Mikhail Bakhtin's Dialogic Phenomenology and Its Relevance to Foreign Language Pedagogy

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Abstract

My research hitherto has focused on the linguistic aspects of Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic theory in order to develop a dialogic foreign language pedagogy of word/discourse (see Matsuo, 2015). I intend next to develop a dialogic theory of pedagogical action to implement the linguistic pedagogy. However, the research is still in its initial stages so this paper is limited to a literature review of the intellectual contexts and sources of Bakhtin's dialogic phenomenology, which is then followed by the outline of a research program where I identify how specific aspects of the dialogic phenomenology can inform and guide pedagogic action in the foreign language classroom. A secondary aim is to provide a short introduction to Bakhtin's work for foreign language educators who may not be familiar with it.

The dialogic phenomenological philosophy of Bakhtin: Its influence on contemporary English language social sciences

The work of the Russian philosopher of language, Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), arrived to great acclaim in France in the 1960s. Two now renowned Bulgarian scholars, Julia Kristeva and Tzvetan Todorov, are generally credited as the conduits for carrying Bakhtin's work across the borders of the Soviet Bloc. As other aspects of Bakhtin's remarkably expansive philosophy beyond his work on literary theory and aesthetics became known, and in particular his dialogic theory of language, his influence spread rapidly beyond the geographical and disciplinary confines of Western European and North American literary and cultural studies to the human sciences, where, according to Per Linnell (2003, p. 1), "dialogism" is "a bundle or combination of theoretical and epistemological assumptions about human action, communication and cognition."

As Linnell's word "bundle" indicates, Bakhtin's work is not a systematic philosophy in Kant's sense of system as a closed order (Holquist, 2002). The discovery of language as a third realm in the late 1920s (Voloshinov, 1973; and see Poole, 2001), which Bakhtin subsequently uses as a basal category to connect the outside world of experience with the inner world of ideas, allows Bakhtin to create a philosophy that is system-like in a second sense of Kant's term: i.e. Bakhtin works through a broad set of ideas rather than dealing with questions in isolation. As just noted, his originality lies in his connecting what are more or less familiar and unoriginal philosophical categories of self and other, time, space and values, through his master idea of dialogue. He realizes that the unfinalizability or open-endedness of dialogue means that unfinalizability and open-endedness are also the defining features of human affairs, which are overwhelmingly realized through language, and where language for Bakhtin means language as dialogue/speech communication. Dialogue endlessly reconstitutes and realigns the relations between the categories of lived experience so the result is a system which, from a traditional Western philosophical perspective might be considered defective because it is not closed or completed. Bakhtin's dialogic philosophy can only ever be an "*open* unity" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 6, original emphasis). But I will argue below that this open unity is precisely what makes Bakhtin's dialogic phenomenology so useful for understanding the foreign language classroom lifeworld where language is understood as an aggregate of speech genres rather than a closed system and where teacher and learners alike are always in the process of *becoming* (see below; see also Harvey, 2014).

Bakhtin's "dialogism" is an architectonics, an account of how the elements or categories of the

lifeworld such as self/other, time/space are put together (see Holquist, 1990; 2002). As noted above, the principle of dialogue and the inherent tensions within that principle ensure that the architectonics cannot be a closed system and the relations between entities in the architectonics can never be fixed—there can never be absolute priority of one relation over another (Holquist, 2002).

The relations between the entities of the lifeworld must continually be re-specified and re-achieved—in Bakhtin's terms, "consummated"—through dialogue. Any unity is only the most temporary unity before "more life" (see Oakes, 1980, pp. 13-14 on Simmel, cited in Brandist, 2002, p. 18), and more dialogue which is brought to bear on it, shifts relations once again. In a dialogic understanding of human life, "[t]here is neither a first nor a last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context…Nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will have its homecoming festival" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 170).

