know that 'people' that's a plural. it doesn't look like it
 14 Jia: °oh.°
 15 T: ((hand gesture, palm up, then extended hand up))-but it is.
 16 Pia: °ah.°
 17 T: → ((gaze at Anna))-so it's not like your language,
 18 ((gaze at Pia; waggles forearm))-it's not like your language
 19 because you do it singular, right?
 20 Pia: [((nods))]
 21 Ana: [°yah°]
 22 T: → ((gaze shift to Jia))-what do you do in in um (.)
 23 Jia: Korean?
 24 T: Korean.
 25 Jia: it's singular.
 26 T: → it's singular (.) so it's like ((big twist wrist gesture))-brrrrit↑
 27 Jia: yeah heh heh
 28 T: → ((to group))-you gotta [change that.]
 29 Jia: [yeah.]
 30 T: → ((to Jia))-it's the same thing in Spanish,
 31 it's singular ((nodding))-too ((to group))-so it's uh
 32 so it'd be ((hand gestures))-people (.) not is but people
 33 (0.5)-((looks around group))
 34 Ana: ((T gaze snaps to Ana))-are
 35 T: → are (.) ((nodding, gaze up))-°right.°
 36 (0.2)-((Jia nodding))
 37 → ((to grp))-that's a strange feeling °>but that's what we do<°
 38 (0.5)
 39 okay so people are talking (.) and (.) ((slaps table))-OH
 40 ((to Ana)) you said that if people are on public transport

Ana's response to where to spy on people includes the incorrect, *people doesn't talk* (line 09). The teacher immediately provides a recast but does not then simply move on. She tosses out the question, *did you know that people that's a plural*, in overlap with Ana's quiet correction, *°don't talk°* (lines 10-11, 13); she then answers her own question, *it doesn't look like it but it is*, which establishes how English operates. The teacher's *but it is* (line 15) is layered with an attention-getting raised palm, which is then held out to make a larger gesture, thus amplifying the statement, perhaps in anticipation of the shift

to a comparison of learners' L1s-L2. Rather than question students, she shifts her gaze to Ana and pivots to her L1, *it's not like your language* (Italian), followed by gaze shift and pivot to the next student, Pia, *it's not like your language* (Italian), because in their L1 *people* is singular (lines 17-19). As she gazes at and addresses Ana and Pia separately, she creates one-to-one moments with each, and ends with a confirmation check addressed to both, *right?* (line 19), to which Pia nods and Ana responds quietly, *yah* (lines 20-21). In this way, the teacher gives Ana and Pia the final word as Italian experts, although they respond with muted claims of understanding. With only three class members present, there is one other student to check in with, Jia. The teacher turns to Jia to ask what Korean-speakers *do* (line 22); Jia states, *it's singular* in Korean, the teacher echoes her response and then summarizes in rather dramatic fashion. In line 26, the teacher makes a surprising sound effect, *brrrrit*[↑], layered with a large circular wrist-thumb-index gesture, which is then bundled with, *you gotta change that*, emphatic advice to learners with a dramatic twist. By deploying both layered and bundled verbal and nonverbal resources, the teacher accentuates this L1-L2 difference, making it worthy of learners' attention. The teacher then adds her L2, Spanish, to the languages being compared, perhaps in a show of solidarity, *it's the same thing in Spanish* (line 30), and perhaps as an L2 learner herself who struggles with this difference. Finally, the teacher turns to the group with a DIU (Koshik, 2002) prompt, *so it'd be people (.) not is but people* (lines 32). After a (0.5) second silence, the student who committed the error, Ana, responds with the correct *are*, which the teacher acknowledges. In a final reinforcing comment, the teacher addresses the group with a personal opinion regarding how *strange* (line 37) it may feel for them to make this change from a singular verb form in their L1s to the plural in the L2.

Unlike the previous excerpt, the teacher checks in verbally and nonverbally with individual students, relying on their L1 expertise in Italian and Korean. The layered gaze/verbal check-in is first expressed as a statement, and the Italian speakers, Ana and Pia, are asked to confirm the teacher's suspicion that *people* takes a singular verb. The check-in is repeated for Jia as a direct interrogative, and she responds with a clear display of understanding, in Korean *it's singular*. The teacher's gaze is trained on each individual student as she asks about their L1, but it shifts to the group as she gives advice, an interactive summary (lines 32-35), and a final personal opinion (line 37). Dramatic highlighting occurs when the teacher layers an unusual sound effect and gesture just after Jia weighs in, and then gives emphatic advice to all, *you gotta change that*.

Although the final excerpt in this section also involves L1-L2 connections, it stands in contrast to the previous excerpts in important ways. First, there is an L1-L2 difference but, unlike the relatively straightforward change of one preposition for another (i.e. lexical choice in a collocation) as in 6.1b, or from a singular noun plus verb form in the L1 to plural noun plus verb form in the L2 as in Excerpt 6.2, the difference is conceptual in nature -- *he-she* subject pronoun errors bring to light an unexpected L1-L2 demonstrative pronoun connection. Second, only two learners' L1s, not all, are held up to the L2. Lastly, Ahmet, our Turkish student, self-selects and takes on a teacher-role and, with the teacher's consent and collaboration, explains how his L1 works, which leads to the perhaps surprising L1-L2 connection. Prior to this spate of talk, Jun, a Mandarin speaker, has difficulty using third person subject pronouns and possessives correctly; he incorrectly uses *he* for *she*, and *his* for *her*, committing numerous errors as he describes

his female partner's (Jia's) shopping habits. The teacher corrects him each time, which prompts him to apologize for his errors.

Excerpt 6.3a it's really hard for Chinese people

01 Jun: I'm [so so sorry]
 02 SS: [((*light laughter*))]
 03 T: ((*to Jun*))-no don't be sorry but ((*slaps fist in hand*))-I'm gonna
 04 (.) I'm gonna (.) by the time you finish this course?
 05 SS: heh [heh heh]
 06 Ahm: ((*to T*))-[but it's] really hard for chinese [people.]
 07 T: ((*turns to Ahm*))-[I know.] I know it.
 08 Ahm: → because [there is no uh difference] between he or she
 09 Jun: [°syl syl syl be- before°]
 10 Ahm: and [chi chi]
 11 T: → [exactly.] I understand. (.) I mean I know why it's hard
 12 but \$every time you [do it, I'm gonna\$] ((*smacks fist in palm*))
 13 Jun: .. ((*smiling*))-[yeah okay]
 14 T: \$every time ((*scan group, hands out*))-er let's all be attentive.\$

After Jun apologizes for making the *he/she* error yet again, the teacher tells him not to feel bad but insists that she will continue to correct him. Ahmet then self-selects, pivots to Jun's L1 and appears to defend him by offering an account to the teacher -- that the *he/she* distinction is *really hard for Chinese people* (line 06). The teacher turns to Ahmet to confirm this, and Ahmet continues, *because there is no uh difference between he or she* (line 08). Ahmet has taken on dual teacher roles of protecting Jun, and providing a reason for his difficulty. He then attempts to continue, but the teacher takes the floor and states that he is correct and that she understands the issue with Mandarin. She then adds, smiling, that she will continue to correct Jun, which is layered with an attention-getting fist-smack gesture. Jun smiles back, and the teacher shifts her gaze to address the group, calling on everyone to *be attentive* layered with arms and hands outstretched (line 14). This appears to be a teacher-move to end the matter; however, Ahmet again self-selects and initiates an informative comparison of Turkish, his L1, and English. Excerpt 6.3b

begins with a repetition of line 14, which calls on everyone's help in attending to Jun's *he/she* errors.

