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**Shaping children's artwork in English primary classes: Insights from teacher-child interaction during art activities**

This paper utilises a Vygotskian framework to examine the ways in which teachers shape the creation of children’s artwork in educational contexts. Reflexive ethnography (Burgess, 1984) and a bottom up approach to discourse analysis (Edwards & Potter, 1992) are used to analyse a range of qualitative data including photographs, observational notes and audio recordings collected from a Year 1 and a Year 4 art lesson held in English Primary schools. It is argued that the co-creation of art in the classroom is a dynamic and collaborative process which is negotiated between teachers and children in different ways. This argument is discussed in relation to the ways in which different teaching approaches shape and limit the creation of children’s artwork.

**Keywords:** child art; classroom interaction; scaffolding.

**Introduction**

The study of children’s artwork is a long standing area of research interest which can be traced back to the beginning of the 19th century. However, as Coates and Coates (2006) point out, the majority of research in this area has tended to score and analyse drawings completed by children of various ages to map out key milestones in children’s artistic development. This is evidenced in experimental research which has sought to identify developmental stages in specific aspects of drawing such as the representation of the human figure (Cox, 1993),the development of expression in children’s drawings (Davis, 1997; Ives, 1984; Jolley, Fenn & Jones, 2004) and children’s use of colour in their artwork (Alschuler & Hattwick, 1969).

An exclusive focus on scoring drawings has neglected what Coates and Coates term (2006, p. 221) an “essential ingredient in each drawing’s production” – the spontaneous utterances which lead to the creation of the drawing itself. Furthermore, the dominance of an experimental method in children’s drawing research excludes the study of children within a naturalistic educational context. This is significant as there is a growing body of research which demonstrates that the creation of child art is guided and shaped by the wider educational context it occurs in.

**Children’s apprenticeship in the classroom**

Rogoff (1990) has argued that schooling is a site for formal apprenticeship where children take on the skills and values of their culture through instruction from their peers and teachers. Research exploring children’s creative activities in the classroom supports this argument. Baker-Sennett, Matusov and Rogoff (1992) examined the ways in which children worked together to create play scripts in an educational context. The results suggested that through classroom interaction, children’s ideas were critiqued, embellished and developed. Thus, creative planning was not an individual endeavour; instead it was a *flexible socially negotiated process*. It was observed that the creative planning process was grounded and guided by the educational context in which it took place. Children were sometimes free to improvise and at other times they were engaged in formal teacher led activities.

Coates and Coates (2006) and Thompson (2000) extended these findings to children’s drawing activities. Coates and Coates’ (2006) observations of 3-4 year old children creating drawings in an English Nursery class revealed that when drawing, children would jointly create a narrative concerning what was depicted in the drawing, engage in social discussion and interact with adults present in the classroom thereby incorporating them into the drawing process. Thompson’s (2000) observational research reported similar findings and demonstrated groups of children worked together to scaffold that drawing process. More specifically, children would follow instruction from their peers on how to improve the artwork or copy models provided by other children. As such the children involved in these research projects took an active role in teaching others how to draw or facilitating the drawing experience.

An advantage of using observational methods is that it enabled children’s creative processes to be examined in more detail and gave valuable insight into the narratives behind the drawings. This highlights the importance of attending to the interactions which guide artistic processes. However, an exclusive focus on interaction between children does not directly attend to the values presented in the wider art curriculum and how these values shape the creation of child art. Research conducted by Cox, Perara and Xu (1998) and Cox and Rowlands (2000) has demonstrated that the curriculum that children are exposed to shapes their development as an artist. This highlights the need for researchers to broaden their scope and explore the ways in which teacher-child interaction shaped by a specific art curriculum shapes the creation of child art.

**The importance of studying the art curriculum**

Darras (2000) has argued that the main objective of the art curriculum is to equip children with the level of artistic knowledge required by the society they live in. In English state-run schools children begin to learn about what art is from the moment they enter formal education at the age of three. Through engaging in teacher- led curriculum based art activities children begin to develop their skills as artists and learn about the art values prized in their culture. Therefore, the art curriculum and the ways in which it is implemented play a powerful role in shaping and limiting the kinds of artwork children create during lessons. Golomb (1992) and Granö (2000) argued the curriculum’s influence is so great that artwork produced in an educational context is more likely to give insight into how the teacher rather than the child conceptualises art.