One look at Linnell's definition of dialogism shows the breadth of human activity, or life—action, communication, cognition—that Bakhtin's philosophy treats thanks to the master idea that human existence is linguistic. Because human existence is linguistic, language must also be the basis for explaining human reality, which is categorically different from the "objective" material reality that the exact sciences seek to explain. As well as continually reconstituting and realigning relations between the elements in Bakhtin's architectonics, the category of dialogue provides a basis that connects Bakhtin's breathtaking range of interests and knowledge of several of the major human sciences. Since all the human sciences themselves originate from "thoughts about others' thoughts," or "words about words" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 103), he is able to use language to connect literature with linguistics, and a phenomenological analysis of aesthetics with ethics. As he himself notes, his philosophy runs "in liminal spheres" along the borderzones of the major human science knowledge domains of linguistics, philology and literature, "at their junctures and points of intersection" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 103). Not surprisingly, given the scope of Bakhtin's thought, already by the 1980s, Bakhtin Studies had become a "Bakhtin industry" (Morson, 1986, cited in Morson & Emerson, 1990). This industry is now global (Holquist, 2002). The Bakhtin Centre in Sheffield, for example, is devoted to work on Bakhtin and houses an impressive online database, while several international conferences dedicated to Bakhtin or dialogism are held annually around the world.

Turning again to Bakhtin's influence in the contemporary human sciences in English, most notable are the afore-mentioned Linnell's empirical dialogic analyses of authentic texts in the field of communication studies (1998; 2003; 2009); Hubert Hermans's (Hermans, Kempen & Van Loon, 1992; Hermans & Hermans Konopka, 2012) combination of Bakhtin's dialogic theory with the American Pragmatism of philosopher and psychologist William James to create Dialogic Self Theory, or DST, in psychology (which also informs interdisciplinary work in sociology); and Gordon Wells's (1999) dialogic inquiry approach to first language education. The last decade in particular has seen an upsurge of interest and research in the potential of dialogue for improving both first and second or foreign language education. For first language contexts, see particularly Alexander (2004); Phillips (2011); Wergerif (2007); for second and foreign language education, Hall, Vitanova and Marchenkova (2005); Harvey (2014); and Matsuo (2012; 2013; 2015) among others.

The intellectual contexts and sources of Bakhtin's dialogic phenomenology

The scholarship of Bakhtin's personal and intellectual biography is a very complex and even hazardous affair first of all because the hazardous and extraordinary history of the Soviet Union had a hazardous and extraordinary impact on Bakhtin's life. Bakhtin Studies is plagued by all the lore and distortions that repressive regimes—and their citizens who are trying to survive—are particularly adept at creating. In Bakhtin's case we have the lore/true stories of manuscripts that have no date; that are written in an unknown hand (see Adlam, 2001); that are eaten by rats or smoked by the author. Among the many distortions of knowledge, there are the vexed questions for scholarship of Bakhtin's motivation for citing the work of Joseph Stalin in *The Problem of Speech Genres* (in English, see Bakhtin, 1986), which, after the break-up of the Soviet Union, is complicated further by the unexplained decision of S. G. Bocharov and I. A. Gogotishvili, the Russian editors of Bakthin's *Collected Works*, which were published in Russia in 1996, to delete those citations (see Hirschkop, 2001, for further discussion and his footnote 10 for bibliographical

details of the Russian language publication).

The implosion of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the sudden opening of the archives created more, not less, controversy in Bakhtin Studies. The revelations that Bakhtin had distorted his own biography—that he did not have a bachelor's degree and instead had appropriated his brother, Nikolai's, and had at various times "borrowed" the CVs of his brother and his friend, Matvei Kagan—caused a deal of consternation for Bakhtin scholars in Western Europe and North America. Hirschkop and Shepherd revised their 1989 book in part to accommodate an overview of newly available Russian scholarship (see Adlam, 2001), but also to provide a correction. Hirschkop felt compelled to entitle his post-*glasnost'* introduction to the second edition: *Bakhtin in the Sober Light of Day* (Hirschkop, 2001, in Hirschkop & Shepherd, 2001), while Poole (2001, p. 124), perhaps understandably rather sour, states ruefully: "We've swallowed the legends—hook, line and sinker." All in all, the correction is overdue and salutary, restoring balance and clearer vision to Western scholars who had been only too quick to fall for the romantic and exotic idea of a hermit, exiled scholar who seemed not to care about his publications and the trappings of fame that came with them. Ultimately, a more measured assessment can only do greater justice to the work of a man who, despite the lack of a bachelor's degree, remains one of the most, or indeed, as Todorov claims, "the most important Soviet thinker in the human sciences" (Todorov, 1984, p. ix).