Excerpt 6.3b we have same thing

14 T: \$every time ((*scan group, hands out*))-er let's all be attentive.\$

15 Ahm: → ((*T, SS gaze at Ahm*))-and also we have (.) same thing.

16 ((*gaze T-SS, left arm out*))-uhm we don't say ((*pt to Jun*))-he or

17 ((*pt to Jia*))-she. just we say ((*pt to Jun*))-‘o’ ((*pt to Jia*))-‘o’

18 like a [not like a male female]

19 T: → [((*pt to Jun*))-‘o’? ((*pt to Jia*))-‘o’.\$]

20 SS: [((*laughter*))]

21 Ahm: ‘o’ mean [‘o’ means \$‘he’ ‘she’\$]

22 T: → ((*holds up her iphone, to group*))-[also (.) ‘o.’]

23 ((*to Ahmet*))-what about this?

24 SS: ((*light laughter, gaze at Ahmet*))

25 T: → ((*to Ahmet*))-‘o.’

26 Ahm: ((*shift gaze back and forth to T, SS*))-look

27 ((*moves scarf on desk closer to him and points*))-‘bu’

28 ((*pushes mini-recorder on desk farther away and points to it*))-‘shu’

29 ((*points to T's desk*))-‘o’ ((*2-handed measure*))-like distance.

30 S?: oh

31 Ahm: [for distance.]

32 SS: [((*gaze at Ahm, light laughter*))]]

33 T: ((*to Ahmet*))-OH.

34 → ((*to group*))-[‘o’ for distance. oh. okay.]

35 SS: [((*laughter, staggered*))-ah::]

36 Ahm: ((*rolling hands*))-[not like a fe[male or male] k- thing]

37 Jun: [((*nodding*))-yeah]

38 T, SS: [((*gaze at Ahmet, light laughter, light talk*))]

39 T: → ((*gaze at grp*))-[oh so it's ((*measure gesture*))-about distance]=

40 SS: [((*continued light talk*))]=

41 Jun: =yeah yeah.

42 Ahm: but ah like ah this ((*points to nearby scarf on desk and holds*))

43 (0.4)

44 T: → ((*to group*))-right, like [this, these, ((*points away*))-that,] those

45 Ahm: [((*chuckling*))]

46 T: → ((*to group*))-so you do- [you don't] say ((*points out*))-he she

47 Ahm: [like that]

48 T: → ((*to Ahmet*))-you say like ‘this’ or ‘that’=

49 Ahm: =yeah=

50 T: → =((*to group*))-languages are radically different. it's cra:zy.

51 ((*to Jun*))-but we're gonna help you so don't be sorry

52 we're helping.

53 Jun: ((*points to Jia*))-so after (.) she (.) get (.) got married?

Once again, Ahmet self-selects, *and also we have same thing* (line 15), in continued alignment with Jun. Then, putting aside Jun's L1, Mandarin, Ahmet pivots to his L1 and begins an explanation of how Turkish manages the English third-person pronouns *he* and *she*, shifting his gaze from the teacher to the group. After recruiting learner attention with layered talk plus an outstretched arm gesture, he again layers talk and gestures, *we don't say 'he' pointing to Jun, or 'she' pointing to Jia, we say 'o' pointing to Jun and 'o' pointing to Jia* (lines 16-17); he adds, *like a not like a male female* (line 18), which is uttered in overlap with the teacher's repetition of Ahmet's 'o' and 'o' and his pointing gestures to Jun and Jia (line 19). With this repetition of Ahmet's words and gestures, the teacher appears to embrace his teacher-role, and she joins students as a fellow learner; however, she simultaneously retains the teacher roles of asking for clarification and broadcasting Ahmet's explanation via repetition to the group. Ahmet further explains that *'o' means \$'he' and 'she'\$* (line 21). The teacher expands on this by holding up her iphone, an "it," and, utters *also (.) 'o' what about this?* (lines 22-23). She does this, presumably, to see if *it* joins third person pronouns *he/she* as 'o' in Turkish, a move which either teacher or learner could take during an explanation. Ahmet-as-teacher calls for the group's attention, *look* (line 26); he then moves objects around on his desk and points to them. First, he moves his scarf closer to him, points, and utters '*bu,*' then he moves his mini-recorder a bit farther away, points, and utters '*shu,*' and finally, he points across to the teacher's iphone on her desk, utters 'o' (lines 27-29), and adds, *like distance, for distance*, layered with a two-handed measure-gesture (lines 29-31). The teacher-as-learner responds in line 33 with an emphatic change-of-state token *OH* (Heritage, 1984) directed to Ahmet, then shifts her gaze to the group and clarifies, *'o' for distance. oh.*

okay. (line 34). Ahmet adds *not like a female or male k- thing* (line 36), to which teacher and learners smile and nod, and addressing the group, the teacher repeats Ahmet's *it's about distance* layered with his measure-gesture (line 39). Ahmet points to his nearby scarf, *this*, which the teacher confirms, *right*.

At this juncture, the teacher takes the floor and uses Ahmet's *this* (line 42) to pivot from his explanation to an explicit L1-L2 connection. First, she shifts to group-gaze and expands on *this* to include all demonstrative pronouns *this*, *these* (i.e., nearby) and *that*, *those* (i.e., more distant) with expansive layered gestures; then, she addresses a final summary statement to the group, *so you do- don't say he she* (line 46), and shifting gaze to Ahmet, *you say like 'this' 'that'* (line 48). Ahmet confirms the teacher's summary, and her final comments to the group, *languages are radically different, it's cra:zy* (line 50), dramatically highlight the fact that L1-L2 differences exist. Although Ahmet initiates the L1-L2 exploration and takes on the teacher role by explaining via examples and gestures, the teacher, in her dual roles as teacher and student, deploys various teacher practices for making the L1-L2 connection clear to all. Ahmet's explanation is both clarified and broadcast via the teacher's repetitions of his words and gestures (lines 33-34, 39). The teacher clearly positions Ahmet as the Turkish expert and gives him the floor. Although Ahmet shows that Turkish does not use the pronouns *he* and *she* but uses distance expressions instead, it is the teacher who highlights the L1-L2 equivalent and more fully articulates how the Turkish system appears to connect with English demonstrative pronouns. There is no Turkish equivalent for English *he/she*, but there is a way to identify persons and objects by distance, which does connect the two languages. Finally, as in

previous examples, the teacher dramatically highlights the difference between how languages work with her statement, *languages are radically different. it's cra:zy.*

Although there are many differences between this excerpt and the previous two, the teacher allows Ahmet, as Turkish expert, to take the lead, which eventually uncovers an L1-L2 connection. It seems that Ahmet has momentarily hijacked the topic of shopping, and perhaps the teacher was not planning to check-in with students on Jun's *he/she* issue. At any rate, it is a fruitful interaction, and an interesting connection is made. Notably, it is not the teacher who pivots to the L1 as in previous excerpts, but Ahmet-as-teacher, who does so. The teacher uses repetition of Ahmet's talk and gestures to clarify and broadcast his explanation, however, thus retaining the teacher-responsibility of maintaining group focus. Verbal dramatic highlighting occurs once the teacher regains the floor; she shifts her gaze to the group, states that there are radical differences among languages, and emphatically adds, *it's cra:zy.*

In sum, this teacher uses verbal and nonverbal resources to focus attention on how learners' L1s may account for their errors/confusion in the L2; she does this by using what she may know about a learners' L1 and/or checking in with learners about their L1s. For example, when the learner's L1 is a Romance language (e.g., Italian), the teacher, a fluent Spanish-speaker, makes an educated guess about a (non)connection, which she either states to the learner or asks the learner to confirm. When she is unfamiliar with a learner's L1 (e.g., Korean, Turkish), she positions the learner as L1 expert; she may check in with that learner via direct question or cede the floor as the learner leads the interaction with her support. Although the teacher usually initiates these zoom-out moments, a learner may do so. In Excerpt 6.3b, for example, a learner launches and

directs an interactive explanation of a non-connection, which leads to a different, and perhaps unanticipated, L1-L2 connection; the teacher does, however, step back in to clarify and summarize.