Research using qualitative methods informed by social constructionism has recently worked at a policy level to examine the presentation of art in the English National Curriculum (Hallam, Lee & Das Gupta, 2007) and teachers’ understandings of art and their teaching practices (Hallam, Das Gupta & Lee, 2008; Hallam, Lee & Das Gupta, 2010). As such it has tackled the educational context in a broad sense and identified some of the educational issues faced by teaching professionals when tackling art in the classroom; these include a gap between educational policy and practice, an emphasis on skills in the curriculum documents for art and the limited place of art in the general curriculum. The current paper builds upon previous policy-based research by investigating the ways in which teacher-child interaction shapes the creation of child art in an educational context.

***Researching the educational context***

An exploration of the classroom context reflects growing research interest in studying general teaching processes and how learning is achieved through classroom interactions (Delafield, 1999). Jolley (2010) has welcomed an examination of the ways in which art is taught and argued that “for too long now such an approach has been neglected”(p. 318). Further to this Jolley (2010) also suggested that “researchers who dedicate themselves to direct observation of children’s spontaneous drawings, and who investigate their contexts, may provide us with a new theoretical framework for understanding children’s drawing development in the 21st century” (p. 318).

Classroom based research is heavily influenced by the work of Vygotsky (1978) who argued that development cannot be understood without first attending to the social milieu in which psychological skills are developed through collective experience. In line with Vygotskian theory and the concept of scaffolding, schooling is a social context where teachers work with children to reach educational goals. It is through every day classroom interactions that a shared understanding of the task is developed between teachers and children (Edwards & Mercer, 1987). Therefore, classroom based research allows an examination of the interrelated contextual layers – from the cultural values presented in the curriculum to specific interactions between teachers and children – which shape and limit the creation of children’s artwork.

Research investigating educational processes and the classroom context has followed two trends. Researchers such as Eriksson and Aronsson (2005) and Delafield (1999) have paid close attention to classroom interactions and how knowledge is co-constructed in this context. Conversely, Edwards and Mercer (1987) and Edwards and Westgate (1994) have sought to identify varieties of classroom discourse and rules that guide interactions occurring in this context. This latter body of research demonstrated the socially negotiated nature of development by highlighting linguistic strategies and contextual rules teachers and children follow when jointly constructing knowledge.

Lyle (2008) has argued that a common theme within classroom based research which explored a number of different subject areas is that classroom talk does little to promote pupil interaction. Lyle (2008) drew upon the research of Bakhtin (1984) to categorise classroom interaction as being either monologic or dialogic. Monologic talk is goal-orientated as the teacher works from a position of power and authority to transmit knowledge to pupils. Dialogic talk seeks to promote an authentic exchange between the pupil and the teacher and places the pupil in control. Lyle (2008) reported that within British and American classrooms monologic teaching dominates and that this teaching style stifles collaborative talk between learners. The current research further explores this assertion by investigating patterns of interaction between teachers and children during English primary school art lessons. In response to Edwards and Mercer’s (1987, p. 10) argument that classroom based research would benefit from attention to “the non linguistic activities and settings” which constitute the classroom context, the current study utilises both discourse analysis and ethnography. Use of ethnographic methodology enables the integration of first -hand observations into the analysis thereby broadening the analytic scope beyond talk and interaction alone.

**Methodology**

In order to investigate the creation of art in educational contexts, a range of ethnographic data were collected from the following classes in two Staffordshire primary schools - Reception, Year 1, Year 4and Year 6.These year groups were chosen as they represent significant milestones in the English primary school system. In brief, the English primary school curriculum is split into three key stages. The foundation stage encompasses Nursery (3 - 4 years) and Reception (4 - 5 years). Key Stage 1 covers Year 1 (5 – 6 years) and Year 2 (6 -7 years). Key Stage 2 covers Year 3 (7 - 8 years), Year 4 (8 - 9 years), Year 5 (9 – 10 years) and Year 6 (10 – 11 years). Each key stage is guided by stage appropriate curriculum documents. Therefore, the year groups included in the project span the three key stages of the English primary curriculum and also include the final year group which represents the ‘finished product’ of the primary school.