The above account by no means exhausts the controversies and distortions in Bakhtin Studies. However, before moving on it is necessary to note the major and ongoing, often acrimonious, dispute in Bakhtin scholarship over the authorship of works published under the names of Pavel Medvedev and Valentin Voloshinov, which some scholars insist should be attributed to Bakhtin. The issue is not likely to be resolved, given the difficulties that attend the dating, verification and loss of manuscripts. To the extent that the works were produced as a result of these scholars' years of debate and rejoinders to each other, it seems feasible that each would have had input in others' texts, and such processes—notions of response and rejoinders—would conform to a dialogic understanding of how knowledge is constructed. In this paper, my citations of the authors conform to the published attributions of authorship; i.e. I cite Valentin Voloshinov as the author of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (Voloshinov, 1973) (something I did not do in earlier papers such as Matsuo, 2012, and which I regret, as convenience is an inadequate reason for using Bakhtin/Voloshinov as a citation for works published under the name of Voloshinov).

Having made the necessary caveats regarding the difficulties of Bakhtin's intellectual biography, I will now give an idea of the zeitgeist and intellectual contexts of Bakhtin's youth, which produce the breadth, connectivity, energy and urgency of Bakhtin's intellectual interests. I will then outline the main intellectual sources that gave rise to Bakhtin's unique dialogic phenomenology. In this paper, I will not deal with the issue of Bakhtin's relation to Marxism except to note the role of the Russian revolution itself in setting intellectuals the task of reinterpreting existing knowledge in psychology, language and literary theory using Marxist theory in order to build the communist state (Brandist, 2002); and to explain the Soviet welcome that greeted the linguistics of Saussure due to his prioritizing the collective as a determinant of society (see below, and again, Brandist, 2002).

Bakhtin developed his dialogic phenomenology in the 1920s. Thus, this paper is concerned with the period that comprises the first two of what are usually categorized as four inter-related stages of Bakhtin's career. The dating of the publications in both Russia and in the West is problematic and confusing. The English versions of the early works which I am concerned with in this paper were published *after* his later works. Bakhtin's early philosophical work on ethics, *Towards a Philosophy of the Act* (Bakhtin, 1993); and his work on aesthetics, including his phenomenological analysis of the processes of literary creativity, published collectively under the title of *Art and Answerability* (Bakhtin, 1990), are generally thought to have been written between 1919 and 1924 (but see Poole, 2001, who dates them later, c1927). The works published in English as Bakhtin (1990), were not published in the Soviet Union until 1975, 1979 and 1986; and Bakhtin (1993) was published in the Soviet Union in 1986 (see Holquist, 2002). It is after 1924 and the move to Leningrad that the discovery that language is central to human understanding and experience takes hold of Bakhtin's work on Dostoevsky's poetics, published in the Soviet Union in 1929, which in English, is Bakhtin 1984, which is actually a version revised and expanded in 1963. Also in 1929, Valentin Voloshinov publishes his groundbreaking

work on linguistics, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (Voloshinov, 1973)

The intellectual crucible from which Bakhtin derived the ideas that he would rework for the rest of his life is known as the Bakhtin Circle. Throughout the 1920s, Bakhtin was at the centre of the Circle that bears his name, although reputedly Bakhtin's best friend, Matvei Kagan, initiated it and was the de facto leader in its early years (Brandist 2002; Brandist, Shepherd & Tihanov, 2004). Its members comprised a group of intellectuals, many of whom spoke more than one language and were relatively well-travelled both within Russia and abroad. As an intellectual circle, it participated in a rather loose Russian tradition of discussion circles going back to the 1830s. Prior to the revolution, some of these circles had been the basis of revolutionary political parties. The Bakhtin Circle, formed after the revolution, was not hostile to the political aims of the Bolsheviks, but was involved in radical cultural activities, giving public lectures on various philosophical and cultural topics (Brandist, 2002), and holding public debates on topics such as "God and socialism" (Maksimovskaya, 1996, cited in Adlam, 2001). The hallmark of intellectual circles since the 1830s had been their embrace of a very wide range of interests and areas of knowledge, and in this aspect, the Bakhtin Circle confirmed to tradition.

The Bakhtin Circle moved from the Western provincial town of Nevel' and then to Vitebsk in Belarus during the years from 1918-1924. Finally, in 1924, it moved to Leningrad (present day Saint Petersburg) before breaking up in 1928/1929 due to the arrests of some of its members, including Bakhtin's in December, 1928 (Poole, 2001), which followed Stalin's crackdown on intellectual and other freedoms.