In each case, in order to keep the group's focus sharp, the teacher repeats learner utterances to clarify and broadcast. Individual-directed gaze is employed for one-on-one check-ins, while group-directed gaze is reserved for advice and summaries. Once the (non)connections are made explicit, the teacher uses dramatic highlighting to accentuate the difference(s). She does this by making emphatic statements and giving advice (e.g., *you gotta change that, languages are radically different, it's crazy*), and staging dramatic moments, such as making unusual sound effects layered with equally unusual gestures, and using expansive gestures.

Zoom out to Larger Patterns

Connections can also be made between a specific error or source of confusion (e.g., a lexical item, an incorrect verb form) and a larger pattern or structure in the L2; searching out and highlighting these language connections is another feature of zooming out. Connecting the specific to the general can show how, for example, the corrected form of a seemingly isolated error is actually part of a general pattern, thus presenting more comprehensive, *big picture* teaching moments. Once the connection has been stated, the subsequent collaborative work plays out in a way similar to the *zoom in* practices described in the previous chapter. Below, I present 3 representative excerpts from a collection of 19 cases in the data set.

In the first excerpt, learners have been sharing what makes their partner unique, a pair work task that opens the class. Clara describes Ana as being *a good cooker*, which leads to general group confusion about the use of the profession suffix *-er*. As this exchange begins, the teacher warns the students, *we have a problem*.

Excerpt 6.4 we have another one

22 T: ((*finger up, turns to BB*))-but uh-uh. so we have a
 23 ((*walks to BB*))-problem.
 24 (0.2)
 25 → but this e-r? (.)
 26 (0.4)-((*writes '-er' on BB*)
 27 happens a lot. ((*faces SS*))-it's the person who:
 28 S?: °mm°
 29 T: ((*right hand backward gesture*))-does something (.) right?
 30 → we have another one. we have this?
 31 ((*writes '-ist' on BB*))-if you work with biology? in the field
 32 of biology (.) you are ((*points to '-ist' on BB and holds*))-a
 33 A: biologist.
 34 T: → biologist. ((*to grp*))-if you study psychiatry?
 35 you're a ((*pts to '-ist' on BB*)
 36 (0.5)
 37 Ana: ()
 38 T: → psychiatry a < psychiatrist. > if you study psychology
 39 ((*looks at '-ist' on BB then at group*)) you're a
 40 (0.5)
 41 Cla: psy psychol [<psychol> heh]
 42 T: → [psychol- try it]
 43 Cla: <psych(h)o>logist
 44 T: psyCHOlogist.
 45 Cla: psychologist.
 46 T: → ((*to Clara*))-right. ((*to group*))-i- it- we have these classic
 47 endings, right? so then you say ok (.) well (.)
 48 ((*writes 'cook' on BB*))-she ((*turns to group*))-cooks so you say=
 49 Cla: =she's a good [cook.]
 50 T: [is she a] cooker? (.) no.
 51 is she a (0.2)-((*looks around group*)) cookist? =
 52 SS: [((*laughter*))]
 53 T: [no.] that one definitely doesn't sound good.
 54 (0.2)

55 but you know what? ((turns to BB, writes 'cooker'))
 56 (0.2)-((crosses out '-er' and turns to group))
 57 nothing. ((hand out to Ana))-she's a good cook.
 58 SS: ((murmurs, nods))-ah hah.

The teacher first recruits learner attention by stating that they *have a problem* (lines 22-23), and she then layers verbal and written modalities to focus on the suffix *-er*; she utters *but this e-r,?* and anchors *-er* on the board (lines 25-26). She then turns to the group and states, *it's the person who: does something, right?* (lines 27, 29), which is layered with a backhand gesture to *-er* on the board. Now that the specific target is isolated and anchored, the teacher zooms out and pivots to another suffix used for professions, *we have another one. we have this?* (line 30), and the teacher writes *-ist* on the board. By anchoring both the specific, *-er*, and an example from the larger profession suffix group, *-ist*, on the board, learners are offered both verbal and nonverbal input. Once learners see that *-er* is not the only suffix for professions, the teacher deploys familiar digging practices -- a series of partially repeated cued elicitations using DIUs (Koshik, 2002) (lines 31-45) -- to build a collection of *-ist* profession examples and push learners to participate. The teacher begins with, *if you work with biology? In the field of biology (.) you are a*, as she points to *-ist* on the board and holds, which clearly indicates the response she expects. Ana responds, *biologist*, and the teacher repeats to confirm and continues. Two more cued elicitations are addressed to the group, *what if you study psychiatry? you're a* (line 34-35) and *if you study psychology you're a* (lines 38-39), both layered with gestures to *-ist* on the board). No one seems able to pronounce *psychiatrist* and, perhaps for that reason, the teacher chooses the presumably less problematic *psychology-psychologist* although the respondent, Clara, has difficulty pronouncing this as well. When a correct response is given (e.g., Ana's *biologist*, Clara's *psychologist*), the

teacher gives individual attention, both gaze and verbal confirmation via repetition, to the responder, then shifts to group-gaze and addresses the subsequent question to all learners. After this *pushed* interactive exchange, the teacher summarizes the larger pattern to the group, layered with group gaze, *we have these classic endings, right?* (lines 46-47). This summary statement ends the big picture phase and signals a return to the original *cook+er* issue as the teacher utters, *so then you say ok (.) well (.)*, and writes *cook* on the board, followed by *she cooks so you say* (line 48), and the rest of the *cook/cooker* problem plays out.

Making a connection between a specific case and a larger language structure or pattern appears to involve various teacher practices: (1) anchor on the board both the specific case (i.e., *cook+er*) and an example of the larger pattern (i.e., profession suffix, *+ist*); (2) use scaffolding techniques to initiate and cue up a campaign to build a collection of examples upon which a general pattern can be formulated, and (3) push learner participation via questioning and scaffolding. Learner attention is secured and maintained via group scan, and potential learner confusion due to additional information (i.e., *-ist*) appears to be minimal due to (1) heavy, repeated anchoring on the board and other nonverbal messaging (e.g., gesture back to board, point and hold gesture, gaze shifts), and (2) repeated/partially repeated cued elicitations. The summarizing statement about the general pattern is followed by a teacher-directed return to the specific case, *cook/cooker* and the *-er* suffix.

The next excerpt differs in the type of prompt the teacher uses to build the collection of examples. Prior to this spate of talk, the learners engaged in a paired discussion to discover what makes their partners unique. As part of the whole group

follow-up, Pia stated that her partner, Jia, married her husband nine months after meeting him. Ana then asks about the expression for *falling in love immediately* (not shown), and the teacher picks up Ana's question.