During data collection the first author worked as a classroom assistant for approximately six weeks on art projects in each age group at both schools. Consequently, a total of 8 teachers (with an average class size of 28 children) participated in this research. The art lessons observed as part of this research ran once a week during the afternoon session. Typically the art lesson took up the majority of the afternoon session and this meant that a total of 9 hours was spent observing each class involved in the research. Consequently 18 hours were spent in each age group and a total of 72 hours was spent in the classroom during this project.

When working as a classroom assistant, the first author helped teachers set up and tidy away art materials and worked with children who had queries during the lesson. This enabled data to be collected from the position of participant observer. Classroom observations and notes relating to discussions held with teachers during the setting up and tidying away time were written up in a reflexive field diary once the lesson had ended. In addition to this, video and audio equipment were used to record the last art lesson of the project and photographs were taken of all the artwork created during the recorded lesson.

**Analytic approach**

The following analysis is informed by reflexive ethnography (Burgess, 1984) and a ‘bottom up’ approach to discourse analysis which studies “the ongoing construction of meaning in everyday dialogues where discourse is used within joint activities or relationships” (Burkitt, 1999, p. 69).This combined analytic approach works at different contextual levels and examines how the classroom context and teacher-child interaction shape the creation of children’s artwork.

Each case study presented in the analysis starts with background information relating to the teaching style and the art activity set by the teacher taken from the ethnographic field notes. A photograph of the finished artwork is then presented. The inclusion of field notes and photographic data serves to (i) give insight into the ways in which learning objectives shape the interaction and the teaching style adopted by the teacher and (ii) make links between teacher intervention and the finished artwork.

Following this, a bottom up approach to discourse analysis - which pays close attention to language and the fine details of talk - is utilised to examine the ways in which teacher intervention shapes the creation of child art. This approach is informed by conversation analysis and focuses on what is happening in interaction between people (Edley, 2001). Within this analytic framework, language is conceptualised as a “site for social action ”which people use to achieve certain functions such as constructing knowledge, persuading and blaming (Wooffitt, 2001, p. 49). Close attention is paid to how devices such as metaphors are used to co-construct art and the ways in which turn taking, pauses and interruptions are used to manage the interaction. In order to attend to these aspects of talk extracts are transcribed using the Jefferson system outlined by Wooffitt (2001) (appendix 1).Consequently, this analysis is multi-dimensional as close analysis of classroom interaction provides evidence to support the observations made in the classroom. The inclusion of field notes and use of discourse analysis enables an examination of how teachers shape the creation of artwork without losing sight of the educational assumptions and ideology that guide these interactions.

**Analysis**

During the ethnographic phase of the research, it was observed that when working with children, teachers adopted positions which Edwards and Mercer (1987, p. 2) have termed “traditional” and “progressive”. Each of these teaching styles is defined by a specific interactional pattern. Teachers adopting a traditional style, take up a position of power to transfer knowledge to their pupils. Conversely, teachers adopting a progressive style take up a more child-centred approach which provides children more opportunity to negotiate learning goals. As such the traditional teaching style maps on to a monologic interactional pattern and the progressive teaching approach is closely aligned with a dialogical interactional pattern.

The following case studies explore examples of interaction between a Year 1teacher adopting a traditional approach with one child, and a Year 4 teacher adopting a progressive approach. These specific case studies were chosen as they best represent the teaching approaches and interactional patterns evidenced in the wider sample during classroom observation.

It is important to note that the following analysis aims to explore the interactional patterns which exemplify traditional and progressive teaching styles with specific reference to the level of direction and intervention offered by the teacher. The analysis does not aim to label the teachers as progressive or traditional as this would be overly simplistic. Teaching style can change depending on the task the teacher is working on, or the needs of the child the teacher is interacting with. As such teaching style is context dependent and not fixed. Furthermore, in line with the social constructionist framework which informs this research, it is beyond the scope of the current analysis to isolate and test variables such as age or the effect of the task. These variables are acknowledged, as they play an important role in shaping the interaction, however a cause and effect relationship and/ or age related developmental patterns are not proposed. Instead, the analysis focuses on exploring interaction in specific contexts.

***Art and the traditional teaching approach***

The first case study explores a typical interaction between a teacher adopting a traditional approach and a Year 1 child. Edwards and Mercer (1987, p. 2) have argued that for teachers adopting this position

“knowledge is not negotiable or open to question by the pupils. The intended end product of the process is the pupils’ acceptance and understanding of what the teacher already knows”.