The Bakhtin Circle included most prominently, among numerous others and with changes in membership as the group changed location (for more details see Brandist, 2002): pianist, Maria Yudina; mathematician and philosopher, Matvei Kagan; biologist and historian of science, Ivan Kanaev; law graduate, literary scholar, and for a time rector of Vitebsk Proletarian University and the equivalent of Vitebsk "mayor," Pavel Medvedev; philologist Lev Pumpianskii; specialist in Eastern philosophy and religion, Mikhail Tubianskii; and linguist and musicologist, Valentin Voloshinov (who was at the very least acquainted with the Japanese language through his post-graduate studies). Activity ramped up with each move to a new location and the group feverishly debated the burning issues of the day: the relationship of language and literature; the nature of human thought and action in time/space; the psychology of creativity; and the relationship between ethics and aesthetics.

Nowadays, it is hard to believe that literature could be a burning issue for a group of young men and women, but burning issue it most certainly was, not just because the novel was still in its golden age in Russia and the West, or because Russian poetics was experiencing its Silver Age, but because this was a time when knowledge domains were not strictly divided into different disciplines. It was, on the contrary, a time when scholars actively sought out relations, connections and intersections between kinds of knowledge: questions of literary theory could be dealt with in relation to philosophy, and/or psychology and/or linguistics. Furthermore, as noted above, the Bolsheviks wanted existing knowledge to be reinterpreted for the newly formed communist state. In general, this was a time when all ideas were up for grabs, because the very laws of nature had been challenged by the revolutionary achievements in physics of Max Planck, Albert Einstein, and Niels Bohr (Holquist, 1990), and the nature of the human mind—the very self—had been thrown into question by Sigmund Freud. It was also a time of urgency—there was the very pressing sense that something positive and constructive needed to be done after the cataclysmic horrors of World War I.

As just noted, scholars were looking for the points of intersection that could connect different kinds of knowledge and find a way forward in the face of the new challenges raised by developments in the natural and mathematical sciences. Because all nineteenth century metaphysics had seemingly failed to cope with these challenges, it was decided to go "Back to Kant!" (see Holquist, 2002). Although now it could almost be said to have been forgotten (but see Luft, 2015, for a very timely revival of interest), Neo-Kantian philosophy, and not Marxism or even phenomenology, was the dominant school of thought in departments of philosophy in both German and Russian universities at the turn of the 20th century. Intellectuals were committed to testing or reinterpreting Kant's speculative epistemology through the exact sciences and the workings of the human nervous system (Holquist, 1990; 2002). The German Marburg School's version of Neo-Kantianism, to which Bakhtin was

connected through his friend Matvei Kagan, who had studied under Hermann Cohen prior to World War I, was the most serious of the Neo-Kantian schools in trying to seek connections between philosophy and the revolutionary new ideas in physics (see above and Holquist, 1990). Holquist tells us that Bakhtin was intensely interested in science, especially the new developments in physics, and also in physiology. Petrograd/Leningrad (Saint Petersburg) was a world centre for the study of the central nervous system in the 1920s; Bakhtin is certainly thought to have attended classes in these subjects even if he was not registered for a degree.

The young Bakhtin is intensely interested in both science and art; he is a Neo-Kantian philosopher consumed by the mind/world problem; he is deeply and urgently interested in questions of materiality and perception from both a scientific and philosophical point of view (see Holquist, 1990). This broad range of intense interests, which Bakhtin as a young intellectual at this time was not unusual in having, formed the basis from which Bakhtin would develop the German phenomenological and Neo-Kantian philosophies taught in the Russian universities and debated by the Bakhtin Circle, and turn them into a unique and original phenomenological analysis of narrative, whose typology of the relations authors can take towards their heroes I argue can be adapted to create a repertoire of pedagogical actions and relations teachers can take to their learners (see below). And again, all this is not even to mention the effect on knowledge of the task that the Russian revolution itself had set the members of the Bakhtin Circle and other intellectual groups like it: how to reinterpret existing knowledge in psychology, language and literary theory using Marxist theory for a communist state (Brandist, 2002; Holquist, 2002).