Excerpt 6.5 silent letters

01 T: ((gaze around group, index up))-what do you call that?
 02 Di: fell in love
 03 T: yeah. they fall in love, but there's
 04 an ex[pression we have]
 05 Ana: [I know I know.] ((smiling, laughs))
 06 [but I don-]
 07 T: [do you know] ((points at Ana, looks at group))-what it is?
 08 SS: ((some shake heads))
 09 T: ((index up, points to right eye))
 10 Di: at the first sight. ((T swings index around to/gazes at Di))
 11 SS: (((staggered talk)))
 12 T: [tell us] ((nods, gets up, goes to BB))
 13 Di: at the first sight.
 14 T: right.
 15 Ana: the first [sight]
 16 T: [so] it's ((faces BB))-called?
 17 (3.0)-((writes 'love at first'))
 18 → ((facing board, swivels head to group))-how do you spell 'sight.'
 19 Di: 's' 'I' (.) ['g' 'h' 't']
 20 SS: ['s' 'i' 'g' 'h' 't']
 21 T: 's'? ((turns to BB, writes 's'))
 22 S?: 'i'
 23 T: ((writes 'i'))
 24 S?: 'g'
 25 T: ((writes 'g'))
 26 SS: 'h'
 27 T: ((writes 'h'))
 28 S?: 't'
 29 T: ((writes 't')) ((hunch shoulders, turn to SS))-
 30 → ↑what's this 'g' 'h.' ↑that's crazy. ↑who does this.
 31 SS: ((laughter, [chuckling]))
 32 T: → [do you know] other words with 'gh'?
 33 SS: ((staggered voices))-height?
 34 T: → height? (((writes 'height' on BB)))
 35 Di: [light?]
 36 T: → (1.0)-((writes 'light' on BB))
 37 light? ((turns to group))-what's the opposite of wrong.
 38 Pia: right.

39 SS: [right.]
 40 T: → [right.] (.) there are all these words.
 41 lookit (.) we've got this ((circles 'gh' in 'light'))-stupid little
 42 (0.2)-((turns to group, scans)) for no reason.
 43 {((waves hands))- I I } I don't ((hands together))-know
 44 well then you would say
 45 (0.6)-((turns to BB and writes 'it was'))
 46 'it was' (.) just to put it in a sentence.
 47 → ((expansive arms out gesture))-it was love at first sight.
 48 (0.2)-((gaze at group, small nods))
 49 ((walks to chair, leans on it))-aw (.) that's nice.

This exchange begins with the teacher calling for how to express falling in love the first time you see someone, and Di answers, *fell in love* (line 02). The teacher asks for an expression that English has and Di offers, *at the first sight* (line 10). Although her contribution is not entirely accurate, the teacher accepts it and moves to the board for further work, asking the group, *so it's called?* (line 16). She then writes *love at first*, stops abruptly, turns to the group and asks, *how do you spell 'sight.'* (line 18). The anchoring on the board of the teacher-identified problematic word, *sight*, is accomplished via student-led spelling, and the teacher writes each letter after students call them out one-by-one (lines 19-28). Now that the specific case, *sight*, has been anchored, the teacher connects it to the general spelling pattern of silent 'gh,' *what's this 'g' 'h'* (line 30) and makes a dramatic comment about how *crazy* it is to have these silent letters (line 30). This is followed by a call for other words, *do you know other words with 'gh'?* (line 32). Several students immediately respond, *height*, which the teacher writes on the board and then repeats (lines 33-34). Di suggests *light*, and again, the teacher first writes it on the board, then repeats it (lines 35-37). The teacher then forces another example that, presumably, all students will know at this proficiency level, *what's the opposite of 'wrong.'* (line 37). Asking this final question perhaps encourages all students to

participate; it is reminiscent of the previously described digging practices that allow learners to use what the teacher may assume they already know in order to make the work collaborative and boost participation. Lines 40-42 summarize the general silent ‘gh’ pattern, *there are all these words*, bundled with a surprising teacher-opinion, *we’ve got this stupid little*, layered with further anchored focus (i.e., the teacher circles ‘gh’ in *sight* on the board). The pivot back to the specific case, *sight*, occurs in lines 45-47, when the teacher writes *it was* and completes the corrected sentence offered by Di, *it was love at first sight*, and the sequence ends.

In this excerpt, the single case, *sight*, is pronounced, and student-led spelling anchors it on the board. The specific issue, silent -*gh*, is further targeted by circling it before zooming out to the larger picture with the teacher’s pivot question, *do you know other words with ‘gh’?* This question cues up learners to build a collection of words with the silent ‘gh’ spelling, indicating a larger pattern; the teacher repeats each learner contribution, and she anchors each on the board (e.g., height, light). The call for multiple learner contributions is reminiscent of how students and teacher put together a definition of *upset* in the previous chapter (see Chapter V), but with added anchoring on the board. Finally, the teacher pivots back to the specific case, *sight*, and then the whole group follow-up to the speaking task continues.

In the final excerpt, the teacher uses yet another way to set up building a collection of examples. Rather than set up drill-like cued elicitation as in Excerpt 6.4, or ask learners to contribute their own examples as in Excerpt 6.5, here, students engage in a teacher-directed search for examples in the written course materials. In this exchange, the group is doing a check of their daily preposition worksheet, which includes the sentence,

I'm thinking about looking for a new job. The teacher has just addressed Pia's preference for *I'm thinking about to look*; as an Italian speaker, this is a direct translation from her L1, which the teacher points out. On the board, the teacher has written, *I'm thinking about Ving*, and *prep* is written above *about*. The teacher begins by explaining why *to look* may sound *better* to Pia.

Excerpt 6.6 any other examples on this page? (D1 1:46)

- 36 T: ((to Pia))-it sounds better for you
 37 (0.2) with an infinitive. (.) why? because that's what
 38 you do in your native ((Jun, Jia nod))-language.
 39 it makes perfect sense (.) to have that feeling
 40 but it isn't ((turns to look at sentence on BB))
 41 → so in this case ((touches 'about' on BB, gazes at Pia))
 42 → all prepositions ((marks time with arm))-<every single one>
 43 every preposition, if you need what looks like
 44 a verb after? (.) i-n-g.
 45 (0.4)-((group-scan))
 46 ev- every single time. there are no exceptions. I think
 47 english has maybe two rules with no exceptions?
 48 (0.2)
 49 it's n- it doesn't happen \$very often.\$ ((points to 'Ving' on B))
 50 and this is one. this is a good one. and you're gonna see this.
 51 → any other examples?-(points to paper on desk)) on this page?
 52 (0.5)-((T sit, T-SS mutual gaze))
 53 → are there any other examples of this?
 54 (1.0)-((SS looking at sentences on handout))
 55 nope? ((T looking at handout))
 56 (0.5)
 57 nope?
 58 (0.5)
 59 no other examples. ((looks up at SS))
 60 → have you got page two? have you got prepositions two?
 61 have you still got that page?
 62 SS: ((start looking through their papers))
 63 T: → take that out. let's look and see
 64 and see if we see any examples-((SS still looking
 65 through papers)) or look on with someone else.
 66 didj- see if you've got page prepositions two

67 (.) take a quick look.-(*Ahm takes iphone photo of Jun's page*)
 68 Jia: in charge of buying
 69 T: → ((*points to, gaze at Jia*))- there you go. what number is that.
 70 SS: ((*staggered voices*)) number 8
 71 T: → ((*to group*))-look at number 8 (0.2) on page two.
 72 (1.0)
 73 number 8? you see it?
 74 Jun: in charge in charge of buying.
 75 T: → in charge of ?
 76 SS: ((*staggered voices*)) in charge of buying
 77 T: there you go.
 78 (0.2)
 79 → ((*looking at page*))-anything else there on that page?
 80 SS: (1.0)-[*(SS look at page)*]
 81 Jia: [(*shakes head*)]
 82 T: → ((*to group*))-this is something you will see again and again
 83 and when you (*rt. arm swipes left-rt*)-buy your magazine and
 84 ((*rt. arm left-rt.*))-when you start looking at your magazine
 85 you will see this ((*two-arm circle gesture*))-all through (.)
 86 ((*bigger two-arm gesture*))-everywhere (.) kay? this is a thing.
 87 (0.4)-((*group scan*))
 88 >alrighty?< (.) okay let's go back to number three.