*Extract one*

The children of this Year 1 art class (5 -6 years old) had been working on a science project that investigated the properties of different materials and a cross-curricular link had been made in the art lesson. The teacher asked pupils to use the same colour to paint the same image on a range of different materials. Children were able to decide which image they wanted to paint but consistent use of the same colour was an important part of the task as it enabled the child to explore the effects that different materials had on the paint. The extract below concerns the production of artwork that depicts starfish.



Figure 1:A Year 1 child’s painting of starfish

1. **Teacher:** Now is that exactly the same as that one ((teacher points
2. to the child’s work))
3. **Child:** °No°
4. **Teacher:** What’s different
5. **Child:** Erm I’ve done it a different colour
6. **Teacher:**<↑You have haven’t you> ((evident strain in voice)) (1.75)
7. and what did we say (2.01) We said to do the same colours didn’t
8. we
9. **Child:** Yeap, °yes° I I didn’t think that was right for the starfish so I
10. did
11. **Teacher:** R::ight
12. **Teacher:**>You did< (0.6) So what colour are you going to do the rest
13. n:ow
14. **Child:** (°Orange°)
15. **Teacher:** You are going to do the rest in orange

In this extract direct questioning is utilised to reinforce the child’s understanding of the task and ensure their artwork stays *within set boundaries*. Hence the teacher’s use of questions follows the ground rules of educational discourse (Edwards & Mercer, 1987). Following the rules of educational discourse, the classroom context is unusual because it is assumed that teachers already know everything that the children are about to learn yet they are the ones who ask questions. Teachers adopt a position of power and questions are used as a tool to both control the interaction and shape and evaluate children’s understanding.

This use of questioning is exemplified in line 1 as the teacher asks “is that exactly the same as that one?” This question draws attention to task boundaries and allows movement towards a shared understanding of the artwork by initiating talk from the child which can be supported or challenged. The child’s answer of “no” in line 3 indicates an awareness that their starfish are not “exactly the same”. Significantly, the child’s response is noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk. Thus the teacher’s louder voice asserts authority over the child’s whisper. The teacher maintains this position in line 4 and uses another direct question to establish a joint understanding of what the child has done “wrong”. In line 6 the teacher accepts the child’s admission that a “different colour” has been used and contrasts the child’s artwork with task requirements. The assertion that “*we said to do the same colours didn’t we?*” (lines 7/8) construes use of the same colour in artwork as the *right way* to complete the task. Furthermore, use and emphasis of the word “we” suggests both the child and teacher accept this understanding. The child’s failure to comply with the *shared* notion of “right” way to do things positions them as a rule breaker. By straying from the task boundaries the child has produced an undesirable piece of artwork. This act of rejecting the right way to do things challenges the teacher’s authority and places the child in a position of resistance.

In line 9, this position of resistance is upheld as the child justifies her colour choice explaining that the original colour was not “right for the starfish”. The teacher’s response of “you did” (line 12) barely acknowledges the child’s statement and *prevents her from elaborating further*. Rather than giving the child the opportunity to discuss her colour choice, joint attention is diverted back towards the teacher’s agenda of ensuring that task boundaries are adhered to. The teacher’s disregard of the child’s defence firmly positions them in a traditional position of authority - someone who has the power to decide what is right and wrong. Consequently, the child does not have the opportunity to negotiate with the teacher - they have to accept their instructions without question.

It is from the position of a traditional teacher - someone who has the right to tell the child how to complete their painting – that the teacher asks “what colour are you going to do the rest now?” (lines 12/13). The child’s answer of “orange” indicates that this question has a correct answer and was not designed to prompt a discussion about the artwork. As before, power relations are manifest in the relative volume of the teacher and child’s voices. The child’s mumbled response is barely audible. This suggests a reluctance to comply with the teacher’s request to paint the rest of the starfish orange. Thus the child agrees because she has no other option - the *right way to do things is presented as something which is not open to negotiation*. The child’s willingness to change her artwork without question demonstrates the powerful role of the teacher in the joint construction of artwork.