Turning to phenomenology, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* notes that phenomenology had been practiced for many centuries and in various places around the globe, including by Hindu and Buddhist philosophers, but just without the particular name of phenomenology. Philosophy with the name of phenomenology, however, came into its own with Edmund Husserl and his *Logical Investigations*, which was published in 1900-1901 (see Smith, 2013).

Phenomenology was to become one of the most important philosophical movements of the 20th century but as noted above, when Bakhtin was a young man at the turn of that century, it was Neo-Kantianism that was the dominant school of thought in departments of philosophy in both German and Russian universities. Also as noted above, Bakhtin had learned the German Marburg School's version of Neo-Kantianism through his friend, Kagan, who had studied under Hermann Cohen prior to World War I. This school espoused an extreme idealism, which Bakhtin in his obsession with the specific and concrete would move away from, although he would retain the Neo-Kantian view that the world is not given to the senses but is conceived, so the production of the object is a never ending task (see Brandist, 2002; Holquist, 1990; 2002). Husserl, in contrast, would later move *towards* the Marburg School's Neo-Kantianism (Brandist, 2002.), and the result was that he came up with the transcendental subjectivity of a lone *subiectum*, a "consciousness in general."

Bakhtin's obsession with the particular and the specific, with the boundedness of the body (see Bakhtin, 1990) and his assumption of a broader structure for the lifeworld—that being is being in the world with other people—will be incompatible with the disembodied egology of Husserl's transcendental subjectivity. Instead, Bakhtin gets his phenomenology from the Munich School of phenomenology which had refused to follow Husserl down the Neo-Kantian path, and adhered to Franz Brentano's empirical consciousnesses. According to Poole (2001), Bakhtin will combine The Munich School's Max Scheler's phenomenological analysis of empathy and distance with the work of the Marburg School's Nicolai Hartmann on the role of outsidedness in cognition. Bakhtin applies these ideas to his own unique phenomenological analysis of the processes of literary creation: he identifies and explicates the structures of perception and the various stances, or attitudes and relations that an author can take that allow the author to create more or less successful literary heroes (Bakhtin, 1990, pp. 4-36). These types of author-hero relations create a typology of the human events that comprise the interrelations of consciousnesses in real life (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 74). When Bakhtin subsequently discovers his master concept of dialogue, he will use Scheler's critique of empathy to create a theory of communication that integrates ethics (Bakhtin, 1990).

Finally, it is worth mentioning two more Neo-Kantians, Ernst Cassirer and Emil Lask, who tried to revise some of the major tenets of neo-Kantianism,

which was in decline around the time of World War I due to its severe abstractness (see Brandist, 2002, pp. 17-18). Ernst Cassirer, who was a great influence on both Bakhtin and Voloshinov (see Voloshinov, 1973; and Poole, 2001), tried to bring about a convergence of Neo-Kantianism with *Lebensphilosophie* and Lask and Cassirer—especially Lask—tried to do the same with phenomenology.

When the Bakhtin Circle moved to Leningrad in 1924, it became acquainted with the work of Ferdinand de Saussure. Sergei Karcevskiy, later of the Prague Circle, who had been a student of Saussure, arrived in Moscow, in 1917, and so Saussure's work arrived in Russia very shortly after publication (Holquist, 2002, gives 1923 as the year when Saussure's work starts to spread widely in the country). Here, we can see the effect of the Marxist revolution on linguistics: while Saussure's ideas were undeniably powerful and he would become the father of modern linguistics, his idea of language as a system resonated with the Bolsheviks because it emphasized the importance of the collective as a determinant in human society (Holquist, 2002, p. 43). The view of language that consumes the Bakhtin Circle becomes increasingly sociological. Voloshinov, influenced by Marxism, by Saussure, and by the Lebensphilosophie of Cassirer, would go on to work out the linguistic aspects of the "lived experience" "expression" and "understanding" of Lebensphilosophie in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (Voloshinov, 1973).

Crucially, for the development of Bakhtin's unique and specifically dialogic phenomenology, by the end of the 1920s, Voloshinov and Bakhtin would find a way to connect phenomenology's concerns with the outer world of experience and Neo-Kantianism's inner world of ideas and its concerns with architectonics through the "third realm" of discourse.