After explaining why Pia prefers *thinking about to look* (lines 37-39), the teacher says that it is not correct in English and turns to the sentence on the board, *in this case*. She turns to Pia, and touches *about* on the board, after which she immediately pivots to the general pattern, and gives a deductive explanation. The teacher begins with the emphatic statement, *all prepositions*, and, marking time with arm gestures, she restates, <*every single one*> *every preposition*, and then concludes with, *if you need what looks like a verb after? (.) i-n-g* (lines 42-44). This is followed by a 0.5 second group scan, perhaps for dramatic effect. She then drills down on the pattern, *ev- every single time. there are no exceptions* and adds that it is unusual to find a general pattern with no exceptions in English, *it doesn't happen \$very often.\$* layered with an index point to *Ving* on the board

(line 49). Now that the teacher has clearly stated the general pattern, the teacher cues up learners to build a collection of examples; she asks them to search for *any other examples? on this page?* (i.e., *prep + Ving*) as she points to the worksheet (line 51). After teacher-learners mutual gaze during the (0.5) second silence, the teacher repeats the prompt rather than offering an example herself. A longer (1.0) second silence follows during which students look at the worksheet for examples of preposition+Ving. The teacher then utters *nope?* twice (lines 55, 57), leaving the slots open for further learner contributions. In line 59, the teacher presumably realizes that there are no other examples on this page, and she asks students to look at a previously completed preposition worksheet, *prepositions two* (lines 60-61). She allows learners time to find their papers as she adds, *take that out. let's look and see and see if we see any examples or look on with someone else* (lines 63-65), with *let's* and *we* indicating that this is a group mission. Her final prompts, *see if you've got page prepositions two* and *take a quick look* are answered by Jia, *in charge of buying* (line 68). The teacher then seems to deliberately slow the pace to give learners time to locate the sentence on the worksheet; she asks for the number of the example, thereby calling for participation, as she could easily find the number herself. Various students respond, *number eight* (line 70), which directs both teacher and all other students to the example, and the teacher repeats, *look at number 8 on page two*, which is followed by a (1.0) second silence during which everyone finds the sentence. Once more the teacher makes sure students see the pattern, *number 8? you see it?* (line 73), and Jun repeats the example. As if that were not sufficient, the teacher drills down with a DIU, *in charge of?* (line 75), and more students respond, *in charge of buying*. It appears that one or two student responses are not enough for the teacher; she pushes for a broader

response to the search prompt, and she is ultimately successful due to staying with the example and simply waiting rather than moving on. The teacher then asks students to look for more examples on that worksheet (line 79), but there do not seem to be any (lines 80-81). Although much has been made of the general pattern including repeated, emphatic talk and gestures, the teacher makes one more plea for learner attention to this matter; she refers to the magazines students buy and read throughout the course, and layers big arm gestures with the announcement, *you will see this all through everywhere (.) kay? this is a thing.* (lines 85-86). This push for students to search out examples of this structure also encourages them, on a larger scale, to recognize and discover language patterns on their own. The teacher follows this with a quick (0.5) second group scan, and finally, a return to the single case raised by Pia on the original preposition worksheet, *let's go back to number three.*

In the final excerpt in this section, the teacher anchors the specific case on the board as in the previous two excerpts. After the initial anchoring, however, there are several differences. First, the general pattern, *prep+Ving*, is clearly established by anchoring it on the board before building the collection of examples; second, learners are directed to search through printed course materials on their own in order to collect examples; and third, although the search only results in one example of *prep+Ving*, it is hard-won and requires sustained learner effort. The teacher uses repetition and gaps that slow the pace to focus learners' attention, keep them on task, and boost their participation. As in previous excerpts, the zoom-out to the general pattern then shifts back to the specific example, sentence number three on the worksheet.

In sum, this section focuses on how the teacher moves from a specific error or difficulty to its place within a larger pattern and back again. Along the way, she deploys several teacher practices during what appears to be a three-part sequence: (1) anchor the specific case (e.g., *sight*) and/or general pattern (e.g., *preposition+Ving*) on the board, (2) engineer and cue up a campaign to co-build a collection of examples upon which a general pattern may be formulated or verified, and (3) return to the original specific case. Building the collection of examples hinges, in large part, on the learners' full-voiced participation: they may be *pushed* by the teacher's use of drill-like cued elicitations; they may be *encouraged* to contribute by offering up what they already know (e.g. words with silent -gh-); or they may be *forced*, that is, made solely responsible for finding examples due to the teacher's insistence and withdrawal. In addition, learners build the collection via a teacher-led inductive or deductive process. The teacher relies heavily on repetition to clarify and broadcast both her own and others' utterances, and as described in previous chapters, she layers and bundles verbal and nonverbal resources (gaze, gestures, anchoring on the board,) that amplify each other as she directs and manages group focus and pumps up participation.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, I described two sets of teacher practices that encourage and promote group work on understanding by engaging in the type of *digging* that features “zooming out,” or viewing a specific learner's problem through a wider lens. A specific learner error or point of confusion is often, perhaps always, simply one instance of a larger language issue (e.g., use of translation, grammatical structure, spelling pattern).

These teacher practices help learners to step back and look at a larger language picture; from this new perspective, L1 and L2 (non)connections become visible, and a specific problem (e.g., error, confusion, misunderstanding) can be seen to fit within a larger L2 pattern.

The first set, *zoom out to inter-language (non)connections*, involves using learners' L1s to source possible reasons that may account for learner errors and/or confusion. In some cases, the teacher uses what she, presumably, knows about specific L1s; she then layers verbal and nonverbal resources to either announce and/or check in with learners of those L1s to make those (non)connections. When she is unfamiliar with a learner's L1, this teacher positions the learner as L1 expert and may simply check in or hand over the teacher role to the L1 expert. The (non)connections are made explicit and accentuated through verbal and nonverbal means. The second set of practices, *zoom out to a larger pattern*, involves connecting a specific error or point of confusion to a larger general pattern (e.g., profession suffixes, preposition+Ving). Highly collaborative teacher-learner digging works to establish this larger pattern by building a collection of examples similar to the single case. The teacher demonstrates considerable flexibility in how and when the general pattern is introduced and tied to the specific case, and also, in how she and the learners co-build the collection of examples that reflect the pattern. In both sets of practices, the teacher layers verbal and nonverbal resources (e.g., gaze, unusual/expansive gestures, anchoring on the board) to clarify, emphasize, and optimize her own and others' talk.

The learners' collaboration is essential for this type of digging, and their active engagement in this work may, simultaneously, boost their language awareness and

promote learner agency (i.e., assert and assume responsibility for own learning). By both reflecting on L1-L2 (non)connections and placing specific problematic L2 cases within larger general L2 language patterns, learners may become more aware of how the target language *works*, and a fuller picture of the L2 may emerge. Closely tied to heightened language awareness is an enhanced sense of learner agency. For example, as learners co-build their collections of examples, their successful search for cases that fit a pattern may embolden them to look for additional patterns on their own. Also, the advice that the teacher gives learners may encourage their use of learning strategies (e.g., L1-L2 translation as *a first strategy*) and highlight the importance of continued study and practice in their L2-world outside the classroom (e.g., search texts for examples of *prep+Ving*). In short, offering learners a *big picture* of language and encouraging them to search for that big picture seems integral to this type of work on understanding.

VII - DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

In a sense, this project was in an embryonic stage for many decades as I taught ESL and EFL in various institutional contexts, each with its own learner profiles and learning goals. As a practicing ESL/EFL teacher, one of my ongoing concerns was how to help learners gain an understanding of how the target language worked, beyond getting the right answer. This concern gained even more importance in the past 10 years in my work as a teacher educator. I continually searched for ways to help new teachers to “see” how teacher/learner interaction could cultivate understandings of how language was put together, which might then inspire them to reflect on and further develop their own classroom teaching skills.