This extract construes art as a subject in which children are expected to create pieces of artwork to please the teacher and meet task requirements. Indeed, the teacher took a traditional position and actively shaped the artwork created by the child who was left in no doubt that following the teacher’s instructions led to the production of correct work. By strictly enforcing task boundaries, the teacher ensured that the child met the learning objective of exploring the qualities of different materials and their effect on the paint. This child’s attempt to test the boundaries by painting her starfish in different colours failed – this was construed as ‘rule breaking’ and stopped by teacher intervention.

***Art and the progressive teaching approach***

The second case study examines a typical interaction between a teacher adopting a progressive approach and a Year 4 child. For Edwards and Mercer (1987, p. 2) this position is characterised by teachers

“offering more opportunities for pupils to negotiate common curriculum goals and incorporating pupils’ wider experience and interests into what is taught.”’

*Extract two*

The following extract is taken from a Year 4 class. The children of the class (8-9 years old) had been working on an art project entitled ‘journeys’. In this project children created artwork relating to real and imagined journeys. The extract below is taken from a lesson in which the children of the class were asked to sketch items related to a real journey that had been on using charcoal. It concerns the production of artwork that depicts sunglasses and a bottle of sun cream.

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# Figure 2:A Year 4 child’s charcoal sketch of a pair of sun glasses and a bottle of sun cream

# **Teacher:** Which one are you ↑draw↓ing

# (1.45)

1. **Child:** ()
2. **Teacher:** Th::e
3. (1.90)
4. **Child:** Bottle
5. **Teacher:** The bottle That’s tough>isn’t it< (1.52) >It’s gotta be<
6. (0.67) it’s gotta be straight up and down hasn’t it (1.42) Those edg
7. (1.40) those edges are straight there aren’t they (1.09) Can you see
8. (1.70) So you have got to be really careful try and straighten those
9. edges out (1.52) You know the cu::boid we drew last week::
10. (1.38)

## Child 1: Oh yeah

1. (0.85)
2. **Teacher:** Yeah (0.81) That is the same as the cuboid we drew but the
3. corners are rounded off aren’t they (1.25) It’s as if they have
4. s::moothed the corners out on it so really you need to start off by
5. drawing the cuboid shape.

In contrast to the previous extract this teacher utilises *progressive questioning* (Edwards & Mercer, 1987) in an attempt to initiate discussion about the bottle of sun cream being sketched. By formulating their observations as questions such as “those edges are straight there aren’t they?” (line8-9) followed by a pause, the teacher *invites the child to voice their own understanding* of what they observe. The teacher does not directly challenge the child or offer orders on the right way to do things. Instead, they put forward options that the child can pursue should they wish to.

Further to inviting the child to engage in discussion the teacher’s questions communicate a conception of what makes a good piece of art. The teacher’s focus on the bottle’s appearance construes good art as work that faithfully recreates direct observation. This is evidenced in lines 9-11 as the teacher makes links between the “straight edges” of the bottle and the need for the child to “try” to “straighten” the edges on their drawing. Thus the teacher subtly promotes the procedure required to create the correct representation of the bottle.

Throughout this section of talk the child does not enter into discussion with the teacher – they only answer a question about the previous art lesson with “oh yeah” (line 13). Therefore, the child has more control over the interaction - they choose when they want to enter into a discussion and which questions they would like to respond to. Furthermore, in this extract the child’s response is just as loud as the teacher’s request which implies a more equal power relationship.

The teacher builds upon the child’s acknowledgement of the previous art lesson by scaffolding the drawing process through reference to the cuboid drawn in the last art lesson (line 11-18). It is important to note that throughout this section of talk the teacher focuses on the practicalities of creating a photo-realistic piece of artwork. Hence, *art is conceptualised as a skills-based subject which children should successfully apply to develop previously learned skills.* Furthermore, to meet task requirements, the child’s artwork should be representational. The progressive teaching approach – which uses questions designed to promote discussion - offers the child more opportunity to actively negotiate the presentation of art put forward by the teacher.

**Discussion**

This analysis presented the classroom as a multifaceted context in which the creation of child art was mediated through interaction with teachers. What follows is a discussion of the importance of attending to the educational context when studying child art and the ways in which different teaching styles shape the creation of child art.

Close examination of classroom interactions at the level of talk supports a Vygotskian conceptualisation of development and highlights the inseparable relationship between development and the wider educational context it occurs in. This analysis evidences how different contextual layers shaped the creation of children’s artwork. When considering the broadest contextual level – the curriculum – Lyle (2008) argued that practical concerns relating to covering a full curriculum has led to teachers adopting a monologic approach. This was illustrated in the first case study were the child had to fully comply with the teacher’s request to only use one colour in order to meet the learning objective for the task. The specific focus of the task meant that a traditional, monologic approach which offers no room for negotiation on colour was promoted.