Here in brief, but expanded in the next section, is an overview of how Bakhtin's dialogic phenomenology can be applied to understanding the lived experience of the foreign language classroom. Bakhtin combines the phenomenological concerns of understanding the outside world of experience (which corresponds to teachers' and learners' physical experience of the immediate reality of the classroom-lifeworld), with the inner world of ideas of Neo-Kantianism (our knowledge of languages, say, and of cultures; and what Bakhtin, 1993, pp. 50-51, calls "the infinitude of cognition… all theoretical (possible) knowledge," which helps create our lesson plans, for example, or lets us imagine ourselves in the classroom and what might happen there). Then, through his subsequent discovery of the centrality of language-as-dialogue in human existence, Bakhtin and Voloshinov unite these two realms through the third realm of language (see Voloshinov's notes quoted in Poole, 2001; see also Voloshinov, 1973).

Bakhtin's understanding of language—language as it truly exists—will always be accompanied by emotion-volition: interaction is always psychophysiological and axiological. This is in stark contrast to the depiction, in much of our Anglophone pedagogical literature, of human agents as supremely and even solely rational and to all intents and purposes, disembodied. Bakhtin's insistence on the pscyhophysiological aspects of dialogue stems from his, and the Bakhtin Circle's insistence on the particular and the embodied. It also demonstrates the influence of Lebensphilosophie: the notion that human sciences must deal with and explain the whole person, "the willing, feeling and representing capacities of the person" (Brandist, 2002, p. 18), in addition to our rationality.

Bakhtin's discovery of the centrality of dialogue results in the understanding that none of the categories of the lifeword—self/other, time/space—has absolute priority, but that each event of the moments of the lifeworld must be acted upon to achieve a culmination in, or unity as, a particular event. To achieve a unity is to make meaning—to consummate an event and to consummate each other. A teacher will never progress beyond a novice if she doesn't try to let the students participate in consummating the pedagogic acts and events of the classroom because she will not be participating in true dialogue. Only through real dialogue do we consummate each other—build each other's character, help each other with our respective tasks of the project of the self.

The discovery of dialogue then entails a dialogic mode of articulating and expressing the eventness of being. For teachers, this specifically dialogic phenomenology has the virtue both of conveying or capturing the quality of the immediate reality of lived experience which is recognizable, and then through intense focus and explication, rendering it intelligible and thus optimally actable upon. The dialogic method Bakhtin has to use to conduct his dialogic phenomenological analysis is a hermeneutics (Pellizzi, 2011). The writing style makes itself available for teachers' participative thinking, i.e. thinking which

is more capable of being converted into practical reasoning, of making theory more capable of breaking into practice (see Matsuo, 2012 ; 2103).

The relevance of various aspects of Bakhtin's dialogic phenomenological philosophy for a foreign language pedagogy of action

This section identifies the particular features and aspects of Bakhtin's dialogic phenomenology that I consider capable of creating a foreign language pedagogy of action to implement a dialogic language pedagogy (see Matsuo, 2015 for an overview of the linguistic pedagogy). Unfortunately, at this stage, I can give only a preliminary overview of the dimensions of the pedagogical action and one which is restricted to the teacher's point of view. I am not yet able to explore or theorize the experiences and understanding of the other important selves of the classroom—the learners—and their relationship to the teacher's pedagogical actions. (and although I have stated that the teacher can orient to learners as a literary author relates to their heroes, this conceptualization of the learner will of course not coincide with how learners conceive of themselves, thus raising questions of ethics that must be explored in a later paper).

Bakhtin's dialogic phenomenology is capable of creating a theory of pedagogical action which explicates practice *during* practice because of the following features and elements. Its open-endedness thanks to the tensions inherent in the basal category of dialogue creates a hermeneutics: Bakhtin's continual reworking and re-expressing of the lifeworld not only captures the feeling, the phenomenological immediate reality of how events come at us one after another in real time, but the immediacy of the writing style is more capable of giving rise to what Bakhtin calls participative thinking (Bakhtin, 1993, pp. 12-13), the kind of thinking that affirms experience in an emotional-volitional manner, thus rendering it more capable of breaking into practice (see Matsuo, 2012).