When Bartels (2009) suggests that pre-service and novice teachers find it extremely challenging to shift from *writing and talking about* teaching (academic skills) to *doing* teaching (practice skills), he neglects to add that shifting in reverse is equally challenging. In other words, simply because a teacher educator can *do* teaching in her own ESL classroom does not mean that she can write and talk about how to do it for pre-service and novice teachers, what Freeman (1996) calls, “tell[ing] the story” (p. 99). This study is, therefore, highly personal. It addresses the challenge that I, as a teacher-turned-teacher educator, face -- to describe to beginning teachers what classroom interaction that works on understanding entails in enough detail, and with enough precision, to make it usable knowledge.

It is clearly the teacher's role to push learners to go beyond simply getting a correct answer in response to an error, a question, or confusion; a teacher's real work is to guide learners to an understanding of what is holding up that correct answer or causing confusion (Waring, 2015). The one broad research question this study attempted to answer was: What practices do teacher and students engage in to collaboratively work on understanding in an adult ESL classroom? In this chapter, I begin with a brief summary of the major findings of this project. Then, I will focus on theoretical implications of the study. I end the chapter with a discussion of pedagogical implications that may be of interest to language educators as well as language teachers.

Summary of Major Findings

In this study, I have described three sets of teacher practices that set up, encourage, promote, and at times, force teacher-learner collaborative work on understanding in an adult ESL classroom. I have called this type of work "digging," and although it is teacher-designed and teacher-orchestrated, it requires the learners' cooperation and active participation.

In Chapter IV, I explored the teacher practices of "pre-digging," which prepared and softened the ground for whole group digging. The teacher first opened a space for this type of work by stopping the forward motion of whatever talk or task was occurring in the moment. She effectuated a clear break by layering verbal and nonverbal resources to recruit learners' attention and direct it to a specific troublesome issue. The teacher then kept learners' attention focused and encouraged them to participate in the upcoming digging work. She worked to get students *on board* by taking time to explicitly express

her appreciation for the risks they took in speaking up and offering ideas, which can be especially difficult in a whole group setting. In addition, she explicitly reassured learners that she understood how difficult the targeted language issue might be for them. She also assessed where learners either claimed to be or demonstrably *were* in their understanding of the issue so as to locate an appropriate starting point for group digging. With these pre-digging practices, therefore, we began to see a mix of controlling, often abrupt moves by the teacher (i.e., focusing attention, taking individual-directed surveys of student understanding, asking for examples) along with softer, more empathetic moves such as appreciating risk-taking and legitimizing learner difficulty. These teacher moves included both cognitive and affective dimensions which underpinned the digging process as well.

In Chapters V and VI, “digging” was presented as an umbrella term for two broad, complementary areas of work on understanding: (1) digging that “zooms in” to isolate a specific troublesome case, put it under a microscope, and dissect it (see Chapter V); and (2) digging that “zooms out” to connect a specific troublesome case to a larger language issue in the learners’ L1s or the L2 (see Chapter VI).

In Chapter V, I described how the teacher guided, encouraged, and pushed learners to participate in the collaborative work of the digging that “zooms in.” First, the teacher transformed the targeted issue into a problem to be considered and resolved collectively, by all learners. This was accomplished by posing an explicit group challenge, which positioned all learners as active co-participants in reasoning through the issue, creating a *community of diggers*. Then, the teacher employed various scaffolding techniques that cued up learners to mount multiple verbal and nonverbal attacks on the targeted language issue. During the attacks, we saw how the teacher often took complete

control, taking learners by the hand through the reasoning process (e.g., asking easily answerable cued elicitation), which allowed learners to, at the very least, participate in the work. As the teacher guided learners to work collectively through their response to the challenge, she kept them engaged by focusing and refocusing their attention on the target through the use of these multiple attacks. Also, by withholding answers and assessments, she pushed learners to *do the work* themselves, aided, in part, by relying on what they, presumably, already knew or could contribute, based on their proficiency level. Finally, the teacher positioned learners as protagonists and meaning-makers in examples that would aid their understanding of the targeted issue. She placed them in familiar *here-and-now* scenarios that would lend meaning to the language issue and connect what they studied in class to their lives outside the classroom.

In contrast to the “zoom in” type of digging, in Chapter VI, I discussed digging that featured “zooming out.” Whereas “zoom in” focused learner attention narrowly on one specific troublesome or difficult case and stayed with that one case, “zoom out” used a wide-angle lens to connect one specific troublesome or difficult case to a larger language system, either the learner’s own L1 or the target language, English. In order to “see” the connections between the L1 and L2 or between the specific case in the L2 and a larger L2 pattern, language issues were viewed from a greater height. The teacher positioned learners as L1 experts in making L1-L2 (non)connections, and she relied on both her presumed expertise in Romance languages as well as the learners’ L1 expertise to showcase them. In one case, we saw a learner-expert take on the teacher role as he led the group through how his language worked. The teacher, however, took back her role when clarifying the connection between this student’s L1 and a larger pattern in the L2. In

the specific L2 case-to-general L2 pattern digging, the teacher led interactive work to help learners build a collection of cases that fleshed out or revealed this larger pattern. Notably, “zooming out” appeared to follow a sequence which began with the specific case, then cued up learners to build a collection of similar cases revealing a larger pattern, and finally, returned to the specific case.

Although “zoom in” and “zoom out” digging have different ends as one appears to look inward (i.e., stay with one case) and the other outward (i.e., connect to a larger pattern), they shared several characteristics, and much of the unfolding moment-by-moment interaction looked similar. For example, both types featured ample use of exploratory talk and a variety of scaffolding techniques, ranging from highly controlled drill-like interaction to open-ended, but carefully designed, appeals for learner contributions followed by teacher recapping. In order to encourage and manage whole group collaboration, at times, the teacher stepped back and, at other times, she heavily controlled the interaction. I would argue, however, that all interaction was under her control. Finally, in both types of digging, the teacher moved learners in one of two general directions: (1) to work through the reasoning that would lead to a correct answer, or (2) to piece together the underlying reasoning once the correct answer had been established.

To a certain extent, by working with students’ existing knowledge and lived experiences, these phases and types of digging offer a powerful exhibit of what it means to be truly “student centered.” Throughout the digging process, the teacher seemed to meet the students where they *were* in their understanding, presented challenges appropriate to their proficiency level, and then worked through the process with them,

incrementally, step-by-step. For example, by gauging learner understanding (see Chapter IV), the teacher took time to find out what students claimed to know. Additionally, she used language familiar to learners and called for language that they presumably were able to contribute as digging unfolded. For example, the final definition of *upset* was the result of various student contributions, while the cued elicitation requiring *-er* profession responses (e.g., *teacher, driver*) were already known by all. Finally, the teacher's use of students' L1s and their lived experiences as legitimate classroom topics and in illustrative examples and scenarios (e.g., *bring me coffee* in *bring vs. take*) also met them where they were. In other words, the teacher looked to learners to locate the starting point for collaborative work, and their participation was encouraged, even demanded, step-by-step, through their work on understanding.

Theoretical Implications

This section discusses how the findings of this study contribute to previous research on classroom teaching. As expected, the findings show that both scaffolding (Bruner, 1978; Wood et al., 1976; Walqui, 2006; Walqui & van Lier, 2010) and exploratory talk (Barnes, 1976/1992; Barnes et al., 1969/1990) are integral to the work of digging as the teacher manages learner contributions (Fagan, 2012, 2015b, Lee, 2007, 2008; Seedhouse, 2004; Waring 2008, 2015). More importantly, however, the findings specify what scaffolding and exploratory talk entail at the very micro-level of every gaze, every gesture, and every turn-at-talk. One way to situate the value of this study then is to consider its contributions to specifying classroom interactional competence (CIC) (Seedhouse & Walsh, 2010; Sert & Walsh, 2016; Walsh, 2006, 2011, 2012, Walsh & Li,

2013) with a specific focus on building understanding. In what follows, I highlight two areas of CIC, based on the findings of this study, that are integral to group work that builds understanding: (1) managing participation, and (2) managing affect.