The alignment of the art activity and a monologic approach is a cause of concern as this particular approach stifles the child’s voice and prevents them from sharing their own perspective and insights (Lyle, 2008). An incident which occurred during the classroom observation supports this argument. During the art class the first author (who was adopting the position of classroom assistant) was called over to view the starfish painting by a concerned child before the teacher intervened. The concerned child asked the first author to look at the starfish painting because they were worried that the teacher’s instructions had not been followed. At this point the child who created the starfish painting began to get upset so the first author defused the situation by asking them to talk about their painting. This open-ended question led to a discussion about the child’s experiences holding a starfish at an aquatic centre. When recounting this story the child explained that they had started painting the starfish red but they remembered that the starfish they held was orange and so they changed the colour to give a more accurate depiction of the starfish based on their experiences. It is important to note that this dialogue was facilitated by the first author’s position within the classroom. Meeting the learning objectives of the task was not a specific concern and this opened up the opportunity for movement beyond monologic interaction.

The significance of the wider context was also highlighted in the second case study. Here, the focus on exploring a journey that the child had been on offered the teacher more scope to enter into a dialogical interaction. However, the interaction focused very much on building the skills to create photo realistic art and not addressing the concerns and the interests of the child. This meant that even though the teachers differed in their style and the amount of freedom they offered the pupils both teachers focused on meeting the learning requirements of exploring materials or creating observational artwork. Therefore, in this analysis, teachers firmly passed on the message that in order to be successful artists, children must closely follow instruction and create photo realistic art.

While only two examples are detailed in this analysis, the interactional patterns explored in this analysis and a focus on developing skills was evidenced in the wider sample. This is significant as the English curriculum emphasises the importance of adopting a balanced teaching position which gives children space to develop their skills, engage in free expression and learn about art history and art appreciation (Hallam, Lee & Das Gupta, 2007). A shared focus on skill rather than self expression and developing aesthetic awareness evidenced by both teachers in this analysis suggests a gap between policy and practice. It also supports Jolley’s (2010) assertion that art activities outlined in the curriculum place too much of an emphasis on skill development and representational drawing. This suggests that movement towards a more dialogic teaching style could enable a more balanced teaching approach and allow teachers to explore pupils’ concerns. This is particularly important as Thompson (2000) argued that art activities can provide children with a valuable opportunity to engage in more informal conversation and incorporate the teacher into the drawing process.

A greater understanding of the processes behind the artwork and different ways in which teachers shape the creation of artwork had important practical implications for the teachers involved in this research. In response to the observations made during this project and requests from teachers for art workshops, half day training sessions centring on art were organised and run in both schools. Each of these training days was developed alongside staff so they catered to the needs presented at each school. During the workshops, teachers worked with a professional artist on a range of activities designed to increase confidence levels, address problems identified by teachers, promote a balanced teaching approach and help teachers deliver the curriculum in creative ways. Preliminary analysis of the workshops indicates that they were well received and that teachers felt more confident in their artistic skill and, by the end of the workshop, had moved towards a more balanced teaching approach. This suggests that this training model could be beneficial in other schools in which teachers feel they need more support in the teaching of art.

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**Appendix 1**

The symbols used in transcription were taken from Wooffitt (2001) and are common to conversation analysis. They were originally developed by Gail Jefferson.

* 1. Numbers in brackets refer to pauses in tenths of seconds

: Indicate and extension of the preceding vowel sound. The more colons there are the greater the extent of the stretching.

(( )) A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non verbal activity.

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

(guess) the words within a single bracket indicate the transcriber’s best guess at an unclear fragment.

Red Underlining indicates stress or emphasis on the speech.

= Indicates continuous talk between speakers.

↑↓Indicates marked rising or falling in speech intonation.

º Degree signs enclose talk which is lower in volume than surrounding talk.

><Greater than and less than signs enclose speech which is noticeably faster than the surrounding talk.

BIG With the exception of proper nouns, capital letters indicate speech which is noticeably louder than that surrounding it.

[ Indicates over lapping talk.