In contrast to the closed social scientific discourse of the more traditional Anglophone pedagogical literature which more often than not ignores or takes for granted the circumstances of the classroom, phenomenological analysis by definition foregrounds and tries to capture the eventness of the lifeworld; identifies its significant elements; and explains how these elements present themselves to consciousnesses. Its emphasis on notions of simultaneous perceptions of self and other in time and space and the positive and productive category of Bakhtin's "other" foreground the classroom lifeworld and render it intelligible and optimally actable upon by teachers (since little can be gained for a teacher in having a negative view of the other). Furthermore, thanks to the influence of Lebensphilosophie, which anyway chimed with Bakhtin's preference for and assumptions about the reality of the empirical world and our experience in it, Bakhtin's philosophy deals with the willing, feeling and representing capacities of the whole person (see also above; and see Brandist, 2002), and not just isolated rationality, which latter is how Western pedagogical literature has tended to treat human agents.

The subsequent discovery of the principle of dialogue will consolidate Bakhtin's early phenomenology as follows. First, for Bakhtin, being-in-the world means being with others (as it does for Heidegger, whose work *Being and Time*, published in 1927, Bakhtin would almost certainly not have read when he was building his own phenomenology in the first half of the 1920s). In fact, for Bakhtin, the events of the lifeworld can only be acted upon if there is more than one embodied consciousness present, so Bakhtin's expanded lifeworld of mutually simultaneously perceiving subjects actually *requires* the presence of another subject if events are to be defined and acted upon, and crucially, if embodied consciousnesses are to be capable of giving shape or meaning to each other. The notion of the other in Bakhtin's thought is not the negative concept of alterity that pervades some traditions of Continental philosophy; on the contrary, as already noted, it is a productive and positive category (as it generally is in teachers' experience of learners as others in the classroom). Thus, the broader structure Bakhtin creates for the lifeworld, i.e. a lifeworld of material objects and others, thanks to whom the subject can develop self-knowledge, combines a phenomenology of perception with a phenomenology of sympathetic feeling towards another (see above for the influence of Max Scheler on Bakhtin's theory of ethical communication; see also Poole, 2001).

Ethics is grounded in the simultaneous intersubjective perceptions of events and each other, and is integral to the lifeworld. As human beings occupying a unique position in time and space, we are forced to act and to make meaning. Thus, Bakhtin: "All actions involving self

and other in the unique event of being where actions seek to modify event and the other…are purely ethical" (Bakhtin, 1990, p. 24). The later discovery of dialogue (Bakhtin, 1984; Voloshinov, 1973) will consolidate the phenomenology of perception and sympathetic feeling because the lifeworld of human experience will be seen to be impossible without its embodiment in signs (Voloshinov, 1973), and the expression of experience through signs "is what gives experience its form and specificity of direction" (Voloshinov, 1973, p. 85). Ethics inheres in dialogue because of each person's unique position in time and space. Language, which is really dialogue in speech communication is ethical because the dialogic utterance—the combinations of its language forms—is constituted on the basis of addressivity: any utterance is already and always a response and we are answerable—responsible—for the utterances we make. Ethics inheres in the patterns of self-other relations that are possible in dialogue, i.e. subject-subject or subject-object.

As for foreign language pedagogy, the focus on dialogue raises the teacher's awareness of the possible modes of discourse—monologic and dialogic—she can use to elicit particular types of understanding and response, and the ethical types of self-other relation she can build with the learners (see Matsuo, 2012; 2013). For Bakhtin: "An independent, responsible and active discourse is *the* fundamental indicator of an ethical, legal, and political human being" (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 349-50, original emphasis). Therefore, just as the central concept of dialogue forces Bakhtin constantly to rework the relations within his architectonics, in a dialogic pedagogy a teacher should aim for a progressive dialogization of the utterances in the foreign language classroom as the syllabus unfolds. Voloshinov(1973) expresses the process of dialogization thus:

> For each word of the utterance that we are in the process of understanding, we, as it were, lay down a set of our own answering words. The greater their number and weight, the deeper and more substantial our understanding will be. (p. 102)

Progressive dialogization generates not only language acquisition but understanding, and through the increased understanding—*responsive, integral, active understanding*—of signs, teachers and learners alike become ethical persons. The open-endedness of Bakhtin's dialogic phenomenology gives us the knowledge—and the stance to that knowledge—that we and our learners are always in the process of becoming. Questions serve to give rise to other questions and all answers need to be responded to in active, integral understanding (see also Matsuo, 2015). A unity may be achieved in a particular lesson, or striven for over the course of several lessons, only to raise further questions and new relations towards and among the questions and the participants alike.

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