Managing Participation While Building Understanding

For over a decade, research in classroom interactional competence (CIC) has focused on both teachers' and learners' use of interaction to aid learning in the classroom (Seedhouse & Walsh, 2010; Sert & Walsh, 2016; Walsh, 2006, 2011, 2012; Walsh & Li, 2013). Well-developed interactional competence results in a classroom that is "more dialogic, more engaged and more focused on participation" (Walsh, 2012, p. 1). As discussed in the findings, managing participation, which includes promoting learner engagement and maintaining learner involvement, appears to play an essential role in the work of building understanding.

A recurrent theme in this study was seeking and then sustaining a high level of whole group participation. The work of transforming a group of individual students into what I called a "community of diggers" (see Lave & Wenger, 1991), was fueled and supported by the teacher's insistence on participation during group problem-solving, her chosen vehicle for building understanding. The work involved in creating a separate "pre-digging" phase pointed to the importance of opening and establishing a comfortable space for learners to participate in the process. We saw teacher practices that stimulated this group effort during the "pre-digging" and "digging" phases by taking an individual's error or confusion and framing it as a language challenge posed to the whole group.

When the teacher withheld answers and assessments, it made learners step up and collectively respond to the challenges posed; in this way, they were pushed to participate in the work required to build on their understanding.

During group problem-solving for each posed challenge, the teacher sustained group participation by calibrating the degree of difficulty of what was asked of learners, which made their collaboration *do-able* (see Prabhu, 1987). Learners contributed what they already knew or were presumed to know, and their guesses were totally or partially accepted, which appeared to affect their level of participation. For example, as learners engaged in launching multiple attacks on the language issue, the teacher adapted learner cues and responses to their presumed competence, trusting in their ability to collaborate (Waring, 2016). By positioning learners as co-collaborators, digging could only move forward with their active participation.

Participation was also stimulated during “zoom out” digging (Chapter VI) by highlighting learner expertise so both the learner and his or her native language received group attention. We saw this when the teacher relied on learners to recognize (non)connections between their native languages and the target language. In fact, the learners’ display of expertise determined whether this component of “digging” could be carried out, which boosted learner agency (van Lier, 1996) and the importance of their participation.

In sum, the findings suggest that managing learner participation, an essential building-block of CIC, lies at the very heart of group work on building understanding: how to promote it, how to maintain it, and how to steer it. Any attempt to separate participation from the work on building understanding I call “digging” would not present

an accurate picture of its components or how it plays out. It is collective and collaborative by nature. In a highly informative review of the *what* and *how* of language teaching, Waring (2019) uncouples “managing participation” and “building understanding,” treating them “as separate categories for ease of presentation” (p. 1058). In “digging,” we see the intricate connections between these two categories; group participation is integral to building understanding, and digging cannot proceed without group participation. In fact, they are inseparable.

Managing Affect While Building Understanding

As Wright (2005) tells us, “teaching-and-learning is an emotional business” (p. 148), as all teachers and learners surely know. As important as managing affect is to classroom interaction (Arnold, 2009, 2011; Wright, 2005), it seems to have been understudied in CA research (see Bell, 2012; Frawley & Lantolf, 1985; Reddington & Waring, 2015; Waring, 2013). The findings of this study, therefore, contribute to filling this gap by demonstrating how affect is managed in the course of building understanding, and in particular, how the “difficult and delicate” work of managing learner affect appears to be “intentionally foregrounded” (Wright, pp. 146-147) during group work on understanding.

A recurring theme in this study is the *care* (Wright, 2005) that is taken to include all learners in work on understanding. Arnold (2009) writes of the difficulty language learners face as “students’ self-image is more vulnerable when they do not yet have mastery of their vehicle for expression – language” (p. 147). For this reason, and because learners are moving into uncharted territory when they build on their own understanding, teachers necessarily take the lead; learners, however, must be able to follow along in

order to collaborate in the process (Waring, 2015). In order to encourage learner willingness to do this, perhaps, uncomfortable work, the teacher attends to learner affect throughout all phases and types of digging in various ways.

First, during the “pre-digging” phase, learner errors and/or confusion are met with teacher statements that explicitly appreciate risk-taking and legitimize language difficulty. Group attention is then directed away from the student who made the error or expressed confusion, and the problematic language issue itself becomes the focus. From this early point on, the teacher’s interactional work to maintain group focus on the language issue, not the individual learner, is essential to managing affect as the work on building understanding proceeds.

Second, the teacher’s use of code words such as “creative” and “brave” appears to play an important role in managing affect (see Chapter IV). These words are used when individuals make errors or incorrect guesses, and serve as group-builders as they become in-jokes; all learners are made insiders, they belong to the group. This emphasis on inclusion perhaps activates learner involvement, especially when building understanding itself is framed as a group mission.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, key to managing learner affect during work on understanding is the notion of *compassionate directness*, a term borrowed from team-building and group leadership in business contexts (Huffington, 2020); it is based on the premise that members of a team want and appreciate honest feedback. In the group work on understanding examined in this study, this means that when errors are made, or confusion is expressed, they are recognized and treated as problematic but addressed humanely. The findings show that errors and language difficulties are, indeed, singled out,

but then presented to the group as reasonable, worthy objects of study. Language difficulty is a group issue, not an individual one, which is treated seriously but with compassion.

In sum, the findings serve to both support and expand on work that specifies and examines teachers' classroom interactional competence. In particular, we observed various *how-to* skills of managing participation and affect during group work on building understanding. What becomes clear is how inextricably intertwined participation and affect are, and how heavily they influence each other. In other words, if learners are made to feel competent and accepted as valuable members of a group of co-collaborators, they may participate more; conversely, if learners participate more, they may feel more a part of the group learning experience, which may affect their emotional well-being. It appears that managing participation and affect are as intricately connected to each other as they both are to building group understanding. This only underscores the terrifically complex nature of navigating the language classroom with the level of interactional skill that group work on understanding requires and demands.

Pedagogical Implications

This is a study of teaching *in situ*, or more specifically, how an experienced teacher guided and promoted work on understanding, moment-by-moment, in one adult ESL class. The notion of going beyond getting a correct answer and engaging in group work on understanding may be entirely new for novice teachers. With this in mind, the findings can be useful for teacher educators in a number of ways; in particular, to facilitate “talking” and “seeing” during teacher training.

First, establishing a common language to talk about what takes place during “digging” can point to the importance of the issue and, literally, begin the conversation. The use of labels to describe various teacher practices, such as *anchoring*, *appreciating risk-taking*, and *legitimizing language difficulty*, among many others, offers a way for beginning teachers to talk about these actions. *Anchoring*, in particular, may provide a new way to introduce and justify writing key information on the board. It can be pointed out that this practice not only presents a visual cue, but it also captures the teacher’s and learners’ spoken words as they fly by -- or fly above -- learners’ heads. Another useful label may be *mounting multiple attacks* as a way for teachers to focus and refocus learner attention as the group engages in building understanding that moves beyond getting a correct response. Staying with an issue through the time it takes to engage in multiple attacks can be particularly difficult for novice teachers, who may be accustomed to moving on with the lesson after getting a correct response. Importantly, novice teachers can use this common language to participate in class discussions with greater efficiency.

Second, the findings offer instruments for observation of both online and actual classrooms that can help new teachers to “see” interactive work on understanding as it unfolds, i.e., breaking down the digging process into smaller, manageable actions that teachers can take to engage learners in this type of classroom work (see Boblett & Waring, 2017). Teacher training often includes observing classroom teaching even though novice teachers are invariably overwhelmed when asked to describe and critique what they see. There are simply too many things happening, simultaneously and continuously (Tsui, 2003), and specific work on understanding may pass unnoticed. The various practices described in this study can provide a guide for what to look for.

Recordings of teaching can also be paused for novice teachers to search for specific practices (e.g., anchoring, individual-to-group gaze shift, posing a direct group challenge), or note the lack thereof. In one practice after another, student-teachers can be directed to notice what a teacher is doing, both verbally and nonverbally, using the common language that has been introduced. Unfortunately, in many, perhaps most, online teaching clips, there may be few or no digging segments; in these cases, student-teachers can be asked to consider and discuss where and when they could be inserted. They can be asked to watch a teaching clip up to the point where a student makes an error or expresses confusion; the recording can then be paused, and a class discussion can be initiated concerning the possible options a teacher has. After the discussion, the clip resumes and everyone can observe and evaluate the decision that the teacher has made and its consequences. The goal of this work would be to raise student-teachers' awareness and have them weigh their options as they spot appropriate "digging" moments.

Third, the findings provide tools for self-reflection when student-teachers video-record their own classrooms, and again, "see" what is happening, the choices they are making, and their consequences. Classes can be video-recorded on a daily or weekly basis, then viewed and examined either by that teacher alone or with peers in a teaching seminar course. Student-teachers can then complete a heavily-guided reflection template, individually, in pairs, or as a group, that focuses on practices that promote work on understanding. Even if student-teachers are not yet able to go beyond providing or obtaining a correct answer, they can be made more aware of their options and perhaps be encouraged to add this type of work to their practice as their teaching evolves.

Finally, the findings of this study contribute to enriching teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987), particularly regarding the analyses of specific problematic grammatical or lexical issues. Teacher educators can draw from the expertise of experienced classroom teachers to add to the growing pedagogical content knowledge of their novice teachers.

In sum, teacher educators face many challenges due to the enormous complexity of classroom teaching. However, arming student-teachers with a common language to talk about specific practices and “see” those practices as they carry out observations and engage in self-reflections will help to promote the important work of building understanding in the language classroom. As more research is conducted, and more teacher practices are identified and examined, teacher educators can continue to structure and refine explanations of how collaborative work on understanding is managed.

Through this research, I have gained valuable new insights into how a classroom teacher can engage in this type of group work on understanding, realizing that there is not only a great deal of variety in how this work is done, but also a great deal of systematicity, which has been both surprising and comforting.

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Appendix A

Transcription Conventions

(.)	untimed perceptible pause within a turn
(1.0)	pause (The numbers refer to the length of the pause in seconds, to one decimal place.)
<u>words</u>	stress
CAPS	very emphatic stress
↑	high pitch on word
↓	low pitch on word
.	sentence-final falling intonation
?	yes/no question rising intonation
,	phrase-final intonation (more to come)
:	lengthened vowel sound (extra colons indicate greater lengthening)
=	latch (direct onset or no space between two unites)
→	highlights point of analysis
[]	overlapped talk; in order to reflect the simultaneous beginning and ending of the overlapped talk, sometimes extra spacing is used to spread out the utterance
°soft°	spoken softly/decreased volume
> <	increased speed
()	(empty parentheses) transcription impossible
(words)	uncertain transcription
.hhh	inbreath
hhh.	exhalation
\$words\$	spoken in a smiley voice
(())	comments on background, skipped talk or nonverbal behavior
{{() words.}}	{ }marks the beginning and ending of the simultaneous occurrence of the verbal/silence and nonverbal; absence of { } means that the simultaneous occurrence applies to the entire turn.

Appendix B

Consent Form
Teachers College, Columbia University 525 West 120th Street
New York NY 10027
212 678 3000

INFORMED CONSENT

Protocol Title: Working on Understanding in the Adult ESL Classroom: A Collaborative Endeavor

Principal Investigator: Nancy Boblett, M. A. University of Illinois; M.A. University of Minnesota

INTRODUCTION

You are being invited to participate in this research study called “Working on Understanding in the Adult ESL Classroom: A Collaborative Endeavor.” You may qualify to take part in this research study because you are enrolled in an ESL course for adult students. Approximately twelve to fifteen people will participate in this study during their regular class meeting times.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

This study is being done to understand instructional practices and make recommendations for improving adult ESL instruction.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to give permission to be audio-recorded and/or video-recorded during your ESL class in the Community Language Program at Teachers College this semester. About five 3-hour classes will be recorded. The recordings will be used to make written transcripts for analysis. You will be given a pseudonym (fake name); your real name will not be written in the transcripts. If you want to participate in the study but do not want to be seen in the video, you can sit “off-camera,” in a part of the classroom that the cameras cannot see. Only a class where all students agree to be audio- recorded will be included in this study.

WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The research has the same amount of risk as participating in a regular class. The researcher is taking precautions to keep your information confidential and prevent anyone

INFORMED CONSENT

from discovering or guessing your identity, including using a pseudonym instead of your real name and keeping all information on a password protected computer and locked in a file drawer.

WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study. Participation may benefit the field of teacher education and help improve instruction for ESL teachers.

WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You will not be paid to participate. There are no costs to you for taking part in this study.

WHEN IS THE STUDY OVER? CAN I LEAVE THE STUDY BEFORE IT ENDS?

The study is over when your course has ended for the semester. However, you can leave the study at any time even if you have not finished. If you decide to leave the study, any previous recording including that participant will be destroyed by the researcher. That is, any subject's withdrawal after initial participation will result in the entire class participation being canceled.

PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY

The investigator will keep all written materials locked in a desk drawer in a locked office. Any electronic or digital information (including audio recordings) will be stored on a computer that is password protected. There will be no record matching your real name with your pseudonym. If parts of a recording are shown in an educational setting, such as a conference, faces will be blurred and names will be deleted from the audio track. Regulations require that research data be kept for at least three years.

HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?

The results of this study will be published in journals and presented at academic conferences. Your name or any identifying information about you will not be

published. This study is being conducted as part of the researcher's doctoral dissertation.

CONSENT FOR AUDIO AND OR VIDEO RECORDING

Audio recording and/or video recording is part of this research study. You can choose whether to give permission to be recorded.

____ I give my consent to be audio-recorded _____
Signature

____ I do not consent to be audio-recorded _____
Signature

____ I give my consent to be video-recorded _____
Signature

____ I do not consent to be video-recorded _____
Signature

WHO MAY VIEW MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY

__I consent to allow written, audio-recorded and/or video-recorded materials to be viewed at an educational setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College

_____ Signature

__I do not consent to allow written, audio-recorded and/or video-recorded materials to be viewed outside of Teachers College Columbia University

_____ Signature

INFORMED CONSENT

WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?

If you have any questions about taking part in this research study, you should contact the principal investigator, Nancy Boblett, at nrb2115@tc.columbia.edu. You can also contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Hansun Waring, at hz30@tc.edu

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the human research ethics

committee) at 212-678-4105 or email IRB@tc.edu. Or you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY 1002. The IRB is the committee that oversees human research protection for Teachers College, Columbia University.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

- I have read and discussed the informed consent with the researcher. I have had ample opportunity to ask questions about the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits regarding this research study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw participation at any time without penalty to future student status or grades.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his or her professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research study that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.

• I should receive a copy of the Informed Consent document. My signature means that I agree to participate in this study

Print name: _____ Date: _____ Signature:
