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**No Time on Their Tongue: Meanings of Silence in Multi-Ethnic Classrooms of
Older Adults**

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of Communication and Social Foundations
Faculty of Education

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to the required standard

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ABSTRACT

Silence in the communicative process is often viewed as the background to speech patterns, or it is not viewed at all. Yet cultural and ethnic teachings concerning the importance of silence, as well as appropriate uses of silence in communication, affect communicative processes in classroom contexts, and can thus affect teaching and learning processes as well. In this study, silence in intercultural communication is the main focus. This is a study about the meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults, as well as a study of signs and signals for breaking silence which are used by participants in classroom contexts when they wish to speak.

A search of the literature revealed minimal information concerning meanings of silences in classroom contexts and no information concerning meanings of silence, nor about signs and signals for breaking silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. Therefore, this qualitative research project was designed to answer some questions about these intercultural communicative issues, which are vital aspects of teaching and learning processes. The two main research questions were: 1) what are the meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults? 2) what are the signs and signals for breaking silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults?

A multiple case study approach was used with seven adults (four women and three men) whose ages ranged from 65 to 82 years and who were from the countries of Nigeria, Cuba, Greece, China, India, England, and Canada. These case studies were supported by a triangulated methodological approach which used three qualitative research methodologies in order to enhance the depth of understanding concerning the research questions of the study. These three methodologies were: ethnographies of communication; ethnomethodology; and interactional analysis of discourse. Saville-Troike's (1985) categories of silences were used as an initial

conceptual framework for analyzing and organizing the data which were gathered from five different sources. This conceptual framework was then adjusted in order to accommodate the various sub-categories and themes which emerged from the data of this study. The five sources of data were: transcription of a video of the participants in their classroom; transcriptions of audio tapes of stimulated recall interviews with individual participants; researcher observations; first focus group discussion; and second focus group discussion (where participants made additions and corrections to tentative findings that were presented to them by the researcher). In order to avoid stereotyping or unwarranted generalizations concerning various ethnic or cultural groups, and in order to respect the communicative differences within cultural and ethnic groups, meanings of silence were not categorized according to culture, but rather, were categorized into communicative themes across cultures. As well, a metaphor of a “patchwork quilt” was used throughout this inquiry as a vehicle for the creative enhancement of insights, organization, connections, and descriptions of the research process.

The findings of this study revealed a large variety of meanings of silence as well as a number of signs and signals for breaking silence. These were organized into the following categories: 1) institutionally-determined silences which included locations, rituals, hierarchical / structural, and silence taboos; 2) group-determined silences which included normative and symbolic silences; 3) individually-determined / negotiated silences which included, interactive, socio-contextual, psycholinguistic, sociocultural, psychological, sociophysical, noninteractive, contemplative and reflective silences; and 4) signs and signals for breaking silence which included verbal, nonverbal, and combined verbal and nonverbal signs and signals.

Various recommendations, which were inspired by the participants’ contributions concerning silences, were made in order to promote possibilities of improved, and refined intercultural communication in classroom contexts. These communicative approaches, in turn, may enhance improved teaching and learning processes.

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Acknowledgments

I am deeply grateful to the many people who have influenced my personal and professional life. In my personal life I am thankful for my parents who gave me language and love, along with a craving for learning throughout my lifespan. I am extremely appreciative of my husband Bob and of our children, Chad and Kindra (and their families), who have warmly supported me, loved me, and encouraged me through my ups and downs of this learning and living process. I am also intensely thankful for my other family members and my friends who have supported me in so many meaningful ways.

In my professional life I am profoundly appreciative of my supervisor, Dr. Alison Preece, who has been my academic guide and mentor through this extremely challenging process. She consistently sustained a warm and caring demeanor while maintaining high expectations of my work. I am also deeply thankful for my committee members, Dr. Mary-Wynne Ashford, Dr. Laurence Devlin, Dr. Lilly Dyson, and Dr. Elizabeth Dow, who shared their encouragement, guidance, and meaningful insights in my learning process. I deeply appreciate Dr. Ted Aoki, external examiner, for his questions, insights and fascinating perspectives on this study. I am very grateful to the enthusiastic participants of this study who openly shared their cultural understandings and who gave me inspiration and hope concerning intercultural communication as well as meaningful learning in later life.

I am also appreciative of colleagues and acquaintances in many different countries who have helped me cross cultural lines, and who have taught me compassion for others who dare to step into these challenging realms of intercultural unknowns.

And, I am deeply grateful for my Father and Brother who encouraged me lovingly in my studies, but who died shortly before this research project was completed. Their spirits live on in my life, granting me much support and strength.

No Time on Their Tongue: Meanings of Silence in Multi-Ethnic Classrooms of

Older Adults

Chapter One

Introduction

Silence in the communicative process is usually viewed either as the background to speech patterns, or it is not viewed at all. In this study, silence in intercultural communication is the main focus and its components may be envisioned as bright, vivid patchwork pieces of fabric which are viewed against a backing of the dark rich cloth of classroom verbal communication. This is a study about the meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. Of related interest, this study is also inclusive of an exploration into the variety of signs and signals in the communicative process that may be used for breaking silence, or signifying the desire to speak, in multi-ethnic classrooms. This project is designed for an inquiry into silence from the perspectives of the participants themselves.

Language and communication are foundational components of the teaching and learning processes of all classrooms. Teachers and students of all ages must engage in communicative activities in order for teaching and learning to transpire. Silence is a major component of the communicative process, yet silence on the part of individual students is often ignored or not understood. Multi-ethnic classrooms provide rich opportunities for exploring meanings of silence of different cultural groups. Multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults provide rich opportunities for learning more about specific cultural teachings concerning silence, due to elders' cultural rememberings. As individuals grow older, they often carry with them "their distinctive ethnic culture, derived from group interactions and early socializations" (Fry & Keith, 1986, p. 267).

Herein then, lies the opportunity of acquiring more knowledge and understanding from older students of various ethnic backgrounds concerning meanings of silence in classroom communication, as well as signs and signals for breaking silence, in order to enhance teaching and learning processes.

Purpose and Significance of the Study.

The purpose of this study is to discover the meanings of silence in classrooms of older adults of various ethnic groups, as reported by these adults themselves. Of related interest, the purpose is also to discover the participants' insights and awarenesses of their own chosen signs and signals for breaking silence in these same contexts. This study is designed to add to the knowledge pool concerning the issues of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. This may eventually lead to more effective intercultural communication and thus enhanced learning opportunities for older participants involved in multi-ethnic learning contexts.

Lack of understanding about silences, on the part of educators, can lead to ineffective teaching and learning processes in classrooms. Educators need a more adequate understanding of the meaning of cultural and ethnic diversity in complex Western societies. Noticing differences in ethnic and communicative patternings is not enough. Knowing behavior without understanding its meanings can provide unreliable interpretations and information (Gubrium, Jaber & Sankar, 1994). Rather, educators need "to examine and clarify their racial and ethnic attitudes, and to develop the pedagogical knowledge and skills needed to work effectively with students from diverse cultural and ethnic groups" (Banks, 1994, p. vi). Understanding silence in its multi-ethnic diversity in classroom contexts is an important aspect of pedagogical knowledge and skill.

Classroom contexts are important components of this study, due to the underlying construct of improving teaching and learning processes through improved intercultural communication. The learning that occurs in classroom contexts is mediated through language (Halliday, 1991). With increased understanding of uses of silence in language, the educational learning process may be mediated more effectively

in the classroom context. The meaning of language depends on context and it depends on the situation within that context (Malinowski, 1923). Therefore, discovering the meanings of silence in particular situations, in particular contexts, may contribute to improved learning and teaching processes.

Since silence is a significant component of communication, yet is often an ignored aspect of intercultural communication, Ishii and Bruneau (1994) encouraged researchers to pursue studies about silence. They wrote:

The intercultural implications of silent behaviors are diverse because the value and use of silence as communication vary markedly from one culture to another. Consequently, communication scholars ought to pay more attention to the cultural views of silence and the interpretations given to silence in communication interactions (p. 247-248).

Silence is often ignored because generally, it has been the background against which the figures of speech in communication have been perceived, valued and studied. Ishii and Bruneau (1994) suggested that these two should be perceived in a reverse manner. "Silence should be treated as the figure against which the ground of speech functions. Most people, especially in Western cultures, are unconscious of this interdependence between speech and silence" (p. 248). Due to this unconsciousness of the interdependence of speech and silence, silence has been overlooked. As well, intercultural varieties of signs and signals for breaking silence have been overlooked. Therefore, this study is designed to discover and display some of these overlooked cultural or ethnic patterns.

This study may also contribute information that leads to improved quality of life for older people of various ethnic groups. Harris (1990) wrote that the sociology of aging (the scientific study of interactions of older people in society) focuses on the interactions of social behavior between people through language. This includes written and spoken language, as well as gestures and symbols. Deeper understandings of these interactions in later life can contribute to improved quality of life for older

persons of various cultures (Amoss & Harrell, 1981). Studies concerning the difficulties of aging, along with the importance of cross-cultural studies of older persons, were described as highly significant by Gutmann (1977).

There are many challenges to be met within the study of meanings of silences and signs and signals for breaking silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. However, with the colourful mosaic or patchwork design of our Canadian multi-ethnic communities, it is of the essence that we strive to learn more about the dynamics of improved intercultural communication and harmonious interactions. Kohls and Knight (1994) wrote:

There is, in these last years of the twentieth century, no more noble calling than to help the people of the world live together in peace and understanding with a fully developed spirit of inquiry about other cultures and other ways. This is not an easy quest and requires all of us to become fully aware of our own cultural conditioning and fully cognizant of the assumptions and values that lie outside our awareness but influence every part of our conscious lives. It also requires that we build some skill in developing and maintaining relationships with people from cultures different, sometimes dramatically different, from our own (p. ix).

Promoting harmonious interactions, or creating unity among people with dramatic cultural differences may be enhanced through deeper understandings of meanings of silences in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. Understanding silence may create unity in the midst of intercultural communicative fragmentations and misunderstandings. Or another way of perceiving this might be as Torsney and Elsley (1994) wrote, “perhaps the most metaphorically resonant quality of quilt making is...the promise of creating unity among disparate elements, of establishing connections in the midst of fragmentation” (p. 55 - 56).

Silence may be viewed, in its sometimes connected and sometimes fragmented forms of complexity, as conscious and unconscious, internal and external, private and

public, usable and abusable, reportable and unreportable, illusive and omnipresent, inclusive of self and others, power enhancing and destructive of power, spiritual and worldly, sayable and unsayable, sad and joyous, predictable and surprising, welcomed and rejected, and more, beyond this. Within this complexity, how then shall ethnic groups, educators, and researchers work creatively and effectively with the many colourful patterns of meaningful and significant silences?

Interwoven within these communicative complexities, several fundamental components which comprise the theoretical underpinnings of this study include: language, communication, intercultural communication, aging and ethnicity. A brief discussion of these foundational components is now included.

Language

Language is implicated in some way or another in all educational activities (Halliday, 1991). Silence is an important aspect of language use. Varieties and complexities of language uses create numerous interpretations, understandings, and misunderstandings in the communicative process. Multi-ethnic communicative contexts contribute to the complexities of communicative interactions and to the possibilities of misunderstandings. Language in classroom contexts may be seen as “a tool and an art” (DeHaven, 1988, p. 50) and silence in language is often used in a large variety of artful forms which are not understood by persons of a differing culture or society. The arts and tools of language, which are imbedded in language and communicative patterns in societal interactions, are inclusive of listening, speaking, reading or writing. Silence in this study is examined in the language realms of listening and speaking.

Language is an abstract and complex phenomenon that can create meaning through a variety of verbal and nonverbal codes. “Language is centered on meaning; it is about constructing and sharing meaning” (Emmitt & Pollock, 1991, p. 5). Language provides contact with the world, or with others, along with providing an arena for actively constructing new meanings between participants in the communicative process (Heritage, 1984). Kalantzis, Cope, and Slade (1989) stated

that the meanings in a culture come not only in symbolic levels of language but through practices which use language as tools in many varieties and forms. They further stated that “culture and life shape language as much as language reshapes life” (p. 4). As well, Hymes (1964) suggested that a focus on language can help us discover meanings, along with similarities and differences of peoples and cultures. Therefore, an analysis of uses of language, including uses and meanings of silence, is an important step in the enhancement of the teaching and learning process.

Communication

Various forms and patterns of communication, and of silence in communication, are involved in language interactions in classrooms, as well as being involved with most other aspects of living. “Communication is intertwined with all of human life” (Littlejohn, 1992, p. 2). Communication is considered as a social activity and it is “something people do with and to each other” (Samovar and Porter, 1994, p. viii). Because of the human need for social interaction, communication is creatively manifested through verbal and nonverbal forms in order to create appropriate social interactions. Deeper understandings of communication and social interactions, including classroom interactions, help individuals become more adaptive, make more sense of experiences, and assign more appropriate meanings in particular contexts (Littlejohn, 1992).

Successful verbal and nonverbal communication through shared meaning is a major communicative goal. “Successful communication means that the communicative effects match the intentions” (Clyne, 1994, p. 145). Success may involve a relationship between the speaker’s communicative intention, the interlocutor’s expectation of the message, and the communicative effects of the message. There are many complexities and pitfalls which may lead to unsuccessful communication. In fact, Yalom (1989) wrote, “It is wildly improbable that the receiver’s image will match the sender’s original mental image” (p. 182). Understanding the meanings of individual verbal expressions and silences is therefore an important and complex issue

to examine, in order to create new knowledge which may lead to an increase in incidents of successful communication.

Culture, Ethnicity and Intercultural Communication

Culture and ethnicity are intricately involved in each individual's choices of speech and silence in the communicative process, both within and outside of classroom contexts. Culture and ethnicity cannot be divorced from the individual nor the context in which a person communicates. Cultural and ethnic codes regulate our lives in many ways and put constant pressure upon us to follow certain types of behavior (Harris, 1990). Yet we are often unaware of our own cultural frameworks which are influencing us (Shearer, 1994).

Culture is a term which is used frequently in this study and which may be defined as the context within which we exist, think, feel, and relate to others. "It is the glue that binds a group of people together" (Brown, 1994, p. 163). The term culture, as described by Berry (1994) "usually includes notions that are both broader than culture (such as ecology) and less broad (such as ethnicity)" (p. 115). Culture may also be defined as a system of symbols, meanings and norms which are historically transmitted. The components of the systems are the patterned symbols such as nonverbal cues, verbal messages, icons, assigned meanings and interpretations. Culture is not the people, but rather the communication, through various forms, which links the people together (Collier, 1994). Culture consists of many shared cognitive and material items, as well as values, beliefs, and customs, which forge a group's identity and ensure its survival (Garcia, 1982; Ribeau, Baldwin, & Hecht, 1994).

The term 'ethnicity' is also used frequently in this study. This term designates basic divisions or groups of people which may be "distinguished by customs, characteristics, and language" (McKechnie, 1962, p. 628). Ethnicity may be defined as groups of people with shared histories and cultural values (Au, 1995, & Bengtson & Morgan, 1983). What constitutes ethnicity or ethnic identity is not easy to define. According to Berry (1994) an ethnic group is an ethnocultural group which is less broad than culture. It involves sets of persons who interact and who maintain

themselves over time as a group. There are two main aspects to consider. First there are the objective facets which involve being offspring of members of a group. Objective facets also include food, dress, language, and religion which are not exact replicas of original cultural phenomena, but “are derivative versions modified over time and space” (p. 122). The subjective aspect of ethnicity involves a sense of identity with or attachment to the group. Members tend to feel they belong to the group and work to maintain the ethnic or ethnocultural group and their membership in it. It often involves a group of people who share a feeling of peoplehood (Samuda, Berry, & Laferriere, 1984). Ethnicity, which often involves values, perceptions, assumptions, and feelings, often influences “one’s sense of space and time and refers to a sense of belonging to an ethnic group” (Garcia, 1982, p. 7).

Padgett (1990) noted that “in most cases, the term ‘ethnic’ suffices as a more neutral term” than does culture or race (p. 723). She went on to say that nothing really works well since race, ethnicity, culture and class remain inextricably intertwined and that there are always various interpretations and confusions among these terms. In this study, the term ethnic is used most, but culture and ethnicity are also used interchangeable, due to the similarities and overlappings of meanings.

Aboud and Skerry (1984) cautioned that within ethnic groups there are developments of distinctive ethnic attitudes, which may show differentiations between groups and between individuals. This serves as a warning to acknowledge differentiations between groups and individuals and to resist generalizations or stereotypings concerning specific cultural or ethnic groupings.

Effective communication across ethnic or cultural boundaries requires sensitive communicative approaches, especially in classroom contexts where access to learning for all students is of high priority. Communication between various cultural or ethnic groups will be referred to in this study as “intercultural communication” (also sometimes known as cross-cultural or interethnic communication). Intercultural communication was defined by Richmond, McCroskey, and Payne (1991) as communication between peoples of differing cultures and ethnicities, where one participant is from one culture and the other participant is from another. Intercultural

communication is not often a simple task, and Brown (1994) noted that finely tuned perceptions are necessary in order to communicate effectively across cultures and ethnicities.

Communicative problems may arise due to cultural and ethnic differences of language use. This may be due in part to language variations in populations of differing ethnic origins which are often systematic and “rooted in speakers’ history and cultural background” (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1981, p. 431). Oxford (1978) commented on intercultural communication which usually incorporates a deeper understanding of one’s self, one’s roots, and one’s senses. Intercultural communication and competency is involved with an adaptive capacity based on integrative and inclusive perceptions (Taylor, 1994). Kohls and Knight (1994) suggested that intercultural goals are to increase participants’ understandings of those who are ethnically different, thereby reducing counterproductive stereotypes, prejudices, and communicative problems.

Nonverbal, as well as verbal aspects of communication are of importance in the intercultural communicative processes of classroom contexts. Nonverbal aspects may include head shaking, staring, smiling, slouching, hand and arm gestures, and a large repertoire of conscious or unconscious physical movements. Nonverbal aspects of communication, which include silence, are often more critical than verbal aspects, due to lack of understanding amongst participants. Richmond, McCroskey, and Payne (1991) wrote that “what we fail to recognize is that other people’s nonverbal messages are even more vastly different from our own than are their (spoken) languages” (p. 292). Various patterns of nonverbal communication, and more specifically of silence in communication, that develop within ethnic groups, are often out of awareness modes of interaction.

These, then, comprise some of the language and communicative components or patchwork pieces which are being analyzed in this study of meanings of silence and signs and signals for breaking silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. Hymes (1964) suggested that studies must be undertaken to gain more information

concerning the various uniformities and differences among cultures and communicative patterns.

Silence

Silence is one aspect of language where differences may lead to difficulties in intercultural communication and understanding in classroom contexts. Silence is defined as “a refraining from speech or the making of a noise” (McKechnie, 1962, p. 1689). There are many diverse aspects of silence, and it is sometimes considered a profound human experience (Trad, 1993). Philips (1985) noted that silence was not to be defined as a “gap” in structure, but rather “structure itself in the organization of interaction” (p. 210). Humans have the choice of using silence or non-silence in communicative actions. There is often significance, not only in spoken communication, but in unspoken communication. It is our lack of knowledge concerning meanings of silence that sometimes creates communicative problems. Chaney and Burk (1998) suggested that silence, whether through deliberate pauses or through momentary inability to speak, also provides clues to meaning which are often interpreted by the receiver. Bruneau, (1973) wrote that “we have only just begun to discover significations in silence because Western cultures... are just beginning to conceptualize them” (p. 18). Each person uses his or her language, both verbal and nonverbal, in their own unique ways. Hall (1959) explained that we must identify cultural similarities and differences or uniquenesses in order to appropriately evaluate the nonverbal messages that are being exchanged in communicative settings. Cultural styles and patterns of using silence are often misunderstood between cultures, in classroom contexts as well as in other contexts.

“Understanding how silence communicates is an art and one that is acquired gradually” (Trad, 1993, p. 169). Silence, as nonverbal communication, is directly connected to words used before and after the silence. “The entire system of spoken language would fail without a person’s ability to both tolerate and create sequences of silence-sound-silence units” (Bruneau, 1973, p. 18). However, Scherer and Ekman (1982) noted that “sound-silence” sequences reveal little information about the

speaker's intention. Therefore, in order to nurture the art of understanding how silence communicates, and in order to understand the various cultural and ethnic meanings of silence, theories and practices of uses of silences must be studied.

Because silence is often an out-of-awareness phenomenon, it may require focused attention in order to be noticed. Armstrong (1991) wrote: "we live in silences, little bits of spaces, slim fitted slivers, wedged between bunches of sound" (p. 19). Too often these meaningful spaces and slivers, or even larger chunks of silence are ignored in research, yet through focused attention, they offer potential for insights into refinements of the communicative process.

Choices of silence may be determined by a variety of situations and contexts. Bruneau (1973) examined the relationships of silence to such processes as perception, sensation, social interaction, mentation, and cultural communication. He noted that silences are important communicative functions and may be either automatic or willed acts of communication. Later, Saville-Troike (1985) dealt with theories of silence by defining three communicative categories for examining a broad range of types of silence. These included: 1) institutionally-determined silences, such as those typical in temples, libraries, and hierarchical contexts; 2) group-determined silences which might be situational (group knows about privilege to speak), normative (privileges of certain members and not others), or symbolic (communicative actions); and 3) individually-determined / negotiated silences, such as socio-contextual situations that include role, status, attitudes.

In this study deeper understandings about silence through research and analysis of the choices and meanings of silence, as well as the signs and signals for breaking silence in classroom contexts are explored. Shelton and Shelton (1992) wrote, "The study of silence as a...communicative form is still largely in its infancy" (p.2). It is, therefore, appropriate to further the investigation and examination of silence as a dynamic communicative form.

Silence, Aging and Ethnicity

This study of silence is enhanced through research with older and ethnically diverse groups of people. Because older persons from various ethnic groups are used as participants or informants in this study, some time and attention is given to their situation or circumstances as learners, in order to give depth to the study. This is done in much the same manner that a researcher might discuss the circumstances of grade 12 learners, if they were the participants of a study.

Canadian societies are now in a phase where multi-ethnicity and aging play major roles. Lifelong learning often enhances the quality of life and social integration of older learners (Legge, 1995). Lifelong learning in classroom contexts provides an appropriate atmosphere for the study of communication concerning meanings of silence in classroom contexts. Research in these arenas may therefore contribute not only to knowledge concerning silence in intercultural classroom communication, but it may also contribute to a deeper understanding of communicative choices, to improved teaching and learning processes, and to quality of life needs of ethnically diverse older learners.

Driedger and Chappell (1987) wrote that the terms 'elders' or older persons usually refer to people over the age of 65. They also noted that "more than any other age group, the elderly provide the nation with a distinct depository of its multicultural history and life" (p. 1). Along with this cultural or ethnic depository, ethnic identity is often a central and meaningful part of the past and present life experiences of many older persons (Padgett, 1990). People carry what may be described as "mental programs" which are developed in a person's life, and which contain components of culture and ethnicity (Hofstede, 1984). Through close connections with these ethnic identities and mental programs, older persons may remember and contribute some of their cultural teachings concerning meanings of silences that they use in their classroom interactions and learning processes. For this reason, older classroom participants from various ethnic groups have been chosen as informants for this study.

Older persons, older traditions, and older patchwork pieces of cloth are all valued highly in this study. Liddell and Wanabe (1985) wrote that Japanese women

often made quilts from lovely old fabrics which reminded the Japanese needlewomen of the past. The metaphor of the patchwork quilt lends itself well to deeper understandings of this study and of the process of gathering treasured old pieces of cultural information concerning silence, like treasured pieces of cloth, which may create theoretical, practical, cultural, communicative, and educational patterns of knowledge that lead to new understandings and insights concerning silence in classroom contexts.

Hansford (1988) wrote that the meanings of silence, like those of words, can only be arrived at appropriately by examining aspects concerning the participants, the setting or context, the content and the culture. The aspects of aging and ethnicity are two valuable components, along with those of language, communication and intercultural communication, which play intricate parts in this study of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults.

Statement of the Problem

The academic literature which deals with intercultural communication reveals a large gap concerning the meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms. As well, the literature shows that little research has been done on signs and signals for breaking silence in classrooms with students of diverse ethnicity. And further, there is a shortage of information concerning effective communication and the enhancement of learning for older adults in multi-ethnic classrooms.

Various problems may arise due to lack of theoretical and practical knowledge and insights concerning silence in communication in classroom contexts, with persons of any age groups. Silent students may be ignored or over-looked in the discourse processes of learning. Brookfield (1990) noted that if a student remains silent for 3 class sessions, it becomes very difficult for that student to break silence and to begin speaking in that classroom, even when he or she would like to become less silent. To complicate matters, teachers are often unaware of appropriate intercultural meanings of silence on the parts of various individuals, and they are also unaware of culturally different signs and signals for breaking silence.

Another problem may involve inappropriate interpretations made by teachers or other students, concerning choices of silence on the parts of certain individuals from differing ethnic groups. Lack of knowledge concerning meanings of silence of various ethnic groups can lead to misinterpretations. Ishii and Bruneau (1994) noted that uses and quantities of silence and speech vary across cultures. They also cited Hammarskjold (1971) as stating that “different cultural groups seem to stylize their forms of silence according to their own traditional wisdoms, beliefs, and attitudes” (p. 246). Lack of knowledge concerning those differing beliefs and attitudes can lead to inappropriate interpretations, ineffective communication, and unsuccessful teaching and learning processes in classroom contexts.

Philips (1985) noted a problem involving the lack of knowledge concerning silence. In discussing this problem, she reinforced the need for research about silence as she wrote, “we know relatively little about either speech or silence in interaction structured through silence, when compared with our knowledge of interaction structured through talk” (p. 211).

Silence, in its complexities, may be seen as “double voiced”. Torsney and Elsley (1994) noted that patchwork quilts may be seen as “double voiced” in that they are private in voice, in some sense, to the individuals who create them, yet they are public in voice when they are displayed to others. Silence may be seen as “double voiced” in that it may seem private to the person who remains silent, yet it is public in voice when it is part of the classroom communicative discourse, and when teachers and peers are trying to understand the meanings of the silences.

Ultimately, the communication process in classrooms is what facilitates or inhibits learning (Hansford, 1988). Lack of theoretical and practical knowledge concerning meanings of silence in the communicative process can therefore create problems and inhibit the teaching and learning process.

Another problem lies with the lack of appropriate classroom learning for older students from non-dominant ethnic groups. In order to meet the needs of older, non-dominant societal participants, appropriate educational demands must be addressed. Several authors have pointed out the phenomena of “multiple jeopardy” whereby

members of these older cohorts are at risk in numerous areas such as problems with language, lower incomes, less education, age, ethnicity, and gender (Ujimoto, 1987; Vacc, 1988; & Weinstein-Shr, 1993). Tien-Hyatt (1987) touched upon the problem of overemphasis of negative aspects of aging, and the need for more positive, differing, and creative views concerning appropriate offerings to older persons of society. Legge (1995) reinforced this notion by noting a gap in published literature concerning the “well aged” people who need appropriate learning contexts. Research for improving intercultural communication and learning processes in multi-ethnic classroom settings for older adults is an appropriate response to these problems.

There are two other problems which may be involved in silence in communication in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. One concerns racism or racial prejudice which may be seen as a form of overgeneralization and drawing faulty conclusions (Olson & Wilczenski, 1995). Another concerns ageism, which involves overgeneralizations due to age categories. Within the ageism perceptual process, older persons are often considered to be inferior simply due to having lived a specific number of years (Walden, 1992). These prejudices may be influencing classroom teachers and peers, as well as the dynamics of silence and signs and signals for breaking silence in classroom contexts. The literature reveals very little concerning these important issues which are intricately involved with learning in older years, intercultural communication, and teaching/ learning processes.

Research Questions

There are many unknowns concerning meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classroom contexts. There are also many unknowns concerning various signs and signals for breaking silence in classrooms. In considering the many aspects that influence choices of silence and speech, Saville-Troike (1985) stated succinctly: “Basic to this approach is not merely accounting for what can be said, but *what* can be said *when, where, by whom, to whom, in what manner*, and in *what particular circumstances*” (p. 13). These aspects, along with many more which are described in this chapter, have been synthesized into two basic questions for this study:

(1) What are the meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classroom contexts of older learners, from the perspective of the participants themselves?

(2) What are the signs and signals for breaking silence when persons from various ethnic backgrounds wish to speak in classroom contexts?

It is acknowledged here that this study may raise more questions as we increase our awarenesses and knowledge of the complexities of silence in communication. We as researchers, teachers, and facilitators in multi-ethnic arenas are met with the challenges of observing, asking, listening, interpreting, learning and transforming, as we come to a deeper understanding of the meanings of silence, and signs and signals for breaking silence in classroom contexts. Olson and Wilczenski (1995) suggested that a significant goal is to create an atmosphere that embraces cultural diversity and individual differences, along with higher levels of acceptance and tolerance. This study is one step towards this meaningful goal.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Through an extensive search of the literature, it has become clear that there is relevant information concerning certain aspects and issues of silence in language and intercultural communication, but there is a large gap in the literature concerning meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older learners. Thus, the various relevant components which comprise the framework upon which this study has been developed are included in this chapter.

The components of language, language development perspectives, communication, intercultural communication, silences, classroom silences, ritual constraints, turn-taking, signs and signals for breaking silence, silencing, reflection, aging and ethnicity are embodied within this study of meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. These components are also intricately involved with various aspects of signs and signals for breaking silence in classroom contexts. Each of these components is included within this review of the literature. Each piece of information that has been gathered from the academic literature has been arranged carefully, like the careful arrangement of pieces of fabric into a patchwork quilt, in order to create meaningful patterns of information, which contribute, in this case, to the foundational work that leads to the study of meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults.

Language

Language is an organized, learned symbol system used to express and represent human experiences within various contexts of ethnic or cultural communities. It is an inexact system of symbols for representing reality and for interacting with others. Chaney (1996) noted that in language there is a symbolic

interactionism which involves the sharing of meaning through the use of symbols such as verbal and nonverbal expressions, pictures, facial expressions or gestures. Within language inexactness, the meanings of verbal and nonverbal symbols that are used are subject to a wide variety of interpretations (Samovar & Porter, 1994). Language is the primary vehicle through which individuals communicate and through which a culture transmits its beliefs, values, world views and norms. Language is also the vehicle through which teaching and learning processes transpire (Halliday, 1991). Silence is a fundamental, omnipresent aspect of language and it is intricately involved with communicative language as well as the teaching and learning process.

Language gives the people involved a means for connecting with others and interacting with others, plus a means for organizing thought. Cultural thought patterns affect the way a person in that culture communicates (Samovar & Porter, 1994), which in turn, affects how a person responds to individuals from another culture. Lack of understanding about uses of language from differing cultural or ethnic groups can lead to communicative problems. “An overriding assumption is that if you know something about the way other people communicate, or how they use language, you can improve the quality of your communication with them and your understanding of their behavior” (Samovar & Porter, 1994, p. 177). Thus, if we understand more about silence in communication and signs and signals for breaking silence in communication, we can more easily connect with others and improve the quality of the communicative process.

Language Development Perspectives

Several language development perspectives are briefly discussed in order to establish the grounding for certain aspects of language and intercultural communication. A “cognitive interactivist” perspective was discussed by Lindsay (1995) where she synthesized Liberman’s (1991), Piaget’s (1986/1970), and Donaldson’s (1978) concepts of language. Liberman’s theory maintains that patterns and rules of language are learned by cognitive mechanisms. Novel language choices may be used while being influenced by knowledge, rules and principles that have been

learned. This theory is inclusive of Piaget's (1970/1986) concepts of cognitive development theories of assimilation and accommodation, along with language development being an active, constructive goal-oriented process which is motivated by the need to make sense of one's world and to interact.

The cognitive-interactivist perspective is also inclusive of the constructivist theories of Donaldson (1978) which viewed a person as an active constructor of his or her own meaning within the environment. Primary to language is the process of sense-making, where one tries to interpret and make sense of the world and to represent one's self in it.

The "social, linguistic, interactivist" perspective of language development deals with social, linguistic, environmental and connecting factors in language development. The Whorf-Sapir hypothesis (first established in 1929) is included in this perspective and is cited and described by Samovar and Porter (1994). These authors stated that at the heart of this hypothesis, there is the concept of "linguistic relativity", whereby a direct connection lies between perception and language (p. 177). This sometimes controversial hypothesis maintains that each language imposes upon its users and their ethnic group or culture, a particular view of reality that may function as a device for reporting experiences, and also function as a device for defining experiences. Therefore, people's communicative activities are socially organized and embedded in cultural systems of meaning. Giles and Coupland (1991) somewhat modified the Whorf-Sapir relationship between speaker and context by commenting that language is determined by social context and that language determines social context also. Persons are seen as products and producers, which is more inclusive of a transactional view of contexts. This means that social and personal identities and other aspects of contexts are negotiated and constructed in language events.

Heath's (1983) study of language socialization of children in three settings fits well in the "social, linguistic, interactivist" perspective. In her study Heath noted that the language used in three different communities or contexts affected the ways that children worked with words or language in school. The three communities or contexts that she described included: Roadville - a community of white people working mostly

in mills; Trackton - a community of black people whose work history changed from farming to mill working; and the mainstream blacks and whites who had the power in the community and the schools. The language differences then led to the need for more learning concerning teaching approaches and language uses that would enhance learning for all students. Lindsay (1995) noted that Mead's (1957) concepts of symbolic interaction and organization of the self fit well into this socially constructed, interactionist perspective. Within these concepts, individuals must interact with language symbols that have shared meanings in order that each person may interact and construct or organize relationships in a manner that allows for feelings of acceptance into the society in which one is interacting. Silence may be an important aspect of language that is used in various communicative approaches across cultures for interaction, for construction of meaning and for organizing interactive relationships.

Hatch (1992) wrote that within the study of language, discourse analysis reveals that language is structured in order that it may be socially appropriate as well as linguistically accurate. It was further noted that the systems or patterns that emerge in communicative interactions are an interlocking linguistic, social, and cognitive enterprise.

Language uses may be viewed from various perspectives. Emmitt and Pollock (1991) suggested that language and learning can be discussed from three different perspectives which include: 1) sociocultural, 2) linguistic, and 3) developmental perspectives. In the "sociocultural" perspective, the individual learns language and uses it for a range of purposes within the society and the culture in which he or she lives. However, what one person uses, and how that person uses the language, is sometimes different from other persons, due to habits, skills, and societal or ethnic groupings. Within the sociocultural groupings, the "individual's use of the language influences the group and vice versa" (p. 6). Language is, therefore, a social interaction where the individual and the society or culture influence each other.

In the "linguistic" perspective, language is seen as a system with many sets of options for use in communication and in the making of meaning. Purpose and context

both highly influence choices and uses of language. Linguistics was described by Hymes (1964) as the science of language study involving components of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Grammar is also included in the linguistic perspective and grammar involves the rules of language. Interactions between various aspects of grammar are rule-governed. Almost all linguistic and grammatical aspects of language are directed at making meaning. Hymes (1972) wrote that communities organize language into meaning by way of such aspects as intonations, tone of voice, rhythm, style, grammar, and other kinds of verbal and nonverbal processes.

In the developmental perspective, there is a focus on the learning of language and the language systems that are used for communication. Language is seen as a powerful and pervasive way of making meaning because it is used for expressing thoughts and meanings by individuals. As well, it shapes meanings and it influences thoughts of individuals. Language development involves the expanding of an individual's knowledge into new fields of knowledge along with an expanding of accomplishments and understandings into more complex language tasks.

These are some of the language development perspectives which may influence choices and meanings of silence in communicative processes of classrooms. These are perspectives which may also affect choices of signs and signals for breaking silence in classroom contexts. Communication and intercultural communication perspectives, which are discussed next, are imbedded within the broader perspectives of language development.

Communication and Intercultural Communication

Communication and intercultural communication are complex aspects of language which may be viewed from many perspectives. Hall (1990) suggested that the world of communication is divided into three parts: words, which are the medium of diplomacy, politics, and business; material things, which are indicators of status and power; and behavior, which provides feedback on how others are feeling and which includes techniques for avoiding conflict or confrontation. These various aspects of

communication are often outside of conscious awareness. They are components of a “silent language”. Silent language may include language choices, concepts, practices, and solutions to problems, which are rooted in shared experiences of groups of people, but which are not usually discussed. These silent language components sometimes reveal insights into underlying principles that carry meanings and values and that shape individuals’ lives (Hall, 1959).

In communicative interactions, people often make assumptions about each others’ processes of perceiving, judging, thinking and reasoning. These assumptions may be conscious or unconscious, correct or incorrect (Klopf & Park, 1982). Built into these assumptions is the “projective cognitive similarity” assumption (p. 103), which assumes that the person being spoken to perceives, judges, thinks and reasons in much the same way as the speaker. As well, people may assume that another person’s use of silence in the communicative process is similar to their own. These assumptions may be incorrect and lead to inappropriate interpretations and unsuccessful communication, along with inhibiting the teaching and learning process.

Success and failure are important issues in the communicative process. Success is the relationship between a speaker’s communicative intention, the interlocutor’s expectations of the message, and the communicative effects of the messages (Clyne, 1994). There must be a matching up of at least some aspects of the intention of the message sender, the expectation of the receiver, and the effects of the message itself, in order for some degree of success to occur in the communicative process.

Successful intercultural communication is laden with many complications and often requires adaptations on the parts of persons involved in communicative attempts. “Cultural teachings concerning appropriate uses of silence and speech create frameworks, patterns, and possibly communicative cages for each individual in his or her communicative process” (Fenimore, 1997, p. 292). These communicative frameworks or cages often complicate communication. Bates (1994) elaborated on this when she wrote:

Adaptations come out of encounters with novelty that may seem chaotic. In trying to adapt we may need to deviate from cherished values, behaving in ways we have barely glimpsed, seizing on fragmentary clues. (p. 8)

The potential for complications in intercultural communication, as well as the need for communicative adaptations and improvisations in intercultural communication are ever-present and challenging.

Intercultural communication is a term used in this study to indicate that people of different cultures are engaged in the communicative process. In this process, there ideally is an attempt at mutual negotiation and at preserving the integrity of each person's culture as well as enhancing the equality of each person through mutual understanding and appreciation. Each individual may experience some change or challenge to his or her meaning system, and each may formulate new perspectives of her or his relationship to the world and to others as well as to chosen modes of communicative interactions (Shearer, 1994).

The term intercultural communication differs slightly from the concept of cross-cultural communication. Cross-cultural communication sometimes carries the assumption that two or more distinct cultures and meaning systems of individuals are involved in the communicative process, and that outcomes of the communication anticipate movement of one individual from his or her own culture into the verbal and nonverbal meaning system of the other (Shearer, 1994). This preserves a little less integrity for the person who must move the most from his or her meaning system into the system of the other person or persons. As well, feelings of equality may be compromised a little more than they would be in the intercultural approach to communication.

Along with verbal forms of communication which may include spoken language, whistling, drumming, singing and other such vocalizations, nonverbal forms of communication are of great importance (Cathcart & Cathcart, 1994). Body

movements are the most common form of nonverbal messages in communication and may include “movements of the torso, head, arms, hands, and legs. Some communication experts have estimated that there are over 700,000 possible signals that can be transmitted through body movements” (Klopf & Park, 1982, p. 93). Many forms of verbal and nonverbal communication vary in meaning from culture to culture. Anderson (1994) stated that nonverbal codes of language may include: chronemics - the study of meanings and communication of time; proxemics - the communication of interpersonal space and distance; kinesic behavior - which may include facial expressions, gestures, and body moves; physical appearance - which may include intercultural differences in appearance; oculosics - the messages sent by the eyes, including eye movement, eye contact, and blinks; and olfactic - the study of interpersonal communication that involves smell. Nonverbal communication may include long periods of silence (Brislin, 1993) as well as distinctive uses of timing of input into conversations (Brislin, 1981). People who wish to interact successfully in intercultural contexts and who wish to establish appropriate intercultural relationships in classroom contexts must give attention to these various nonverbal and verbal aspects of communicative language.

With the vast variety of intercultural communicative differences of verbal and nonverbal language, it is sometimes difficult for people to feel confident in their communications or to achieve a sense of improved levels of “communicative competence”. “Communicative competence” may be defined as an impression that behavior, as well as communicative attempts, have been “appropriate” and “effective” in a given context (Spitzberg, 1994). “Appropriateness” in this case means that “valued rules, norms and expectancies of the relationship are not violated significantly” (p. 347). “Effectiveness” in communication is considered to be the accomplishment of better understandings of valued goals which are related to a variety of alternatives and communicative choices in each situation or intercultural communicative act. These competencies may also be viewed as “conversational currency” which is the ability to know what can be talked about and what cannot, in order to enhance the

communicative process (Brislin, 1981). Confidence in intercultural communication is therefore very complex and cultural differences diminish the prospects of effective communication (Orbe, 1995).

Inherent in the struggle toward communicative competence and improved intercultural communication are various aspects of ethnicity or culture which affect each individual's communicative choices. These may be seen as "cultural consequences". Waldrip and Fisher (1997) identify four major dimensions which may be considered as cultural influences or consequences in individual's lives, and which may also be influential in their communicative interactions. These four dimensions, which often serve as regulators concerning choices of verbal and nonverbal communication, include: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity/femininity.

Intercultural communicative competence usually involves various aspects of transformative learning . Perspective transformation is a major aspect of intercultural competency. It is an adaptive capacity based on an integrative and inclusive perception (Taylor, 1994). In learning to be interculturally competent, or to communicate effectively across cultures, Taylor (1994) suggested that a person goes through five phases which usually include: setting the stage, by getting involved with or gaining more understanding about another culture; disequilibrium; cognitive orientation; learning strategies; and intercultural identity. Outcomes of becoming interculturally competent, especially in communicative interactions, are dependent on progression through these phases.

Intercultural communicative competence and perspective transformation is usually inclusive of an evolving intercultural identity, which may be experienced through changes in values, increases in self confidence concerning relating across cultures, and changes in many other perspectives. This may include learning new ways of making sense of certain situations and appreciating new values (Jacobson, 1996). It may also involve the developmental process of "ethnic socialization" whereby people acquire the attitudes, perceptions, values and behaviors of a different ethnic or cultural group, and come to see themselves as a member of this new group (Olson &

Wilczenski, 1995). This may also be viewed as the development of an “intercultural personhood” whereby an individual may bridge the communicative gaps between his or her own culture and that of another person of a different culture (Shearer, 1994). This perception transformation and intercultural identity formation may be seen as communicative competency which is developing in three specific competency areas: first, increased sense of competency in one’s own culture, due to insights through realizations of communicative differences; second, increased competency in a new culture, as new perceptions and identities are realized; and third, increased competency in an inter-culture, or the culture of in-between the first and second cultures, which might be viewed as a third culture.

In most intercultural or cross-cultural communicative situations, people of the non-dominant culture are required to learn the language of the dominant culture in order to function effectively. Along with the language learning, social conventions and societal rules must be learned for effective functioning or communication. Lack of use of appropriate language or of appropriate social skills is sometimes judged as a deficiency in an individual’s character, rather than merely as a lack of skills (Furnham & Bochner, 1986).

Effective intercultural communication involves not only appropriate expressions, but appropriate interpretations of expressions. Scollon and Scollon (1995), in their discourse approach to intercultural communication, suggested that in order to communicate across cultures, “participants must share some aspects of symbolic systems which they can interpret in shared ways” (p. 39). It was suggested that two approaches to interdiscourse communication might include: know as much as possible about the people with whom one is communicating, through an approach of increased shared knowledge; and deal with miscommunications as they arise, because these misunderstandings across cultures will arise. A grammar of context was also suggested, whereby understanding is sought on how communication is structured in a particular context. These contexts may often hold keys for interpretations and therefore lead to improved intercultural communication.

Communicative styles within particular communicative contexts may be involved in particular intercultural communicative problems. Differences in communicative styles across cultures often lead to difficulties in intercultural communication (Clyne, 1995). Weber (1994) reported on a communicative style of some black students who were observed in a classroom. During a lecture, a black student was saying “all right”, or “make it plain”, or “teach”, when the teacher paused for a moment. The black students were comfortable with this style of communication, but the white students found it disruptive. The author noted that with the many differences in communication styles, “the beginning of racial understanding is the acceptance that difference is just what it is: different, not inferior. And equality does not mean sameness” (p. 225). The understanding of communicative styles then, can enhance or hinder appropriate and equitable intercultural communication and learning.

The concept “saving face” in intercultural communication is also a form of communicative style. The concept of “face” is one which is “tied closely to the need people have to a claimed sense of self-respect in any social interactive situations” (Ting-Toomey, 1994, p. 362). This involves the need to feel respected and approved of in everyday communicative behaviors and in classroom contexts. How people manage face, or self-respect, and how they negotiate “face loss” and “face gain” in social settings or in conflict situations, differ from one culture to another. Face relations as communicative style in intercultural communication are of critical importance (Scollon & Scollon, 1981).

Silences

Communication involves interaction between meaningful sound and meaningful silence, and each deserves attention and focus. Jaworski (1993) wrote, “instead of treating speech and silence as primary and secondary (derivative) concepts, respectively, I would rather see them as complementary” (p. 44). Illich (1971) argued that communicative interactions are composed of a “yang-yin” of silence and sound, and often silences are more meaningful than sounds (p. 41). Even though sound and

silence are complementary, sound, or speech, has often been the main focus of attention.

Tannen and Saville-Troike (1985) proposed another perspective to the giving of attention to silence. They wrote, “silence is most often an out-of-awareness phenomenon - the ground against which the figure of talk is perceived” (p. xi). They suggested that people reverse polarities and examine silence as the figure to be focused on with talk (or other events and actions) as the background. This perspective may heighten awarenesses of various aspects of intercultural communication, and it may reveal the richness of meanings and patterns of cultural similarities and differences of silences in classroom communicative interactions.

In order to understand patterns and perspectives of silence, a theoretical schema called “the theory of silences” was proposed by Baker (1955). This author suggested that there are two major types of silences. There are either positive silences (s+), which involve contentment or placidity and which often occur with old friends or lovers, or there are negative silences (s-), which often involve psychic tensions or anger. Between these two poles of silence lies the field of psychic tension which fluctuates continually. When effective communication is occurring, there is an aspect of “reciprocal identification” (p. 166) whereby the speaker and listener involved in the communication partnership at the present time are identifying with each other, and understanding each other well enough that tension is reduced and positive silences of various forms may occur. Baker also reported that along with the positive silences, there was an increase of vocabulary variety within this reciprocal identification aura. When this identification process dwindled, vocabulary variety also dwindled, and silences were reported to be higher in tension or anxiety. When appropriate and effective communication began to occur again, tensions were “bled off” and silences again became positive. Thus, when tension was reduced, the speaker relaxed and used a larger variety of words.

In a search for understanding patterns and perspectives of silence, Bruneau (1973) divided silence into three major forms, with various functions of each form

described. The three forms are: 1) psycholinguistic silences; 2) interactive silences; 3) socio-cultural silences. Each is discussed briefly.

1) Psycholinguistic silences, which are considered variable impositions of slow-time on the temporal sequence of speech, may be created by both encoders (speakers) and decoders (listeners) of speech. Encoders sometimes impose discontinuity, or hesitations, or pauses in their speech, (forms of syntactic or semantic silence) to reduce their own uncertainty, or to aid decoders. Decoders impose discontinuity to reduce uncertainty by creating “mind-time” (slow-time silence) for the decoding process (p. 23). Decoders may do this by focusing on only part of what is being said by the speaker, thus creating a mental silence where thinking about the chosen words may occur. Psycholinguistic silences are constantly being utilized in interpersonal and small or large group communication.

2) Interactive silences between people often appear to be quite variable, and are usually longer than psycholinguistic, slow-time silences. They are involved with the nature of the message sharing process, and especially with communicative situations and circumstances. Within interactive silences, many cognitive and affective decisions, inferences and judgments are made. One of the most basic decisions made in interactive silence is the question of who will take the burden of speech. Each member of a dyad or small group makes a decision to speak or remain silent. These decisions also appear to be a function of: the interactive context; each member's concept of self; power relations; as well as a function of deciding to reveal or to conceal oneself.

3) Socio-cultural silences are those related to the particular manners in which entire social and cultural orders refrain from speech and use both psycholinguistic and interactive silences. “Socio-cultural silences may define cultural patterns of communication much better than what is said” (p. 36). That is to say, rules about silences and meanings of silences may portray certain cultural and societal values which are not portrayed through words. Bruneau (1973) encouraged further study and research on patterns and perspectives of silence because “silence as a communicative function is complex and profound” (p. 42).

A perspective of an analysis of silence through the description of four main uses of silence was outlined by Richmond, McCroskey and Payne (1991). First, silence serves to establish distance when relating interpersonally. A psychological distance may be created through remaining silent, even though physical removal may not occur. Second, silence is often used in order for a person to put his or her thoughts together. The encoding of messages is facilitated by silent moments during the process of putting thoughts into words. A third use of silence is to show respect for another person or to show respect for a special setting. Finally, silence may be used to assist in modifying another person's behavior. Mothers and fathers, spouses or friends have used the 'silent treatment' to show disapproval.

Different cultures or ethnic groups often provide new perspectives through which both spoken and silent language uses may be viewed. One of the special qualities of humans is the ability to work with meanings of silences as well as meanings of words. Weber (1994), explained that several African cultures distinguish humans from other beings by their possession of 'Nommo', the "magical power of the word" (p. 221). With this magical power of words, interspersed with the often misunderstood power of silence, comes the opportunity to explore new meanings of silences in various intercultural contexts.

Understanding the meanings of silence has powerful effects on the communicative process. Cathcart and Cathcart (1994) described a Japanese tradition of "Nakama", the life-long group (p. 299), where the members who know each other very well, do not need words to express many of their thoughts, but rather they share feelings through a type of telepathy, focusing primarily on visual clues, not on verbal ones. Hall and Hall (1990) referred to this type of communication as "high context", whereby many things in the context of the communicative setting are seen, heard, smelled, or noticed in a variety of ways, often leading to improved understanding and communication. This interaction occurs in the silent places, outside of, or around, or in the absence of words. Hall and Hall went on to say that North Americas are often considered culturally to be "low context" communicators, giving low value to the communicative context and high value or attention to the spoken words. The

Japanese, however, may place high value on perceptions of feelings and on sensitivity and contextual cues, rather than on various verbal skills (Cathcart and Cathcart, 1994). Ishii and Bruneau (1994) noted that in the Japanese culture a person with good 'Sasshi' (p. 250) is someone who is valued by their group for their ability to perceive other group member's ideas or feelings through sensitive intuitions, rather than through spoken words. These authors went on to explain that often the speaker, while depending on the understanding of the other person and the communicative situation, simplifies his or her own messages that are being given, rather than elaborating on them. The speaker's "psychological 'exit' through which the encoded messages are sent out, under the impact of *enryo* (reserve or restraint), is considered to be much smaller than his or her own message-receiving 'entrance,' called *sasshi*. The sense of *enryo-sasshi* is of utmost importance in high-context Japanese interpersonal relations" (p. 250). These culturally distinctive approaches to silence and speech highlight the need for further understanding concerning meanings of silence in intercultural communication.

Many North Americans of European background nurture the concepts of self expression through oral language or speech, rather than through silence. Shelton and Shelton (1992) stated, "our culture (Western) tends to place great emphasis on verbal communication and to downplay the role of silence" (p. 5). These authors also noted that within ethnic and societal groupings, "when we have examples of other culture's uses of silence to contrast and compare to our own, we can perhaps better understand why we use silence in the way we do" (p. 5).

Another perspective to be considered is that of silence as a meaningful pause in communication. Aggertt and Bowen (1972) as cited by Shelton and Shelton (1992) wrote: "a pause is purposeful, 'living' silence that is charged with meaning" (p. 7). Scollon and Scollon (1981) discussed various aspects of this pause perspective. They suggested four reasons for pauses: cognitive- for time to think; interactive - lets others take the floor; backchanneling - pausing for feedback from others, but others do not take the floor; and coughing. Pauses are points in the communicative process

where each person involved must make quick judgments and decisions. “Pauses in a conversation are as much in need of on going interpretation and reaction, as the words, clauses, and sentences” (Scollon & Scollon, 1981, p. 64). These authors noted that such points of ambiguity arise about once per second. They therefore emphasized the need for metacommunication whereby attention is given to discourse and to how communication is transpiring, with words and with pauses or silences.

Cultural norms and constraints determine perspectives and approaches to silence. If an individual has been trained to use or exclude silence in certain contexts, then “norm-breaking” by that individual may be very stressful (Coulthard, 1977). From another perspective, if someone has been trained concerning silence in certain contexts and then witnesses others breaking these normative patterns, the situation may also be very stressful. Jaworski (1993) stated that “cross-cultural uses of silence are rooted in the observation of different types of taboos, practical magic, and in varying beliefs as to how much or how little talk is necessary in a given situation” (p. 23). Clashes in these beliefs and taboos may lead to extreme discomfort for some members of the group. These normative clashes may be experienced in classrooms, to the extent that they are impeding learning; yet often instructors are not aware of the discomforts nor the reasons for differences. Hatch (1992) suggested that these communicative constraints of various ethnic groups may be a starting point for cross-cultural or intercultural research.

Various ethnic groups have been reported as having distinctive communicative constraints and approaches to silence. Jaworski (1993) reported on a study by Reisman (1974) where he wrote about the “extreme silence...with some Lappland people of Northern Sweden” (p. 112). They often had silent periods of up to five or ten minutes in their social conversations. Lehtonen (1985) explained that the Finns tolerate more silence than Americans or central Europeans, and are sometimes judged as sullen, hostile, and annoyed, due to their silences. Hatch (1992) reported that in some Scandinavian languages, “gaps between turns are relatively long” (p. 52). More silences and less talk were noted by Scollon and Scollon (1981) in Athabaskan and

Apache communities. However, these authors reported that the Athabaskans talked more once they knew the other persons very well. One study of communicative patterns of silence in Apache communities showed that silence was related to ambiguity of status of focal participants, to lack of predictability of social interaction, and to responses toward uncertainty (Basso, 1970). Philips (1976) reported that there was a large “tolerance for silence among the Warm Springs Indians of Oregon” (p. 88). Coulthard (1977) reported on research which explained that “some Eskimos of Iceland would visit once a day for an hour to check that all was well. During the hour there would be no more than one half dozen exchanges, and all the rest of the time was spent in silence” (p. 49). I personally experienced these “mostly silent visits” from villagers when I taught for two years in a one-room school in a remote Native village in northern British Columbia. Parents and grandparents sometimes came to our cabin, had tea, answered our questions briefly, sat silently for long periods of time, spoke maybe five or six times briefly in a half-hour period of time, then thanked us warmly for the lovely visit, and left. I also experienced these types of “visiting silences” from Native persons in a remote village in the Andes Mountains of Colombia, South America, where my husband and I worked as Peace Corps volunteers for two years. Along these same lines, Johannesen (1974) reported on a study done with American Native tribes. Silence reflected reverence for careful language usage; words were not to be used profusely or promiscuously. Silence facilitated effective listening. “One derives from silence, the cornerstone of character, the virtues of self-control, courage, patience, and dignity” (p. 27). Shelton and Shelton (1992) stated: “Eastern cultures have also traditionally placed high value on silence” (p. 5). South-East Asians often observe silence and take fewer and shorter turns in conversations (Clyne, 1994). Here then are many distinctive cultural constraints and approaches to silence.

The applications or uses of silences vary between ethnic or cultural groups as well as within ethnic groups. Scherer, Wallbott, and Summerfield (1986) reported on silences that are often used with emotions. Fear and sadness were found to be silent emotions, as there was more of an absence of speech. Joy and anger, however, were found to be more talkative emotions, where absence of speech was rare. Silence may

be a language of 'strong passions' such as surprise, fear, guilt, and shame (Bruneau, 1973).

Silence may be used as a time for listening. Listening silence, as explained by Fiumara (1990), gives space for the "re-connecting of the divergent poles of manifest meaning" and allows for "a sequence of further possible meanings" (p. 95). Within this space there lie the opportunities for developing new perspectives for considering various possible meanings. Ting-Toomey (1994) elaborated on the value of listening silences. She suggested learning to listen attentively and to observe mindfully and reflectively, while feeling the 'copresence' of the other person. She noted that, "in Chinese characters, hearing, or 'wun' means opening the door to the ears, while the word listening or 'ting' means attending to the other person with your ears, eyes and heart" (p. 369). Listening silences in sensitive intercultural communications, then, are of utmost importance.

When silence is used in communicative interactions, a space is created for others to interpret and assign meaning to the choices of silences of others. "By being silent we cause others to assign some meaning to that silence, just as we cause others to assign meaning to our choice of words, gestures, and other traditional modes of communication" (Shelton and Shelton, 1992, p. 2). "Silence can carry "a variety of meanings - from acceptance to total refusal" (Fiumara, 1990, p. 101). Yet, "seeking agreement on our interpretations and beliefs is central to human communication and the learning process" (Mezirow, 1996, p. 162).

Within the interpretations of silences, there are many possibilities of misinterpretations of what is being expressed by the silent person. Myers and Myers (1973) warned that unique uses of a person's moves, facial expressions, body postures and gestures may mislead interpretations. Also, "sound-silent" sequences may reveal little information about meaning, context or speaker intention (Scherer & Ekman, 1982). Prior experience, noted Johannesen (1974) may be involved in determining just how we interpret the silences that we encounter. Cultural teachings also have heavy influences on interpretations of the silences of others.

“The quantity of silences versus the quantity of speech is interpreted and valued differently across cultures” (Ishii & Bruneau, 1994, p. 247). These writers reported that U.S. interpretations of silence were often (1) sorrow, (2) critique, (3) obligation, (4) regret and (5) embarrassment (p. 248). They mentioned that Australian interpretations of silence seemed to be very similar to these listed, and that Japanese interpretations were more neutral and uncommitted. Giles and Copeland (1991) reported that with lack of understanding concerning the meanings of silences, the quietness of some Inuit people was sometimes interpreted as apathy or animosity.

Intolerance of differences as well as respect for others may cause a reaction such as silence. Prejudice can show itself in silence (Bruneau, 1973). Physical diversities such as colour of skin, cultural differences, or physical disabilities may cause silence on the part of another person in communication, due to a person’s uncertainty about acting appropriately. On the other hand, silence may be used to show respect for others, including respect for elders (Ishii & Bruneau, 1994; Fonua, 1997). Silence may also signify a power distance relationship, whereby an individual may be inhibited in verbal expression with certain individuals due to a recognition of differences in power, prestige, and wealth (Anderson, 1994).

Johannessen (1974) compiled a list of potential meanings of silence which included:

- a person lacks sufficient information to talk
- no sense of urgency about talking
- pondering what to say
- normal rate of thinking
- avoiding discussion of a controversial issue
- agreement
- disagreement
- doubtful or indecisive
- bored
- uncertain of someone else’s meaning
- emotionally overcome
- snooty or impolite
- punishing others
- concern for not saying anything to hurt another person
- preoccupied with other matters
- sense of self-uniqueness

- sulking anger
- companionship of shared mood or insight

With this range of potential meanings, interpretations, and mis-interpretations, it becomes obvious that much remains to be done concerning meanings of silence in intercultural communicative settings, and particularly in multi-ethnic classroom contexts.

Classroom Silences

Silent behavior on the part of particular students is often perplexing to teachers and peers in classroom contexts. There is a wide variety of cultural influences on an individual's communicative choices between silence and speech. These cultural influences may have been implicit or explicit in the formative, developmental, communicative processes of each classroom individual, including the teacher.

Cultural teachings concerning appropriate uses of silence and speech create frameworks, patterns, and possibly communicative cages, for each individual in his or her communicative process. A story about a rabbit (Kosinski, 1983) may shed light on the development of these communicative frameworks. There was once a very young wild rabbit that lived in a meadow and that was caught by villagers and put into a cage. The rabbit was crazy with anxiety for a while and tried desperately to escape. However, with time, the young rabbit grew older, became accustomed to his environment, and settled into the various routines of his life. One day his cage door was left opened. The rabbit jumped out and started toward the meadow, leaving the cage behind. Suddenly, however, he seemed to change his mind, and he turned around, nibbled and hopped his way back from the meadow, and jumped into the cage, for now, it seemed, he carried the cage within himself. This story of the rabbit highlights the view that cultural frameworks or teachings about silence and speech, which are often learned in young formative years, are carried within us as persistent cultural frameworks or cages, as we engage in choices of communication in intercultural classroom contexts.

The socio-cultural-educational organization of the classroom group that is involved in communication may also determine the amounts of speaking or silence that are engaged in by each individual. Culture shapes and structures classroom communication, therefore there is a need for heightened awareness of one's own culture and of that of others (Powell & Anderson, 1994). Hall (1959) pointed out that individuals must persist in identifying cultural similarities and differences in order to appropriately evaluate the verbal and nonverbal messages that are being exchanged in communicative settings. Silence is an important aspect of the verbal and nonverbal messaging that is being exchanged in educational settings. Brookfield (1990) suggested that acknowledgment be made for the more silent learners in classrooms by speaking approvingly about silence and quiet, and by having a variety of activities that are inclusive of more silent participants.

Various cultural differences of classroom philosophies may influence perceptions of who teaches whom, and who speaks or remains silent. Powell and Anderson (1994) suggested three learning paradigms which may influence classroom discourse interactions. The postfigurative learning paradigm emphasizes older people teaching young people. The configrative cultural learning paradigm emphasizes peer learning patterns. The prefigurative paradigm is operative in societies which tend to learn from younger members. These paradigms may be influencing not only learning patterns, but silence and speech patterns that are used in the classroom teaching and learning processes.

Misunderstandings or misinterpretations of silence and speech in intercultural classroom communication may present barriers to learning, especially for members of non-dominant groups. These misinterpretations may be made by peers as well as by the instructors. Shelton and Shelton (1992) wrote that we often consider silence as a weakness, or perhaps that silent members may be perceived as the least influential members of the group. If this is true, the more silent participating members of classrooms may perceive the instructor's negative interpretations, and they may therefore feel diminished or not important.

Jaworski (1993) gave several interpretations that may be involved in classroom silence. "Silence may signal the students' lack of relevant knowledge,...it may indicate their hostility toward the teacher...or it may mark the students' shyness" (p. 4). He also described a study by Rowe (1974) which looked at pausing or wait-time and the quality of instruction in the classroom. It was found that when teachers were trained to increase the wait-time (silence) at the end of the question asked, or at the end of the student's response, student responses increased.

Silence and nonverbal communication in classroom contexts are of high value to some people, yet may not be to others. Myers and Myers (1973) reported on a study which showed that the student who is of different ethnic background often relies heavily on nonverbal communication in the classroom. This requires culturally sensitive perceptions on the part of the teachers to the communicative differences. "This means sensitivity to your own silences and to the silences of others to whom you would speak" (p. 206). Powell and Anderson (1994) reported that many Eastern cultures nurture beliefs that knowledge and insights come from reflection and meditation, while American students often use visual learning observation, imitation and explicit verbalization. Teachers and students can learn to read cues better in order to have more appropriate interpretations of silences. Sensitivity to varying patterns of silences is imperative to effective communication (Myers & Myers, 1973).

Patterns of silence in classroom participation may be established early. These patterns may later become inappropriate for the learner, yet they may be difficult to change. Silence and speech is often associated with levels of participation. Brookfield (1990) wrote:

Patterns of participation tend to be created, and fixed, early in a group's life. By the third meeting of a discussion based course, discrepancies in communication between garrulous and silent members are usually well established. This pecking order of communication is self-fulfilling; the longer a student remains silent, the more intimidating is the prospect of eventual (verbal) participation. (p. 88-89)

Silence on the part of certain classroom participants does not mean non-participation. Three types of verbal and nonverbal classroom participation were mentioned by Bagnal (1989): 1) presence, which basically identifies the person as being present rather than absent, and therefore establishes the number of persons in the classroom; 2) involvement, which means that the learner is interacting or is engaged with the learning event; this may include silent considering or verbal activity; 3) control, which involves participation at a level whereby the learner acts to have some control or give some direction to the goals, outcomes and content of the educational event. Silent members may be participating fully, learning much, and enjoying their choices of communicative participation. However, if choices of modes of participation change from the desire to remain silent, to the desire to speak, then instructors must be ready to acknowledge these desires for breaking silence, regardless of earlier established patterns. Skakum and Lightning (1993) suggested that instructors be sensitive to cultural perceptions of timing and rights to silence. A person who has been choosing silence, may be transformed to a person who is being silenced, due to lack of perceptiveness on the part of the facilitator or instructor, to that student's signs and signals for breaking silence. Sensitivity to intercultural variations in signs and signals for breaking silence is required in these situations.

Sensitivity to individual silences is sometimes difficult. There may be times when an instructor must decide whether to encourage more silent members of a classroom to speak, or to respect their silence. Brookfield (1990) suggested that the instructor might announce that people do not have to speak, while maintaining the belief that the silent participants are still learning. He also suggested that instructors might assign a brief sharing time for each person and then give special praise to those who have been silent in the past. Silent members may also be encouraged to write a journal about what is being learned and this might be shared with the teacher. Acceptance of emotionality and encouragement of minority viewpoints were also suggested, in order to enhance verbal participation by some of the more silent learners.

In viewing differing perspectives on silence and the need for sensitivities, Crocker (1980) stated that “if silence serves as important a function in communication as these theorists suggest, then instruction in silence should be offered to speech communication students” (p. 73). Crocker then went on to develop nine exercises for speech communication improvement in dealing with silence. Some of these exercises included a day of silence, an hour of silence in the classroom, visiting silent places such as temples or churches, charting one’s own talk and silent times, doing a “silence process analysis” whereby silence in a small group is observed and analyzed, using silence to show respect or gain attention, and leaving 15 to 30 seconds of silence between each person’s speaking turn. These activities might then lead to new insights concerning various perspectives of silences.

Communicative choices of silence and speech are affected by the cultures and contexts within which the communicative patterns are developed. Cultural underpinnings as well as uses and responses to silences in classrooms in just a few cultures have been reported in the literature.

In a Brazilian educational project for teachers of various ethnic groups and of various levels of education, Lima and Gazzetta (1994) reported that an attempt was continually made to “balance people’s cultural experiences in the educational process, so that individual voices would not be silenced, personal experiences would not be devalued, and people would not feel discouraged in their quest for formal knowledge” (p. 248). These then were primary classroom goals for the sensitive recognition of speech and silence patterns in multi-ethnic settings.

Classroom silences have various aspects which have been examined. Dumont (1972), in a study with Cherokee and Sioux children in classrooms, discovered that silence was sometimes shyness, sometimes a defensive act against an embarrassing situation in class, and an act of maintaining some control for oneself by maintaining silence. Plank (1994) reported that some American Indian groups used silence in the classroom because it was “inappropriate to set oneself above or apart from one’s peers” (p. 5). Rather, the cultural role of the pupil requires the listening and watching of the teacher as opposed to questioning or answering questions.

The aspect of control and other meanings of silence were discussed by Jones and Gerig (1994). They studied silences in classrooms of children in grade six and found that, along with other reasons for choosing silence, some students used silence to control their participation in class discussion, to time their interactions with the teacher and peers, to avoid competing, to avoid taking risks, to listen and learn, and to avoid giving wrong answers. It was noted that further research is needed on how cultural characteristics affect classroom communicative participation and on how learning may be enhanced for silent students.

Derewianka (1992) reported on a case study of a Papua New Guinea boy who moved to Australia and was often overlooked in class by the teacher because he was so quiet. It was later discovered that in Papua New Guinea, students were typically expected to be quiet, polite, listen to what the teachers said and ask very few questions.

Differences in Eastern and Western philosophies have contributed to differences in communicative classroom patterns. While some Eastern cultures emphasize sensitivity or conformity of the individual to the group, Western cultures often encourage individuality and personal autonomy (Kim, 1994).

While interpersonal meaning in the Eastern perspective resides primarily in the subtle, implicit, nonverbal, contextual realm and is understood aesthetically and intuitively, the Western communicative mode is primarily a direct, explicit, verbal realm, relying heavily on logical and rational perception, thinking, and articulation. (p. 420)

In Eastern cultures, the Confucian legacy of consideration for others as well as concern for the group, the collective, and the properness of human relationships “has led to the development of communication patterns that preserve one another’s face” (Yum, 1994, p. 82). This often leads to careful consideration concerning appropriate speech or silence. As well, in East Asia, there has been an emphasis on listening and interpretation. In contrast, North American communication often focuses less on

collective human relationships and the group, but rather centers more on the 'sender' as an individual, and how that sender may formulate better messages, improve credibility, and polish speaking skills (Yum, 1994).

Vietnamese students are often more silent in classrooms than are Non-Vietnamese students (Nguyen, 1991). Some of the meanings of their silences were reported to be: a fear that they would not express their thoughts and feelings well; a wish to 'save face', both their own and that of the other person; a shyness to ask 'what do you mean'; and, a belief that assertiveness in communication implied a lack of respect. Thu (1988) also discussed communicative patterns of Vietnamese students who are often viewed in Western cultures as passive, shy or timid. Traditional Eastern classroom methodologies have evolved whereby the teacher is included in the hierarchy which may be seen as "Quan, Su, Phu", or King, Teacher, Father (p. 19). Under the influence of this tradition, students are not to ask questions because they may be insulting the teacher. "By being polite, sitting properly in class, obeying class orders, asking few questions,...the Vietnamese student expresses his high respect for his teacher" (p. 20). Teaching methodology was considered a one-way process whereby the teacher taught and the student learned. "The only attitude a Vietnamese student perceives as safe is to adopt a silent and attentive attitude in the classroom" (p. 22).

Fonua (1997) reported similarities between Confucianism in S.E. Asian classroom behavior and Polynesian cultural classroom behavior. Polynesian students maintain high levels of silence in their expressions of respect for the teacher. The teacher is seen as the provider of knowledge and the students are to listen, be silent, and learn. Students are very careful when questioning a teacher, in order to not offend the teacher or appear to be disagreeing. "Instead of asking the teacher about what has been unclear, they try to work it out amongst themselves. In Polynesian cultures, this is the form of collectivism that students fall back to since they cannot question the teacher that much" (Fonua, 1997, p. 18).

The literature has revealed a number of meanings of silences in some diverse cultural classroom contexts. These meanings of silence are of vital importance in the

pursuit of improved teaching and learning processes. There remains a gap in the literature, however, concerning meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classroom of older adults, as well as gaps in the literature concerning signs and signals for breaking silence. Intertwined within the meanings and choices of silence and speech in intercultural classroom contexts are some important interactional aspects of intercultural communication, which may affect choices of silence and speech. These aspects are now discussed.

Ritual Constraints, Turn-taking, and Signs and Signals for Breaking Silence

Multi-ethnic classroom communicative interactions are affected by many conscious or unconscious social rules and constraints. Ritual constraints, which are sometimes considered social constraints, are embodied within communicative processes and serve to smooth social interactions. These communicative interactions include system constraints such as turn-taking, openings and closings, and other communicative systems (Hatch, 1992). Many of these systems regulate individuals' choices of silence and speech. While system constraints provide the components required for all communication systems, ritual constraints reveal the system of social markers that allow communication to flow in desirable or appropriate ways. Examples of this include expecting a return greeting when one gives a greeting, and expecting a listener to give cues if a message was not clear. Ritual constraints reveal ways in which we present ourselves as competent members of particular societies. They also govern communication of social groups and they tend to vary from group to group and from culture to culture (Hatch, 1992).

Many gestures and eye behaviors, along with a variety of vocal cues in communication, serve as system constraints to regulate the turn-taking or back-and-forth interaction between speakers and listeners. These behaviors, whether conscious or unconscious, are used to give signals to others concerning a person's speaking or listening intentions during conversations, or during participation in classroom discussions. The dynamics of these behaviors may have powerful influences on opportunities for speech on the part of some individuals, especially if they are from

ethnic groups which do not use the same gestures and vocal cues as those of the dominant group. For example, silence on the part of some individuals may come down to cultural variations of turn-taking rules. System constraints which are embedded within social class, as well as ethnic backgrounds, may affect classroom talk patterns (Edwards & Westgate, 1987).

Turn-taking cues are vital in intercultural communicative interactions and in maintaining of silences on the parts of some individuals. Richmond, McCroskey and Payne (1991) reported four types of turn-taking cues: turn-maintaining; turn-yielding; turn-denying; and turn-requesting. Turn-maintaining cues are used by speakers to signal their listeners that they want to “keep the floor” (p. 103). Vocal cues may include an increase in the loudness of speech, increase in rate of speech and the filling of pauses so that the listener may not find a pause place to begin speaking. Turn-yielding may include the asking of a question, which often involves the raise of the pitch of the voice at the end of an utterance. It may also involve an emphatic drop in voice pitch, the trailing off of the utterance, or a phrase such as “you know”. Turn-denying may include an increase in the rate of speed, looking away, turning the body away slightly, or increasing loudness on the part of the speaker. When an individual of a non-dominant culture is not familiar with turn-taking cues and procedures of the dominant culture persons with whom (s)he is communicating, the non-dominant person may be forced to remain silent, due to a lack of turn-taking skills.

Turn-requesting cues are behaviors the listeners use to gain possession of the communicative floor (Burgoon, Buller, & Woodall, 1989). These turn-requesting cues, on the part of the listener, may involve some types of cues to signal the speaker that it is time to stop talking and yield the turn. Nonverbal gestures and/or vocal utterances or stutter starts may be inserted by the listener into a conversation while a speaker is still speaking. Gestures may include raising a finger along with the eyebrows, leaning forward, or perhaps inhaling audibly (Richmond, McCroskey, & Payne, 1991). Sometimes backchanneling cues may be mistaken for turn-requests. Backchanneling cues are behaviors the listener uses to communicate a variety of messages to the speaker without trying to gain access to the communicative floor

(Burgoon, Buller, & Woodall, 1989). These messages often indicate that the hearer is still listening, and is reacting or confirming (Clyne, 1994). Brown (1994) indicated that turn-taking is another of the culturally oriented sets of rules that require finely tuned perceptions in order for participants to communicate effectively.

Ethnic background sometimes affects “response latency”, which is a type of silence that is an important component in the turn-yielding and turn-taking processes. For example, Bloch (1975) reported that in Madagascar, with the Merina people, the listeners “listen in a well disciplined silence and according to the speaker’s status allow a greater or a shorter length of time to elapse at the end” (p. 7). Response latency is “the time it takes a person to begin speaking after another stops” (Richmond, McCroskey, & Payne, 1991, p. 104). People often differ greatly in the length of their response latencies. People with short response latencies may overtalk (interrupt or begin speaking too soon) their communicative partner. In contrast, people with very long response latencies may cause their partners some discomfort, as the partner may feel forced to begin speaking again if the pause or silence is too long. From another perspective, the person with the long response latencies may seldom get to speak, because the person with the short latencies will begin speaking first when a silence or pause is in effect in the conversation. When a person with a short latency of response interacts with a person with a long latency, the short latency person will usually dominate the communicative interaction. Hatch (1992) referred to these latency periods as gaps. She emphasized the fact that what’s important is not differences in length of gaps, but rather the social interpretations that are made concerning these gaps, and how they are used.

In Tannen’s (1984) descriptions of a study of conversational style, strategy, and talk among friends, she noted that due to differences in people’s style of talk and silence, some participants felt locked out of conversation due to short pauses or short latency periods on the part of fellow participants. If an individual in her study valued or took comfort in silence or pauses in communicative interactions, then that person had much less opportunity to speak. As well, when a participant paused in her own speech patterns, others considered that an uncomfortable pause or silence, and often

provided a word in order to break the silence. Tannen also noted that people judged others, and were judged by others for their way of talking, and that different habits often lead to misjudgments and misunderstandings. She suggested that these misunderstandings can unfold thusly: “You try to be nice and are judged pushy. You try to be considerate and are judged cold. You try to make a good impression in a job interview or at a cocktail party and see that the other person is annoyed rather than charmed” (p. 4). Consequences of these misunderstandings may vary widely. An awareness of talk and silent styles may not always prevent misunderstandings, but the awareness in style may help refine understandings about what is happening in conversation. Refined understanding may then help prevent some of the negative judgments. A type of rapport is established when conversational styles and strategies are similar or understood among communicators. However, “the use of any strategy with others who do not share its principles and devices can lead to just the opposite of rapport” (Tannen, 1984, p. 129).

These turn-taking revelations testify to the importance of studies of the investigation of “what goes on between turns - both the signs of silence and silent signs” (Umiker-Sebeok, 1980, p. 313). These intricate dynamics are involved in intercultural classroom communicative patterns of silence and speech. Some of these cultural and ethnic dynamics may be contributing to the ‘silencing’ of certain individuals or groups of individuals.

Silencing

Within the many aspects of communicative interactions, the silencing of various societal members may be transpiring, consciously or unconsciously. Ritual constraints, as discussed previously, may be involved. As well, family members may promote the silence of children. In some cultures it is more appropriate for children to be seen but not heard. Rosenthal (1977) commented on an interpersonal and “almost universal form of the request for silence -- placing the forefinger vertically against the lips, through which a hiss is emitted” (p. 32).

Silenced groups often feel deprived of official means of expression. Olsen (1978) discussed unnatural silences of some groups, which are the “thwarting of what struggles to come into being, but cannot” (p. 6). Along with these types of silences, members of a group may experience anxiety and conflict concerning self-identification, expression, and acceptance. “When the feeling of one’s ambivalence in relation to the accepted norms or values of the outside world prevail, the resulting state is silence” (Jaworski, 1993, p. 129).

Students may feel silenced due to fears concerning the response of their teachers in a classroom. Maugham (1915) described a silenced student’s feeling when he wrote, “rather than risk an answer which might be wrong and excite a storm of abuse from the master, he would sit stupidly silent...and when it came towards his turn to speak, he grew sick and white with apprehension” (p. 89).

Gender issues are sometimes implicated in silencing within certain groups. Women in various cultures have felt silenced in the face of a male dominant culture. Women in Western societies have often been silenced, especially in the public domain (Jaworski, 1993). This was more fully elaborated on by Sadker and Sadker (1995) when they reported on research done in classrooms of boys and girls. Boys received more attention than the girls and had more opportunities to speak in class. It was noted that attention from the teacher is important for a student’s feelings of achievement and self-esteem, and girls were having less than their fair share of attention from the teacher. As well, most teachers were stunned to find that they, themselves, were giving more attention to boys than to girls and thus were teaching subtle gender lessons in their classrooms. These gender lessons often carry through to adult life as well. In South America, Wardhaugh (1992) described the Aroucanians of Chile who enjoy talking a lot, but the women remain silent in the presence of men. Customs of silence for women are changing in some contexts, however, and several Feminist writers have commented on this change. “Women broke years of silence to discover the shared nature of problems which they had assumed to be theirs alone” (Bryson, 1992, p. 183). Hooks (1989) wrote that “silence is the condition of one who has been dominated, made an object; talk is the mark of freeing, of making one

subject” (p. 129). Lorde (1984) elaborated on this further by stating that you are “never really a whole person if you remain silent” (p. 42). She went on to say that the weight of silence will choke us and that there are “so many silences to be broken” (p. 44). Fassinger (1995) found that women’s silences were often due to poorly formulated ideas, ignorance about the subject, fear of appearing unintelligent to peers, and reaction to classroom processes such as tensions and competition. As well, Fassinger reported on men’s silences which were mainly due to feeling unprepared in class or fear of negative effects on grades. McCracken and Appleby (1992) stated that “both women and men have been harmed by the expectations and limitations of gender as traditionally defined” (p. viii). These expectations may be implicated in the silencing of women as well as men in classroom contexts.

People of non-dominant ethnic backgrounds have often felt unheard, disempowered and silenced. Silencing may occur due to expectations and limitations that are underlying in societal communicative interactions. Racism and ethnocentrism, as well as sexism and ageism, are sometimes involved in silencing. They are also often institutionalized and practiced unconsciously (Samovar & Porter, 1994). There is often an inability or unwillingness on the parts of people of the dominant group to be respectful and accepting of members of differing ethnic or cultural groups. This disrespect is usually displayed in communicative interactions and may be foundational in the silencing of specific groups of people.

Ageism has contributed to the silencing of older persons. Ageism includes stereotyping whereby older persons may be seen as inferior by virtue of having lived a certain number of years (Walden, 1992). Stereotyping, which also often focuses on older persons as frail and as having physical and mental illnesses, leads to lack of attention to older voices and ideas (Tenenbaum, 1979). Margaret Kuhn, one of the early “Gray Panthers” in the United States, encouraged the breaking of silence and the developing of a stronger voice for older persons by shouting to a large crowd of fellow group members, and encouraging them to get “off your asses”, and to get out there and be vocal for the rights and privileges of older persons (Tenenbaum, 1979).

Silencing is a critical issue that may be involved in this study of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. Levitz (1993) noted, “it is a continuous journey of recognizing and reclaiming the words, sounds, and senses, that will allow me to shape both a present and future where both voice and silence have a known and chosen place” (p. 82). Aspects of silencing in various societal contexts, including classroom contexts, need more careful examination in order to enhance intercultural communicative equality for all members of society.

Reflection, Understanding and Silence

Silent time for quietness, reflection and self-understanding is often absent in classroom contexts. Yet, it has been noted that “through silence we quietly attain our greatest understanding of ourselves” (Trad, 1993, p. 167). When we welcome silence there is the space and the location for deeper understanding, deeper meaning and deeper feelings. Caranfa (1990) wrote, “The passage through the silence, although painful, also fills us with unexpected joy because we perceive the bliss that awaits us at the end of our journey” (p. 71). Iyer (1993) said that “silence is a place where we trust ourselves to be alone” (p. 60). Silence, reflection and self-understanding, therefore, need to be viewed as integral parts of communicative and learning patterns of students in classrooms.

In these sometimes painful, sometimes blissful silences, there dwells the opportunity to perceive things in new ways in order to find deeper meaning. “‘Spirit speech’, the ‘sounds of silence’ is essential to this world, for it establishes the foundation upon which meaning is made”, (Peek, 1994, p. 475).

Silence and reflection may be like two closely connected patchwork pieces of cloth for some individuals in classroom contexts. In these cases, allowing time for silence and reflection in classroom contexts may be of benefit. Heider (1988) advised, “allow regular time for silent reflection. Turn inward and digest what has happened. Let the senses rest and grow still” (p. 23). In the process of turning inward and putting words to inner language, Murray (1989) suggested that 15 minutes per day be spent in silence. “The silence will fill and, if we filter out what is trivial, what we have

succeeded at before, what we know, we will see and hear what surprises us” (p. 21). Murray also noted that sitting in silence and staring vacantly into space often caused people to “leap into social action” because they seem to feel that conversation of some sort might be needed. Silent time for reflection and for deeper understanding in the learning process is often meaningful, yet it is often not recognized nor respected in many contexts, including multi-ethnic classroom contexts for older or younger students.

Aging, Ethnicity, and Older Persons Learning in Later Life

Within this study of meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults is the need to study certain aspects of older adults in their classroom learning processes. Older adults are the informants or participants in this study, and just as we might study some of the dynamics involved in the learning processes of younger learners in educational research projects, so we must study aspects of older learners’ processes and programs, in order to have a clearer picture of the appropriate contexts from which the data of the research findings emerge.

The multi-ethnic patchwork pattern of modern societies requires that we develop more understandings about the meanings and interpretations of silence in communication, in order that we be more inclusive and accepting of all societal members. Various societal and educational attitudes and realities are often influencing patterns of silence and speech in the communicative processes in classroom contexts. Within the classrooms of our more aged citizens, educators are provided with a context wherein the facilitation of equal learning opportunities for all participants may be achieved, regardless of ethnic heritage. However, in order to accomplish this, educators must learn more about ethnicity, aging, older learners’ processes, and verbal plus silent communication. This may lead ultimately to improved learning and perhaps to a sense of improved quality of life for a greater number of people in their extended lifespan years.

We are in a time in history where we as human beings are extending our lifespans beyond the lifespans of generations preceding us. The valuing of older persons by societal members is an important issue in this phenomenon. Hartman (1990) wrote that “one of the most remarkable and dramatic changes in our society has been the lengthening of human life”(p. 387). This phenomenon brings problems along with opportunities. One of the problems is: “Like North Americans in general, Canadians are sometimes inclined to value youth more than old age (Ministry of State, Seniors, Canada, 1988, p. 15). This phenomenon of losing value in old age allows for painful situations such as the displaying of social alienation of older members of society. Kaakinen (1992) presented a stark image when she wrote, “unfortunately one of the hallmarks of life in a nursing home is forlorn silence” (p. 258). Attitudes towards extended lifespans and the valuing of elders are both issues which are intricately involved in communicative patterns and in the endeavors of providing appropriate learning situations for older members of society.

The devaluing of older members of society in some cultures is contrasted by a significant number of cultural groups who tend to value the wisdom and experience of seniors (Ministry of State -Seniors- Canada, 1988, p. 15). Patterns of silence are sometimes displayed in the valuing and devaluing of elders. Holmes (1983) reported on an Inuit tradition of giving great respect to their elders and of Samoans showing respect for their aging members during ceremonies. Fonua (1997) noted that Tongan peoples of the Pacific, with a strong oral tradition, see elders as a storehouse of wisdom, and worthy of high respect. Traditions or mores of respect or contempt for the aged of many societies were discussed by Sumner (1906). He noted that in one set of mores the teachings and usages of language inculcated respect for the aged while in another set of mores the aged are regarded as “societal burdens which waste the strength of the society, already inadequate for its tasks” (p. 321). Many Asian, African and Eastern cultures maintain status and show respect consistently for their elders (Javidi & Javidi, 1994). In Vietnamese societies, respect for elders serves to maintain family and social order and to acknowledge contributions of wisdom spoken by the

older persons (Tran, 1995, p. 6). Sitting silently and listening to elders is reported as a strong display of respect. With these types of examples and cultural differences in mind, Cole, Achenbaum, Jakobi and Kastenbaum (1993) emphasized that we must keep doing research concerning aging people.

There is a significant lack of appropriate attention in the research field to differences among aged persons of ethnic and minority groups. This is displayed through an “age-as-leveler” bias which tends to simplify things and ignore the important elements, such as ethnicity, that shape older person’s lives (Harris, 1990). As well, Driedger and Chappell (1987) stated that there has been a failure in Canada to recognize that older populations often represent heterogeneous groups with differing concerns, needs, backgrounds and histories. McPherson noted in Driedger and Chappell (1987) that:

the 1981 Census reports that about 17 percent of Canadians are foreign-born. Of this group, 32 percent indicate that their ethnic origin is other than British or French. Moreover, these percentages are even higher for the older age categories... Clearly, the multicultural character of Canada is reflected in our older age groups” (p. vii). He later wrote: “many Canadian institutions and policies for the elderly have been designed for members of the dominant culture...As a result, policies, programs and services have often failed to adequately meet the needs of older Canadians with diverse cultural, ethnic, language or religious backgrounds. (p. vii).

In meeting diverse cultural, ethnic, communicative, and educational needs, educators for older adults must acknowledge the need for developing appropriate andragogical approaches in classrooms. Knowles (1981) defined andragogical as the instructional practice of dealing with adult learners who have their own goals which are to be incorporated into the lessons. To take this even further, John (1988) suggested that we nurture skills in “geragogy”, the process which involves helping older persons to learn. Within this process, the need for appropriate communicative

interactions is essential. A focus on positive as well as negative aspects of aging is also important in the process of meeting diverse needs of older adults.

There is often an over emphasis of negative views on aging with a lack of attention given to positive aspects. "Aging is often associated with a series of losses" (Leder, 1996, p. 103). Choices of language often betray these prejudices, which are sometimes unconscious. Yet there are many significant and valued gains in later life. Some people report a renewed sense of self, and a strong desire to learn, with time available to focus on the learning process (Williamson, 1997). Others report a strong quest for knowledge, new concepts of meaning in life, new modes of giving and receiving respect, and a renewed sense of purpose and commitment in life (Watson & Watson, 1995). Other positive aspects of aging may include spiritual growth. Leder (1996) reported on "ElderSpirit" centers where spiritually oriented older persons gather for psychospiritual growth in their elder years. At these centers, while negative aspects of aging are being dealt with, positive aspects such as inner contemplation, expanded sense of self, discovery of meaning in old age, and social involvement are nurtured.

Along with a focus on negative aspects of aging, there has been an underlying predominance of negativism towards education for older persons. Long (1986) synthesized Moody's (1978) writings that described educational attitudes towards elders. These attitudes ranged from the rejecting of elders and seeing them as a waste of valuable resources, to the recognition and enhancement of self-actualization of elders through the provision of additional educational opportunities. With attitudes of non-respect for elders and with views of them as a waste of valuable resources, it is then easy for a society to display a lack of interest in significant and appropriate education for older persons.

In discussing educational and communicative needs of older persons, it must be noted that the meaning of the terms 'old' or 'older' or 'elders' in different ethnic groups or contexts may vary. There seems to be little agreement as to when old age begins. Some societies may consider people to be old or elderly around age 50, while others may use this term for much later chronological ages (Cowgill, 1986; and

Bengtson & Morgan 1983). However, Driedger and Chappell (1987) suggested that old age is usually defined in this society as starting at age 65, but they acknowledged that it is a social definition which was established around retirement norms and legislation, and which often relates to old age security payments. They went on to explain:

In recognition of the fact that the abilities, needs and other characteristics of those aged 65 and older vary considerable, it is becoming increasingly common to distinguish three groups (Schreiber 1972; Chappell and Havens 1980): the young old (frequently defined as those age 65 to 74); the middle old (frequently defined as those age 75 to 84) and the old old (frequently defined as those age 85 and over). Even these groupings frequently mask important differences among the elderly. One such difference is variation by ethnicity. (p. 3)

Variations in age and ethnicity of older persons are presenting educators with the considerable challenge of providing appropriate educational opportunities for individuals. Even with careful planning in some situations, elder members of various non-dominant ethnic groups do not appear to be participating in classroom learning as much as members of the dominant culture. "Since elderly minorities have much lower participation rates compared to whites, what are the barriers to their participation? What has been and can be done to overcome these barriers and involve elderly minorities in a variety of educational activities?" (Ventura & Worthy, 1982, p. 39). Other questions might include: what types of programs are the most suitable for older non-dominant populations; and how might participation be encouraged and enhanced?

Scalan and Darkenwald (1984) noted the importance of the study of deterrents to participation on the part of various individuals in adult education classes. In considering these deterrents, Rutherford (1989) suggested that perhaps elders do not participate as much due to course design, location of courses, time (elders often prefer to not go out at night), characteristics of the program, or characteristics of the people

involved in the course. A need for good teaching models for working with older adults was also mentioned. In this way specific deterrents or barriers to participations might be addressed.

Lack of feelings of pride in classroom contexts may also be deterrents to participation. Research with two Labradorian aboriginal educators revealed that a strong sense of pride for both teachers and learners was essential (Robinson, 1994). Struggles with language and cultural differences may also hinder some older persons. Yet, classroom participation by older persons from various ethnic groups is important since “multiple jeopardy” concerning problems with resettlement, adjustment, language, cultural differences, literacy, aging, and social networking often complicates their lives (Ujimoto, 1987; Vacc, 1988). Therefore, meeting specific needs of older learners, as well as dealing with deterrents to classroom participation, warrant attention, as they may be intricately involved with meanings of silence in classroom participation.

Older persons may participate more in classes if they experience a strong sense of personal worth and meaning in that context. de Beauvoir (1970) suggested that an atmosphere must be established by the teacher whereby each older person involved may feel his or her own personal sense of worth and sense of meaning. This meaning may include devotion to self, to others, to groups, to certain courses, to social gatherings or to various creativities. These dynamics of meaning and sense of worth are worked out through the communicative process in the classroom. Silence and speech are intricately involved in this interaction.

In an educational setting, instructors must become more aware of the communicative as well as the teaching and learning dynamics of each class, in order to enhance meaningful learning for all participants. Heightened awareness of these vital components may involve teachers and students becoming more aware of their own cultural approaches, as well as a heightened awareness of another’s cultural approaches to various aspects of life and learning (Powell & Anderson, 1994). These authors discussed three teaching and learning paradigms that may be culturally embedded in each participant’s approaches to classroom participation and

communication. First, there is the “postfigurative” learning paradigm in which older persons often teach younger ones. Secondly, the “configurative culture” is one where there are peer learning patterns involved in the teaching and learning. And thirdly, in “prefigurative cultures” members learn from the younger individuals. These paradigms may provide insights into the cultural communicative constraints that some older classroom participants are working with, consciously or unconsciously. These paradigms may also affect choices of silence and speech in multi-ethnic classroom communicative interactions. Educators would do well to be sensitive to these paradigms in the struggle to provide meaningful learning contexts and appropriate communicative climates for each older learner.

Educational opportunities for older persons might focus on new developmental phases for older persons of various ethnic groups. These developmental aspects of later life may well be affecting perceptions of meaning and fulfillment as well as communicative patterns. The developmental tasks of late maturity involve high occurrences of change in late life and therefore individuals often must learn new ways of living as well as coping with life (Havighurst, 1957). Some of the developmental tasks may involve an increase of a defensive, or a holding on to life approach, rather than a seizing of more of life, due to changes in energy levels. Issues concerning decreased incomes, death of a spouse, illness, and possibly a widening of a spiritual sphere may be of importance, and may lend themselves well to meaningful educational opportunities.

Along these lines of meaningful education, Erikson (1982) discussed eight stages of an individual’s life and suggested that old age may include the prospects of grappling with integrity versus despair. He stated that “hope connotes the most basic quality of “T”-ness, without which life could not begin or meaningfully end” (p. 62). It is a state of grappling with the hopefulness of maintaining personal meaning and personal identity throughout the duration of one’s life.

Erikson, Erikson, and Kivnick (1986) emphasized the aspect of a psychosocial identity where an individual can face himself or herself as one who shares an all-human existential identity. This identity may form a bond with other persons of older age,

including groups of peers in different parts of the world. Contacts with older persons in other parts of the world through computer networking was suggested by Irizarry, Downing, and Elford (1997) in order to enhance confidence in self and meaningful social interactions. There is therefore much value in learning to communicate interculturally with a world community, in order to nurture self-confidence and meaningful social interactions in later life.

Learning in elderhood was discussed by Fisher, Blazey, and Lipman (1992). They noted a number of concepts that may be meaningful in programs for older adults. These included: the sharing of transitions of life with peers; sharing and improving inner strengths; emphasis on “being” rather than “doing”, to enhance the soul; the finitude of life; what has happened in the past and what can happen in the future; what is complete and what is not complete. Learning in elderhood is emphasized in the University of the Third Age, an international educational system, which focuses on meaningful learning for older persons, and which often deals with many vital issues concerning quality of later life (Legge, 1995). The “third age” is considered to be a time when a person is possibly leaving the work force, experiencing a decrease in many domestic and family responsibilities, and becoming free to satisfy personal goals, ambitions (Williamson, 1997). Laslett (1989) called the third age an era of personal fulfillment. He called the first age the era of dependence, socialization, immaturity and education; the second age the era of independence, maturity and responsibility, of earning and of saving, and the fourth age an era of “final dependence, decrepitude and death” (p. 4). Both authors stressed that meaningful communicative interactions and learning opportunities are vital in the third age in life.

Older people often want to find meaningful use of leisure time through various types of learning programs. These might include: non-formal learning which may include organized systems for selected types of learning, but with no exams; informal learning which is often unorganized, and sometimes unintentional or serendipitous learning; and formal learning which may be institutionalized and often includes a grading system (Brady, French & Peck, 1989; and Clough, 1990).

In the process of choosing an appropriate and meaningful learning situation, an older adult may be continually adjusting to change and reassessing just how much involvement is appropriate at that particular phase of his or her life. McPherson (1990) discussed various positive and negative aspects of three theories concerning involvement in later life. The “activity theory” attempted to provide a description or prescription for successful or ideal aging in later years of life. It dealt with the idea of people slowing down but keeping active. Individual adaptation might involve continuing an active life-style of social interaction in order to maintain a sense of well-being or life satisfaction. This active lifestyle might involve replacing lost roles, by either re-engaging in earlier roles or engaging in new roles. Opponents of the activity theory however, argued that activity levels can decrease without a loss of morale. Individual personality, self-concept, health, economic resources and previous life-style are elements which will regulate decisions concerning appropriate amounts of activity in an older person’s life.

The “disengagement theory” is an alternative to the activity theory (McPherson, 1990). Disengagement theory developed through both functionalist perspectives and developmental perspectives. Change and adaptation in later years were seen as functionally necessary, both for the individual and for society. Due to the inevitability of death, probable decrement in ability with age, value placed on youth, and the need to efficiently complete tasks and fill roles, “both individuals and society demand disengagement” (p. 135). Disengagement results in decreased interaction between an individual and others in society and is hypothesized to be satisfying to both the individual and society. Opponents to this theory argue that some people are socially or psychologically disengaged throughout most of their life cycle, while others are fully engaged until death, although the nature of their engagement may change as they adjust to the aging process. The question remains: is disengagement initiated by the individual or by society?

The “continuity theory” was also discussed by McPherson (1990). Successful aging is seen as being related to a satisfactory lifestyle establishment in middle life which will be continued and pursued in the later years. The problem with this theory is

that continuity may not always be maintained due to deaths of family members, or lack of funds, power, or health. Also, continuity can be maladaptive in late life if it is outmoded. Thus, maintaining continuity may involve adapting to both internal and external changes, as well as coping with discontinuity due to illness, disability, role loss, or loss of skill. These theories may be carefully considered and respected by educators and may be creatively worked with through sensitive communication with participants in classrooms.

Self direction, whereby the learner has direct control through the communicative process, over what is to be learned and how it is to be learned, is considered a high priority in a meaningful learning process of older adults. Flexibility, choices, and individual tailoring of courses by participants themselves creates successful and meaningful learning (Herzog & House, 1991). Collaboration in defining orientation and aims also contributes to the meaningfulness of the learning process (Chene & Fleury, 1992). Issues concerning silence and speech are intertwined in these processes. As well, Carlsen (1991) noted that in assessing the learning situations for older adults, the teacher and student might work together to assemble data that are significant for self direction and enhanced learning.

In order to create a more meaningful and equal atmosphere, Davies (1987) challenged instructors to not only give out energy, but to be receptive to learners' energy. Learning then empowers and energizes all who are involved. Throughout this type of learning process, feelings of enhanced self-esteem may emerge. The interplay of silence and speech in these interactions is important. As well, through the sharing and relating of tales of struggles and accomplishments, new insights and re-enforced feelings of self-esteem and fulfillment may be experienced (Goldman, 1991). It may also be very meaningful for older adults to be trained, as well as to be involved in the training of others, to be teachers or resource people in classroom contexts, group settings or on a one to one basis (Murphy & Florio, 1978).

Finding a purpose in life is often of value for older persons, and educators might focus on these issues. The chief purpose of learning in later life is often to improve confidence, self-esteem, and life satisfaction (Midwinter, 1982). This author

also observed that elders receive very little quality education, and that they often get educational “crumbs from the table” (p. 15). Establishing a range of options, and a range of options on how to exercise those options, is also an important purpose in later life (Amoss & Harrell, 1981). On the other side of the patterns of improved confidence and self-esteem in later life, there lie issues of disempowerment for some older adults. Appropriate educational opportunities which stress health, self-esteem, values, and positive outlooks in later life contribute much to the meaning of life, empowerment, and life satisfaction for older persons (Percy & Kozma, 1996).

Having a learning theory which is centered on meaning for each individual was suggested by Mezirow (1991). From this theory, a five step approach was suggested: set goals with the individuals; do needs assessments; develop the program; carry out the instruction; and follow up with research as to effectiveness of the course. Sensitive intercultural communicative skills are essential in this learning approach, especially when people from various ethnic groups are involved. Irizarry, Downing, and Elford (1997) suggested that in order to establish meaningful teaching and learning programs for older persons, three interacting elements must be present: selection, with careful consideration for expectations, adjustments, feelings of satisfaction and self control; optimization, with considerations for maximizing chosen life courses, both quantitatively and qualitatively; and compensation, which involves “adoption of psychological and technological supports to augment functional losses” (p. 2). All of these elements must be considered with a careful focus on meaning in an individual’s life.

The importance of meaning in educational settings for older adults of various ethnic groups continues. Older participants in courses are motivated by an intrinsic need for intellectual growth. They have several major areas of need that may be addressed in educational settings: to improve basic skills, to be expressive, to make a contribution, to be influential, to be transcendent, and to improve their own situation (Courtenay, 1989). This author also discussed a negative societal attitude of a “terminal perspective” of learning, which involves the doubts of capabilities of older adults and defines their learning as only recreational. A “life span perspective” on the

other hand, sees older adults as capable of, and interested in, very meaningful learning, beyond recreational and leisure activities.

Establishing just what is important and meaningful and what is an educational need for older persons of various cultural backgrounds may be very challenging and require sensitive intercultural communicative skills. Research with older persons concerning educational needs was done by Leclerc (1985). An educational need was defined as a “gap between the present and the desirable state of knowledge, abilities, and attitudes of an individual” (p. 137). Several steps were described in this process. It was also noted that learning abilities do not necessarily deteriorate with age but they may decline if they are not used regularly. Also, if an older adult has negative images concerning his or her own intellectual capacities, these may interfere with a meaningful learning process. Ultimately, in order for an educational program to have meaning, it must be intellectually stimulating and educationally rewarding for the individuals involved (Walden, 1995).

Various characteristics of appropriate programs for older learners, as well as characteristics of learner needs and interests have been discussed in this section of the literature review. This discussion highlights the vitality and diversity of older learners, along with the challenges for educators concerning the providing of meaningful learning opportunities for all older members of society of dominant and non-dominant cultural groups. From within these contexts can emerge new knowledge concerning various research questions, including those related to silence. This discussion has also established a foundation which provides a vision of appropriate types of classroom contexts for older learners. It is hoped that participants for this research project will be involved in these types of appropriate learning programs.

Within this study lies the possibility of discovering more of the positive aspects of multi-ethnic aging and learning, while exploring the meanings of silence in classrooms of older adults. Cowgill (1986) wrote that the “cross-cultural study of aging is still in its infancy” (p. 10). And the meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults, along with signs and signals for breaking silence, still remain to be discovered.

Conclusion of Literature Review

The literature has revealed a small array of patterns of interpretations of silences with a few applications and a few meanings of silence included. There was little written concerning the meanings of silence in classroom contexts, and there was nothing discussed in the literature concerning silences in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. The literature has also revealed various aspects of meaningful courses for older learners that might provide appropriate classroom contexts for the gathering of data for this type of research. There was nothing revealed in the literature that dealt with signs and signals for breaking silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. Yet these aspects of teaching and learning are vital in the educational endeavours to provide appropriate and meaningful educational opportunities for older members of society, from all ethnic and cultural groupings. Therefore, there is much to be gained through research concerning the meanings of silence, and signs and signals for breaking silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

This study uses a qualitative research design for an inquiry into the meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults, as well as for an inquiry into the signs and signals for breaking personal silence in the same contexts. This project is designed for an inquiry into silence from the perspectives of the older learner participants themselves. Ethical issues are of essence and are carefully considered at each stage of this research design. This multiple case study approach, backed up by a triangulated methodological design, offers insights into this research topic. Various approaches to the data gathering and analysis provide rich, valid, and thick descriptions of the phenomena that are being studied. Thick description describes a situation, its context, and the meanings and intentions inherent in that situation (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

Qualitative research is described by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) as an approach that “emphasizes description, induction, grounded theory, and the study of people’s understandings” (p.ix). Grounded theory in qualitative research is one that is inductively derived from the study of a phenomenon. That is to say, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of the data pertaining to the phenomena being studied. Also, the researcher does not begin with a particular theory and then prove it, but rather, she begins with a more general theory within an area of study, and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this study, a general theory was formulated concerning the importance of the meanings of silence in classroom contexts. Data gathering procedures and data analysis were then developed to reveal insights concerning the meanings of silences of older adults in a multi-ethnic classroom context, as well as their signs and signals for breaking silence. Close regard for

theoretical sensitivity enhanced the re-visioning and analysis of the research situation and the gathered data. This then allows for a fuller exploration of the data's potential for developing theory (Sanger, 1994).

Qualitative research involves interpretive, naturalistic approaches to the subject matter. Thus, things or phenomena are studied in their naturalistic settings and the researcher attempts to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings that participants themselves ascribe to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). This study has naturalistic groundings in the sense that interventions are not made into the natural communicative actions of the participants, other than the videotaping. Activities are "natural" in the sense that they are not planned and manipulated by the evaluator as would be the case in an experiment (Patton, 1987; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Various theoretical qualitative perspectives are incorporated within this study. The range of methodologies is wide, and choosing among them is difficult due to the knowledge that no single approach can serve all research purposes, nor will it be applicable to every educational setting. A single theoretical perspective of research may display an appearance of rigor; however, an eclectic approach seems more realistic where "the phenomena being studied are highly complex and many faceted" (Edwards & Westgate, 1987, p. 55). Since the meanings of silence, as well as signs and signals for breaking silence, in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults are complex and multi-faceted, an eclectic approach is used. The complexity of the focus is compounded by the influences of such diverse variables as individual differences, teacher's approaches and personalities, cultures, ethnicities, language differences, meaning systems, objectives of the learning event, diversity of expectations, control systems, and interpretations of communicative rules (Hansford, 1988; Hohepa, Smith, Smith & McNaughton, 1992).

Qualitative design, which is used to deal with communicative complexities, has its roots not only in the social sciences (i.e. anthropology, sociology, and psychology) and in humanities (i.e. art, literature, and philosophy), but also in interdisciplinary studies (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). Within these multi-dimensional aspects, this

research design has been developed in order to allow for older, multi-ethnic classroom participants to share their deepest understandings of their personal communicative silences in classroom contexts. This design also facilitates the study of multi-ethnic signs and signals for breaking silence, on the part of the participants. Within this multidisciplinary design lies the possibility of narrowing the knowledge gap between what is known and what needs to be known about communicative processes that are intricately involved in classroom contexts.

In order to narrow this knowledge gap, a multiple case study approach is used, which is supported and backed up by a triangulated approach of the use of three research methodologies in order to enhance the depth of understanding concerning the research questions of this study. The multiple case study approach and the three perspectives of this triangulated methodological approach are now discussed briefly.

Multiple Case Study Approach

A case study approach was used with seven senior aged persons, over the age of 65, who were participating in a classroom context, in order to discover the meanings of silence that were used in their communicative interactions. “A good case study brings a phenomenon to life for readers and helps them understand its meaning” (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 543). Case studies are used to give rich descriptions while bringing new insights into a phenomenon. A phenomenon in research may include processes, events, incidents, persons, or things in which the researcher is interested (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Yin (1994) suggested that case studies are preferred strategies when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, “when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p. 1). These criteria fit well with this qualitative study.

Triangulated Research Approach

The multiple case studies in this research project were informed and backed up by a triangulated approach of using three qualitative research methodologies: 1)

ethnographies of communication; 2) ethnomethodology; and 3) interaction analysis of discourse. Through exploring various aspects of each of these methodological approaches, it is believed that the researcher, as instrument, became more sensitive to and perceptive of the various cultural and communicative dynamics that were involved in each step of this research process. There were no definite lines drawn between these approaches, and each served to differently inform and enlighten the researcher.

1). Ethnography of Communication

Ethnography of communication is a mode of inquiry or a research approach which has several important dimensions that served to enhance the process of discovering the meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. Its philosophical underpinnings also allowed for new discoveries concerning signs and signals for breaking silence in classrooms. The term ‘ethnography’ is explored first. “Ethno”, a Greek term, denotes a people, a race, a culture or an ethnic group. When ‘ethno’ as a prefix is used with ‘graphic’ or ‘graphy’ to form a term ethnography, the reference is to the subdiscipline known as a science devoted to describing ways of life of human beings. It often refers to social scientific descriptions of certain cultural phenomena of particular peoples (Vidich & Lyman, 1994). Ethnography is also a form of inquiry which is sometimes based on extended observations in order to gain access into participants’ views of reality (Edwards & Westgate, 1987). It also refers to forms of social research which may include aspects such as: emphasis on exploring the nature of particular phenomena rather than setting out to test hypotheses about something; working with ‘unstructured’ data that have not been coded at the point of data collection; investigating a small number of cases; and analysis of data that may involve interpretations or descriptions of meanings and functions of human actions (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994). These research dimensions are then linked with ‘communication’.

Combining ‘ethnography’ with ‘communication’ draws the research focus to the cultural norms of communicative conduct of various or different communities of people (Saville-Troike, 1989). It is the “application of ethnographic method to the

communication patterns of a group” (Littlejohn, 1992, p. 227). Or, it may be viewed as a study of how members of a cultural group use speech in their social life, in particular contexts (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The researcher then, attempts to make sense of the forms of communication employed by the members of the group or culture.

Within this combination of terms of ‘ethnography’ and ‘communication’ is the inherent joining of the field of “anthropology”, which is concerned with descriptions and analysis of culture, with the field of “linguistics”, which is concerned with, among other things, the uses, description and analysis of language codes (Saville-Troike, 1989). Inherent also within these broad fields is the concern for the ‘art of language’ or language arts in the learning processes of different cultures. Since the nature of ethnographies is to be holistic, the integration of these aspects, through descriptive and analytical approaches, is essential. All too often these combinations or interrelationships of various component systems are ignored (Saville-Troike, 1989).

Within the discipline of ethnography of communication, researchers may explore the knowledge of what kinds of codes, channels and expressions people use, in what kinds of situations, and with what kinds of people (Basso, 1970). Researchers may also explore the type of shared identity created by communication in the cultural community, to uncover the shared public meanings that are used in the group in certain contexts, and to realize the contradictions and paradoxes within each culture or group concerning functions of communication (Littlejohn, 1992).

Three types of questions are often pursued in ethnography of communication inquiries: questions dealing with forms, which look at types of communication used within the group, that is, what behaviors count as communication and how they are organized; questions of norms, which are sets of standards and rights and wrongs and how they affect the communication patterns; and finally, questions of cultural codes, which give attention to meanings of the symbols and behaviors used as communication in the cultural community or group (Littlejohn, 1992).

Within classrooms, the ethnography of communication may serve to assist the researcher in describing the speech patterns of the group located there, by examining

or comparing the patterns of communication in different classrooms (Cook-Gumpers & Gumpers, 1992). It may be viewed as an ‘ethnography of speaking’, whereby functions of speech and silence are examined in language and educational situations in order to discover the sets of communicative options and means that students, as part of the speech community, use for shaping their particular communicative patterns, classroom histories and adaptive niches (Hymes, 1980; and Coulthard, 1977). As well, this approach may examine the “rules for not speaking” (Braithwaite, 1990, p. 321).

Ethnography of communication focuses on language interaction in contexts such as classrooms. Heath (1983) used an ethnography of communication approach in her study of differences between language uses in the homes of children of various social and ethnic groups, and uses of language in the classroom. With this study she unveiled a deeper understanding of the awarenesses and sensitivities needed for appropriate language uses in classroom contexts in order to enhance the learning of individuals of various social and ethnic groups. Hymes (1972) noted that within the classroom dynamic there lies the potential to study, through ethnography of communication, the interaction of speech and silence between teachers and students, whereby learning is enhanced through the recognitions of communicative details that are transpiring amongst all participants in the learning and communicative processes.

The ethnography of communication should not be confined to the exclusive use of choices within verbal repertoires. Rather, it should also be used to examine those conditions under which members of the society (dominant and non-dominant group members) regularly decide to refrain from verbal behavior (Hymes, 1964; Bruneau, 1973; and Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz, 1992). In many ways, therefore, this methodological approach enhanced the inquiry into meanings of silence in classroom contexts.

2). Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology is the “study of techniques that individuals use to make sense of everyday social environments, and the common sense strategies that they use in these environments to accomplish the tasks of communicating, making decisions,

and reasoning” (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 626). Ethnomethodology views ‘practical reasoning’ activities as being managed by social actors (members) who strive to produce what they and others in the community will recognize as orderliness in those activities. The focus of the researchers in a particular activity and context, such as communication patterns in a classroom, is the finding of the orderliness that an activity displays and the methods or procedures required to produce that orderliness (Taylor & Cameron, 1987). Built into this research approach is the search for explanations of behavior in the orderliness of communicative interactions.

Ethnomethodology acknowledges that actors or participants in particular contexts follow interactional rules because they are aware of interactional consequences of not doing so. The rules are shared norms which actors or participants use to guide their behavior. Rules are a means to the participant’s ends (Taylor & Cameron, 1987). Rules may be seen as systems or grammars, such as grammatical regulations and constraints in a language which may lead to the desired communication ends, sense making, and decision making in communicative interactions. The rules or grammars of silence as well as the grammars of speech must be studied in order to understand meanings and communicative interactional rules and consequences (Ilich, 1971).

Ethnomethodology also concerns the study of common-sense knowledge and the range of procedures and considerations in how “ordinary members of a society make sense of, find their way about in, and act on the circumstances in which they find themselves” (Heritage, 1984, p. 4). It is an open-ended approach to sense-making, rather than an examination of clearly delineated territory. The researcher strives to account for mutual knowledge and understanding that is shared among participants. Also, those involved are asked to reflect and give insights into the normative background of their own actions. Cultural values are often operating, either consciously or unconsciously, in the minds and decision making processes of the communicative participants. This approach encourages participants to explore the cultural values and common-sense knowledge that are involved in their communicative interactions.

This research approach is a 'point of entry' into an investigation that focuses on practical reasoning of individuals in social interactions such as classrooms. Understanding language in this situation is not to understand the grammar of sentences, but rather to understand actions, utterances and silences which are constructively used and interpreted in relation to their contexts. This may involve viewing an utterance against a background of who said it, where and when something was said, what was being accomplished by the saying, what were some possible considerations, and what were some motives (Heritage, 1984). As well, we may consider silence in classroom contexts against the background of who just spoke, where and when the choices of silence and speech are being considered, what is to be accomplished through silence, how is silence to be broken, and what are the motives of silence. Ethnomethodological procedures may be used to investigate these types of issues through analyzing the practical reasonings, meanings, interpretations and language backgrounds of individuals in the production of communicative interaction. These ethnomethodological procedures may be achieved through detailed analysis of interactions in communication in particular contexts, especially classroom contexts (Heritage, 1984).

3). Interactional Analysis of Discourse

Theories of interactional analysis of discourse contribute to the study of meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms, as well as to understanding signs and signals for breaking silence in communication. Interaction is defined as "people doing things together or with respect to one another - and the accompanying action, talk, and thought processes" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.178). Interactional analysis, then, is the study of interlocking social, cognitive, and linguistic aspects of people doing things together through communication. As well, it includes the analysis of how communication is structured in order to be socially appropriate and linguistically accurate (Hatch, 1992). A basic starting point for research in this approach is the knowledge that each culture or ethnic group uses its own form of ritual constraints and

signals in the communicative process. Interactional analysis may enhance the revealing of the intricacies found therein.

Interactional analysis often includes aspects of speaker discourse such as: speaker turns, strategic moves or gestures, organization of conversations, openings, closings, verbal utterances, silences, speech acts, styles, figures of speech, nonverbal interactions, narrative schemata and dialogical units of interaction (VanDijk, 1985). VanDijk further noted that research involving inter-ethnic communication, the characterizations of discourse and nonverbal activities, along with their applications, functions and interpretations in interactions, have often been made from the point of view of the (white) majority members of society. Therefore, cultural bias is inherent and unsatisfactory consequences occur through incorrect explications and interpretations. Research designs must therefore be carefully constructed in order to minimize this omnipresent limitation of cultural bias in multi-ethnic interactional analysis.

Nunan (1992) suggested the use of interactional analysis in naturalistic cross-cultural contexts where naturally occurring, non-elicited language is used. This method of inquiry may be effective in the investigation of communication tasks and difficulties that people from different cultures encounter. The aim is to identify patterns and regularities “underlying interpersonal interactions in particular contexts” (p. 174). This approach may lead to the identification of the sources of difficulties in communication, as well as to assist with the development of strategies for more sensitive dealings with persons of various cultures in classroom contexts. This approach may also lead to the examination of how communication trouble is signaled, routines for dealing with problems in communication, clarification requests, and conscious strategies of improved communication and learning.

Various aspects of classroom contexts affect communicative interactions and these may be analyzed through the methodological approach of interactional analysis. These aspects include: gender, group size, same or different gender in group, learning style, student ability, complexity of content, content of questions, teacher control, framing, sequencing, validating, turn taking, and topic development (Roth, 1996). As

well, aspects of culture that affect interactions must be considered. Through socialization, which usually occurs through informal communication systems, “people learn to act according to expected behaviors that are patterns of cultural choice among many alternatives of sequential actions (Kaakinen, 1992, p. 259). These are some aspects of intercultural communication which are underlying the choices of silence, as well as signs and signals for breaking silence, that are studied through this choice of research inquiry.

Analysis of interactions within a group or classroom is important because group outcomes depends on interactions (Littlejohn, 1992). People in classrooms are continually acting and reacting, with speech and with silence. There are two general classes or categories of group-communication behavior which may be examined. First is the socioemotional behavior with positive and negative actions like friendliness, tension and dramatizing (releasing tension through stories or expression). Secondly, there is task behavior with contributions of suggestions, opinions and information. Embodied within these two general categories are ‘elaborated’ and ‘restricted’ codes which are often instilled through cultural values, and which serve to determine how individuals elaborate or restrict communicative choices (Littlejohn, 1992). Silences and signs and signals for breaking silence are involved in these interactional decisions and affect group outcomes. Interactional analysis has been found to be an effective method of examining some of these dynamics.

The taking of turns in communicative interactions is also an important focus in interactional analysis of discourse. Turn taking has many specific rules and requires fine-tuned perceptions (Brown, 1994). As well, turn changes and procedures for turn changes are largely determined by cultural variation and power relations (Clyne, 1994). Strategies and cues for turn requesting, turn taking, turn maintaining and turn suppressing are important dynamics (Burgoon, Buller & Woodall, 1989). Sometimes, silences or gaps between turns are so small that turns almost overlap (Hatch, 1992). Cultural teachings concerning silences, as well as signs and signals for breaking silence, which are sometimes related to turn taking in classroom communication

processes, are details which may be examined through interactional analysis procedures and theories.

Interactional analysis facilitates a focus on frequency of utterances, distribution of utterances, and categories of utterances, which may be seen as backgrounds or frameworks for the more intense focus on silences. The silences which are part of the communicative interaction and which are situated between these utterances, maintain the focal position and are examined and studied. Various aspects of silence, as well as signs and signals for breaking silence, may be analyzed through an interactional analysis perspective.

Each of these three methodologies contributes to points of entry into the unknowns concerning meanings of silence in classroom contexts of older adults, as well as to understandings of signs and signals for breaking silence in classroom communicative interactions. Therefore, all three have been carefully studied in order to increase my sensitivities and perceptions as researcher.

Ethics in Research

Ethical approaches are vital in all research, including qualitative research. Cohen and Manion (1994) stated that the dilemma is “that which requires researchers to strike a balance between the demands placed on them as professional scientists in pursuit of truth, and their subjects’ rights and values potentially threatened by research” (p. 347). These authors went on to quote Cavan (1977) as saying, “Being ethical limits the choices we can make in the pursuit of truth. Ethics say that while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better, even if, in the extreme case, the respect of human nature leaves one ignorant of human nature” (p. 359). Each part of the research process must be carefully examined for its ethical sensitivity.

Stereotyping or overgeneralizations concerning various ethnic or cultural groups is considered to be unethical. No individual is totally predictable, nor is an ethnic group. Generalities about meanings of silence within certain groups would be unethical because “there are huge variations among the individuals within each cultural group” (Tran, 1995, p. 2). General cultural differences diminish the prospects for

effective communication, but there are large differences within cultural and ethnic groups, therefore, stereotypes must not be formulated (Orbe, 1995). For this reason, meanings of silence, along with signs and signals for breaking silence are studied through participants of various ethnic groups, but the meanings from all ethnic groups are not categorized into ethnic groupings. Rather, the meanings are categorized into themes across ethnicities, which can enlarge our knowledge about meanings of silence of multi-ethnic classroom contexts, and which is respectful of differences within ethnic groups. In this way unethical stereotyping is avoided.

From another perspective, the exclusion of various ethnic groups from qualitative research programs may be considered unethical. Many groups that might benefit from participative qualitative inquiry have often been alienated from the process of institutionalized knowledge creation, and may be considered as being part of a 'culture of silence' (Reason, 1994). New epistemologies from previously silenced groups can emerge through appropriate qualitative research in order to offer solutions to problems (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; & Bastida, 1987). As well, qualitative research can allow "examined people of color to articulate holistic explanations about how they construct their realities" (Stanfield, 1994).

Yet another ethical issue to consider is that little research concerning discourse analysis of interethnic communication, and interactions between members of different ethnic groups has been done. Often when it is done, it has been strongly from the point of view of white majority members (Van Dijk, 1985). This study, therefore, focuses on the voices of non-majority members of society, from various ethnic groups.

Researcher and 'Self/ 'Other' Dynamic

Since the researcher is the instrument in qualitative research, a personal awareness of 'self', along with 'other' is of essence (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The researcher must be sensitive to his or her own identity and perspective, along with that of others, in the research design. The researcher's viewpoint is considered to be the "etic" perspective, which is the researcher's theoretical understanding of the research participants' social reality (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 759). The researcher must be

sensitive to the others' or the participants' viewpoints. This is the "emic" perspective, which is the research participants' perceptions and understanding of their social reality (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 758). It is essential that the researcher be aware of the continual interaction of both the emic and the etic perspectives during the research process.

Research writings are not "cultural reportage, but cultural construction, and always a construction of self as well as the other" (Stacey, 1991, p. 115). Aldefer (1988) stated that "researchers should recognize themselves as individuals, as members of identity and organization groups, and as people with relationships to those whom they study in the methodological equations they report" (p. 35). Establishing more interactive collaboration and reciprocal relations between researchers and participants often contributes to the development of appropriate identity of self and others in the research process (Kirsch & Ritchie, 1995, p. 13).

Researchers are often involved in the research process in many complex ways. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) wrote:

Within qualitative research there "stands a personal biography of a gendered researcher, who speaks from a particular class, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspective. The gendered, multiculturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework. (p. 11)

Every researcher works from within a distinctive interpretive mode that is inclusive of his or her own patchwork patterns of self which include biographical details, geographical details, life experiences, knowledge, skills, expectations, social perceptions, educational interests and personal biases. As well, "we all have ethnicity, even though it may be entangled with status and social organizational attributes such as class, gender, age, ethnoregionalism, and religion" (Stanfield, 1994). Or, as Neville (1995) stated, "each individual belongs to many cultures" (p. 33). Within the complex involvements of research, the author is often a background voice on the pages, serving to frame things, sort through, and draw connections between things that are conveyed

in quoted materials (Gubrium & Holstein, 1994). In some ways we write ourselves into the knowledge, through the ordering, weighing, listing, juxtaposing, and bridging of information (Sanger, 1994).

A passion for a deeper understanding and awareness concerning intercultural communication, and more specifically silence in communication, has consistently led me, as researcher / learner, as well as nurtured and inspired me in this challenging research project. Many questions have plagued me in this powerful learning process. I have resonated with Jung (1990) where he commented on life's double-faced perspective, where life has addressed a question to us, or, from the other perspective, we ourselves are a question that is addressed to the world and we must communicate our answer. He also noted, and I must agree, that this often takes much effort and has much difficulty. And amongst the difficulties, I have found for my self, that there are many gratifying rewards in this intensive journey. Along these same lines Jung also wrote that the purpose of humans is to "kindle a light in the darkness of being" (p. 326). Light emerges from darkness as individuals become more conscious of aspects of self and others.

Through careful consideration, I have chosen to write in 'third person voice' in most parts of this document. Through this form of expression I find a more common ground between 'self' and 'other'. At the same time, I feel strongly voiced through personally and professionally chosen words and concepts which serve to portray the knowledge and theory that is developing here. And finally, through this study and through the use of my third person voice, I am continually becoming more aware of my own transformational process which is allowing for deeper personal understandings of my own silences as well as the silences of others.

Validity of Qualitative Design and Case Studies

Validity is an issue to be considered in case studies (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Some aspects of validity include: construct validity - "the extent to which a measure used in a case study correctly operationalizes the concepts being studied" (p. 571); external validity - the extent to which the findings of a case study can be generalized to

similar cases, or establishing the domains to which a study's findings can be generalized (Yin, 1994 & Gall, et al., 1996); and interpretive validity - the extent to which the knowledge claims from the qualitative study satisfy criteria of useful consequences, take context into account, acknowledge role of researcher, and have accepted authenticity by readers (Gall et al. 1996, p. 761).

The process of "triangulation", which is the process of using multiple data-collection methods, data sources, or theories, contributes to the validity of case study findings (Gall, et al. 1996). Triangulation is a verification process of double-checking findings through the use of multiple sources and modes of evidence (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Edwards & Westgate, 1987). Thick descriptions are therefore created, which are detailed reports of re-creations of situations from different perspectives, along with meanings and intentions inherent in the situations, and which all contribute to the validity of the case studies.

Generalizability

Generalizability is considered an important goal in quantitative research, but generalizability of case study findings is more "problematic" (Gall, et al. 1996, p. 578). These authors suggested that responsibility about this issue be with the consumers of the findings rather than the researchers. That is, they may rely on "reader/user generalizability", which indicates that each reader or user of case study research must determine the applicability of the findings in his or her own situations (Gall, et al. 1996, p. 579).

Key Informants

Key informants are people who contribute relevant information and suggestions involving specific concerns in a particular study (Gall, Borg, and Gall, 1996). In order to enhance the effectiveness of this study, numerous discussions were held with older persons of various ethnic backgrounds concerning silence, as well as appropriate approaches to understanding meanings of silence and signs and signals for breaking silence. Ethnic backgrounds of these older key informants, whom I met with

weekly at the Migrant Resource Center in Launceston, Tasmania, Australia, included: Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malaysia, Korea, Switzerland, Germany, Australia, and England.

During recent international study and travel, several individual interviews were conducted with members of various ethnic groups concerning sensitive research approaches in this project. Some of the ethnic groups represented in these interviews included: Aboriginal people of Australia, Maori people of New Zealand, and Vietnamese people of North, Central, and Southern Vietnam.

As well, I facilitated two focus groups at the University of Tasmania, Australia, which were completely focused on my research goals. These focus groups were attended by international academic colleagues from several countries including: China, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Tonga, Australia, and Canada. I also met with a leading educational researcher from Great Britain, Dr. Nevel Bennett, (visiting Professor to the University of Tasmania), for special consultation concerning my methodological approaches. All of these people have served as key informants in the multi-culturally sensitive development of this research inquiry.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in order to test and refine the research methods and questions of this research project. I was not able to locate an appropriate multi-cultural seniors group for the pilot study. Therefore, with permission from teachers and students, and after careful discussion in each of the two classes ahead of time, fourteen students between the ages of 30 and 55 were videotaped while attending two different classes. Three students who were from China, Tonga, and Thailand, volunteered to participate in the stimulated recall and focus group meetings, since they had the time available from their academic studies. The stimulated recall sessions and focus group sessions were audiotaped. The three participants contributed vital information, not only concerning silence and signs and signals for breaking silence, but also concerning methods, procedure and questions that helped or hindered them in their reflecting and sharing processes. The pre-videotaping discussions were reported

to alleviate the camera shyness that some of the participants had experienced. These contributions from pilot study participants assisted in the refinement of this research design by helping me see the research approaches through the eyes of the participants.

Participants of This Study

All seven participants were classroom learners who were between the ages of 65 and 82 years. I was told that learners in this class were to be 65 years of age or older in order to be enrolled. I did not ask the participants about their specific ages, due to my lack of knowledge concerning cultural appropriateness in these matters. A classroom with four women and three men from various ethnic groups of non-majority members of society, was selected for the study. The seven participants were from seven different countries which included: Nigeria, Greece, India, England, Cuba, Hong Kong / China, and Canada. A brief description of each participant is now provided, with the use of pseudonyms for everyone in order to protect their anonymity. Two of the interviews took place in the homes of the participants, due to their struggle for getting rides to the InterCultural Association Center, where the other interviews took place and the class and focus groups met.

Connie, who is from Nigeria, was the teacher / participant of this study. In her deep, calm, low-toned voice, she explained that this course she was teaching or facilitating was for seniors only. She explained that the aims of the class were to promote the improvement of the English language for some students. Otherwise, she explained that the aims for everyone were to give and receive companionship, to share in intercultural learning, and to make each other happy. These aims were met through friendly conversation, the practicing of various English dialogues, singing songs from everyone's countries, learning poetry, practicing and performing skits or plays, sharing of multi-ethnic snacks, and doing dances from the various countries of the participants. Connie noted that this course opens the students up more to relate, to speak, to listen and to understand.

As Connie spoke about these matters concerning the class, she smiled often. Her hands, arms, and body moved continually as she spoke, adding emphasis and

eloquence of their own creations to the expressions of her voice. She sometimes complimented students in the classroom for their accomplishments in speaking or singing or acting, and commented on these accomplishments to the rest of the class. No student was left without her encouraging attentions. Connie has been in Canada for just a little over one year and she therefore has a deep understanding of the struggles with language and culture that the other immigrant seniors in the class were experiencing. Her use of the English language was excellent and she had many animated ways of expressing herself through the language, as can be seen in Chapter 4. Connie had been a teacher in Nigeria and was enjoying having this teaching opportunity in Canada.

Len is from Hong Kong / China. He immigrated to Canada about two years ago and took up his profession of building and selling houses, much as he had done in Hong Kong. He was a serious student in class, sitting with a slight frown on his face much of the time as he listened intently to everything that was transpiring in class. When something arrived to him as funny, he instantly broke into laughter and his smile spread widely across his broad, square face. Len's wire-rimmed glasses hid little of the merriment that danced in his eyes when he was laughing. He had salt and pepper hair that leaned slightly more toward the salt. He spoke with short, brief, chopped words that were decorated on both sides with brief, abrupt pauses. Len took great pride in narrating a play that the whole group participated in during class, and he led the enthusiastic applause when the play reached its end. He seemed very pleased to be part of this group.

Pat is from England. She immigrated to Canada a number of years ago with her husband, and is now engaged with the challenges of widowhood. Her 82 years of age have presented her with deep wrinkles and rich brown age spots that provide intricate, colourful backdrops to her pink blushed cheeks. Many wisps of gray hair fell from the loose bun that she had gathered at the back of her head with a black ruffled tie, and as she spoke or sang or listened, she sometimes tucked a lock of hair back into her bun, only to have it gently escape with the same slow delayed motion of her hand as it returned to her lap. Pat spoke in gentle tones that sometimes softened

and sometimes melted at the ends of her sentences. She often spoke slowly and reflectively, with the focus of her eyes drifting somewhere other than in the present context.

Dirk immigrated to Canada from India less than a year ago. The graying at his temples was partly lost under black thick hair that had been combed back but that preferred to come forward and that finally compromised by dropping downward over his ears. His head often dropped slightly forward and to the right in a shy, timid manner, and his delicate jet-black eyebrows, that joined his long refined nose, showed themselves better when his head dropped. His choices of bright plaid shirts seemed to add richness and colour to his dark shining skin. When something funny occurred in class, his initial laugh popped out as a gleeful giggle and then settled down to a deeper toned chuckle. Dirk had very little English language to work with. Speaking was difficult for him. He and I were helped by Connie with the stimulated recall session, so that he could more easily understand what I was asking and so that he could have some help with choices of words as he answered. Probably due to his shyness and struggles with the language, he chose to have me take notes during our interview, rather than using the tape recorder.

May explained, as we sat in the tiny living room of her apartment, that she had moved to Canada four and a half years ago and that she was missing her family terribly. The sadness seemed to sit heavily on her forward-rounded shoulders as she spoke about the struggles of her family members back home in Cuba, and of her hopeless desire to help them in some small way. She then spryly popped up off the tattered green couch to bring me a picture of her son who lives in Canada and provides her with her only family companionship at this time. The video ran quietly in the corner of the room as we sat on the couch with the audio tape on the coffee table at our knees, during the stimulated recall interview. May's black shoulder-length hair, that folded gently onto the collar of her blue flowered dress, had gray outlines at the center part, and bobbed briskly when she laughed. May taught English at the University of Havana in her earlier years and memories of those experiences brought flashes of joy and sparks of anger to her dark, wide eyes at different times. Her hands

added drama to the power of her words as she sometimes clapped a fist into an opened receiving hand. Her English was usually quite good, although she had times when she seemed to struggle for the words she wanted and then she spoke in a more halting manner. Always, there was a passion that sat waiting for just the right spark to ignite the flare.

John arrived from Greece about one year ago. English was a struggle for him as he participated in class and in the research project, but this struggle did not blanket the spunkiness that seemed to exude from his body and spirit. His gray wavy hair sat in thick locks behind a hairline that gave plenty of space to a tanned, lined face. His agility, as he moved around the classroom while taking part in a play, eluded to the agile ways he might engage in Greek dancing, which he said he loved to do. His voice had deep vibrating tones that seemed to originate in his ample belly. The stimulated recall interview session took place at John's home and his daughter-in law helped a little with some translations. She was from Italy, but her language granted her a communicative bridge between Italian and Greek. John preferred that I take notes during the interview, rather than use the audio recorder. John was not feeling well that day as he had had surgery not long before, but he was still pleased to have me come for the interview. John's son and grandchildren arrived just as I was about to leave, and the grandchildren both snuggled onto "Grandpa's" lap to stare openly at me for a while. We all had a warm chat before the parting.

Mary loved to travel to other countries and enjoyed relating to people from other cultural and ethnic groups, but she was born and raised in Canada. Her chest puffed out when she reported that her family had been here for seven generations. Her short gray and blonde patched hair stood up in back and looked as though a comb had no power in its presence. Her face was white when she was silent and went bright cherry red when she spoke. Her words rushed out quickly, quicker than her lips could accommodate at times, and quicker than my mind could take them in without review. Her eyes beamed like headlights on each person who spoke in class, and her face turned fully towards them on a short chubby neck. Mary loved to laugh and her whole

body joined in the fun when she did. She was quick to respond to the interview questions and often laughed at her own responses once they were out of her mouth.

These, then, are the participants who contributed the vital information and data for this research project. I as researcher am deeply grateful to each of them.

In this study, there was no attempt to manipulate the sample or composition of the class concerning ratio of women to men, nor ethnic groups involved. All participants were proficient enough in English to converse in a manner that allowed for discussion in class as well as discussion for the research interviews. This was a type of 'purposive sampling' which increased the likelihood that interactions which were to be studied would be appearing in the context where the data were being gathered (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

All participants in the classroom were asked if they were willing to consider being part of this study and being videotaped as they participated in their class. They were also asked if they were willing to be audiotaped during a stimulated recall session, and during two focus group interviews. The participants were told that this was a study about classroom communicative interactions. That is to say, they were told that this would be a study about the ways they relate and participate in class. It was explained that sometimes modes of classroom participation vary amongst cultures and ethnic groups, and that I wanted to understand more about that, thus I had chosen their multi-ethnic classroom. I did not announce specifically about the focus on silence in the beginning as this might have caused some feelings of self-consciousness concerning participants' silences and their signs and signals for breaking silence in their classroom communicative interactions.

In order to contact these participants, and to gain entry into their regular classroom in which they participated, administrators of the InterCultural Association of Victoria, B.C. were contacted concerning programs that were being offered for older adults (Appendix A - "Participant recruitment and initial contacts"). My research project was carefully explained, in person and through a letter of introduction (Appendix B). Certain courses and teachers were then discussed, with considerations for research criteria. The InterCultural Association then sent a letter of consent

concerning collaboration in this research project (Appendix C). A specific classroom of older learners from various ethnic backgrounds was recommended. Introductions were made and a discussion then ensued with the teacher, concerning videotaping in her classroom and appropriateness of participants for this study, with considerations for: older students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds; teaching style in that class which allowed for student choices of verbal and silent participation; probable willingness by the students to participate in such a study; and English proficiency of students.

The class selected was the InterCultural English and the Arts Seniors Group. The learning in this classroom was focused on improving English, intercultural learning between all cultures in the group, establishing companionship and caring through the group learning process, and improving skills in acting, singing, dancing and poetry reading or reciting. The Nigerian teacher expressed a strong desire to be a participant in the study also, as she saw herself as a facilitator / learner with much to contribute in this study, so she was also included. There had previously been three more students in this class but they were away for several weeks due to visits in their home countries. All students in the class were very pleased to be involved in the study.

When all details were settled, I visited the selected classroom and collaborated with the teacher in explaining my research project, and in giving careful explanations concerning each step of the data gathering process. All questions and concerns were addressed. I had planned to visit the class several times before videotaping their normal classroom process in order to establish a rapport with the participants. However, all participants were enthusiastic about the research project and asked if I wanted to begin videoing immediately! Since I did not have the video camera with me, we all agreed that I would video their regular classroom process the next week, which I did. I also asked if I might do some brief practice videoing with them in two or three sessions, in order for them to get comfortable with the videotaping. They felt this was not necessary since someone had videoed them before in order to have a record of their class in action, thus each person was comfortable with the process. All suggestions by the students and the teacher were considered.

Camera shyness on the part of the teacher and the participating students was discussed with the group. All members of the classroom were asked for suggestions concerning what would assist them in overcoming their camera shyness or concerns. The only suggestion was that I be the camera person since they all felt comfortable with me.

Various ethical issues were discussed with participants. Participants were told that this study would require a four hour commitment from each of them, in one hour increments (one hour of videotaping in class, one hour of stimulated recall which would be audiotaped, one hour in the first focus group, and one hour in the final focus group). Further time would be involved with reading the 'tentative findings'. It was explained that their participation was completely voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time without explanation. They also had the right to refuse to answer any questions they did not wish to answer. They were told that all data would remain confidential and that interview results and audiotapes and videotapes would be kept in a locked room or cabinet. As well, participants' names would not be attached to any published results. Rather, code numbers or pseudonyms would be attached to any results obtained from individual subjects. Only myself as researcher and my research supervisory committee would have access to the raw data. The audiotapes and videotapes would be erased after the responses have been coded in written form and when the study has been accepted. It was also explained to the participants that the focus group often provides an excellent learning opportunity. They were also asked to keep confidentiality concerning the information discussed in the focus groups. It was explained that whether they chose to participate or chose to not participate in this study, it would have no bearing on their classroom acceptance levels nor job status nor academic standing nor living situation. Also, if they chose to drop out of the study early, they could decide if their data were to be destroyed or used. When everyone understood these matters clearly, they were asked to sign a participant consent form (Appendix D). These discussions lead to a more relaxed and natural communicative interaction during the research process.

Interviewing

Good interviewing is essential if data are to be rich with the information that is desired in the study. Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) outlined interviewing steps which include: defining the purpose of the study, selecting a sample, designing the interview format, developing questions, doing a pilot test of the interview procedures, conducting the interviews and analyzing the interview data. These steps were included in the study.

Esseveld (1988) stated that “good interviewing involves more than empathy and personal involvement, it also involves taking a certain amount of distance and probing” (p. 70). As well, it involves gently inquiring further into the personal meanings of conventional phrases that are used by the participant, in order to test if first impressions gained by the interviewer were correct.

Interviewing is a form of discourse. It is usually shaped and organized by the asking and the answering of questions. Or, it may be a product of what the interviewees and interviewers talk about together. In cultural anthropology and sociology, the use of interviews to illuminate certain features of culture and of human lives has a long and established history (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Interviews assist in the process of moving beyond surface talk to rich discussions of thoughts, perceptions, rememberings, and feelings concerning the research topic.

Each participant in this study was interviewed privately within a ‘stimulated recall’ context. As an individual viewed herself or himself in the video, a conversational type of interview was used, which often assists the interviewee in feeling relaxed, and which facilitated reflections on the issues at hand (Williamson, 1997). During that time each participant was asked some semi-open-ended questions concerning the research topic. These research questions are now listed (and also found in Appendix E).

Questions about the participants themselves:

Can you tell me why you are choosing to be silent at this particular time in your classroom participation?

Since I want to understand more about silence from your perspective and point of view, perhaps you might explain some underlying reasons for your silence at this time.

What is the meaning of your silence at this particular time in the class?

How might you interpret your silence?

Does your age affect your choices of silence?

Does your gender have meaning in your choices of silence?

Does your ethnicity affect your choices of silence?

Questions concerning signs and signals for breaking silence:

How do you usually signal or show that you want to speak in class?

What are the meanings of your signals or indications for wanting to speak?

How might you interpret your signals for ending your silence and speaking?

How do you decide which signals for wishing to speak that you will use?

Further questions about participants themselves:

What might be some causes for your silence?

What is your silence used for?

What are you trying to say or express with your silence?

When or where do you use silence and why?

In what situations do you use silence?

With whom do you use silence more?

When the teacher asks you a question in class, how do you feel?

What types of things affect your choices or underlying meanings of silence?

Do you think you are quiet or talkative in classes and why?

What helps you determine when you will be silent and when you will speak?

I noticed that you were more silent in _____ situation and a little more talkative in _____ situation, can you tell a little more about that?

Questions concerning an individual's classmates and silence:

What do you think about students who talk a lot in class?

What do you think about students who don't talk a lot in class?

Some of these questions were developed and refined before and during the key informant and pilot study processes, which were described previously, and some of these questions were adapted from a study by Jones and Gerig (1994), about silence in several grade six classes.

Focus Groups

A focus group, or a focus group interview, is an informal discussion among certain individuals about specific topics relevant to a given situation. One of the characteristics that distinguishes focus groups from other interview procedures in qualitative research is the group discussion aspect. A major assumption of focus groups is that "with a permissive atmosphere that fosters a range of opinions, a more complete and revealing understanding of the issues will be obtained" (Vaughn, Schumm, & Sinagub. 1996, p. 4). The main goal of focus group interviews is to create an atmosphere that nurtures normal conversation which addresses, in depth, the selected topics. Focus groups can assist in explaining how and why people behave as they do. This is not a time of consensus building. Rather, it is a time for obtaining a range of thoughts, reflections and opinions from people concerning the particular issues at hand.

A focus group works well with a carefully planned discussion which is thoughtfully designed to obtain perceptions from the participants concerning a defined area of interest. A permissive, relaxed, comfortable, enjoyable, nonthreatening environment is essential for desirable results (Gall, et al. 1996).

The focus group technique avoids putting the interviewer in a strongly directive role. Rather, the interviewer asks questions to initiate the discussion, but then (s)he allows the participants to take major responsibility for reflecting on their

own experiences and knowledge, expressing their views, drawing out the views of others, and responding to the views of others (Gall, et al. 1996). The focus shifts from close direction of the researcher to the direction that the group provides, concerning the specific topics. The major goal is “to hear the voices and viewpoints of the target individuals” (Vaughn, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1996, p. 155).

I facilitated the focus group discussions. Once we had comfortably settled into our group I thanked everyone for being a part of this study and I then reviewed what the study was about. I asked for any questions or concerns that individuals might have had to that point. I then asked for and received permission to audiotape the first session and I asked all of them to please share more about their meanings of silence and their ways of signaling their desires to speak in class. During the first focus group I used the research questions (Appendix E) that were used in the stimulated recall sessions, to initiate focused discussion on the specific topic. One member of the study was absent from class for the first focus group discussion. This session was audiotaped and transcribed. Due to the informal nature of the focus group discussion, it was not always clear who was speaking on the audiotape. Therefore, transcription was done with the use of the word “participant” to demonstrate that a different person had begun speaking. This technique circumvented the problem of quoting someone incorrectly. A few excerpts from the discussions that took place in the first focus group discussion can be found in Appendix F.

The purpose of the second focus group discussion was to review the tentative findings and to make additions and corrections to those findings if they were needed. During the second focus group discussion the participants and I read the list of tentative findings (Appendix G) that had been gathered from the data. Much time was taken in explaining each item and making sure that everyone understood. This session was not audiotaped, but rather, careful notes were taken on additions or corrections that participants made as we went through each point (Appendix H). I then expressed my deep appreciation to all participants for the sharing of their thoughts, reflections, opinions, remembering, and answers to the questions. Through this approach we all created a relaxed, friendly, enjoyable, and nonthreatening

atmosphere where individuals felt comfortable with participating and sharing in the focus group setting.

Data Collection Procedures and Sources of Data

Once contact had been made with participants, careful and sensitive rapport was established and appropriate human subject consent forms were explained to each participant and each was asked to sign the form (Appendix D). The research project then proceeded.

There are five sources of data in this study. The first source was the video tape of participants while they took part in their regular course. The videotape was transcribed verbatim. This source of data was used for ‘stimulated recall’ interviews plus for careful examination for information related to this study.

I then invited each of the seven participants separately to view the video and discuss the research topic. Through discussion and questions and answers, the semi-open-ended interviews transpired (see interviewing section for questions). The approach was a “stimulated recall” method of inquiry, whereby individuals often recall more details of what is being studied through them, due to the viewing of themselves in the studied context (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 598; Nunan, 1992, p. 94). This provided the opportunity for participants to observe themselves in the video, to respond to their own classroom communicative interactions, and to reflect on the meanings of silence in those actions. Some participants chose to have their voices audiotaped and some chose to have notes taken of their interviews. The data from the audio tapes or the interview notes, were then transcribed. This provided the second source of data.

The third source of data was the audio taping of the first “focus group interview” (Gall, et al. 1996, p. 309). In this process the participants, after having completed their stimulated recall procedures, were asked to participate in this group interaction. In this focus group interview, they were encouraged to discuss silence and signs and signals for breaking silence, and encouraged to perceive and share their insights and perceptions that they may not have remembered or expressed when they

were interviewed alone during the stimulated recall process. In the group process, memories of cultural teachings about silence were triggered through realizations of similarities and differences that are noted, through comments made by other members of the group. This was a constructivist approach to knowledge and theory in this group process. Data from this tape was then transcribed.

Researcher observations and reflections concerning the videotape of the regular class in session, the stimulated recall sessions, and the first focus group interview were noted. This provided the fourth source of data.

Tentative data analysis of the first four sources of data then followed. When all of the data had been transcribed and analyzed, a summary of the findings was written up and copies were made for each participant as 'tentative findings' (Appendix G). I then met with the participants for our second focus group discussion. Due to limitations of the reading of English by some participants, we all read the tentative findings together and discussed their meanings. Participants were asked to comment on the tentative findings, to give feed-back to the researcher, and to add more details which had not been remembered previously. Notes were taken during this session which provided the fifth source of data (Appendix H).

Particular attention was given to feedback concerning researcher observations and interpretations of the data, since there were possibilities of biases and misunderstandings. This provided authenticity acceptance by the participants, as well as enhancing the validity of the study. This step of the process may be metaphorically viewed as a "quilting bee", whereby members work as a team on final stages of an important project. There is often a group energy or synergism, whereby the whole is greater than the sum of it's parts. This stage of the inquiry also allowed for a dynamic learning process whereby all participants, including myself as researcher, gained the benefit of maximum learning from the research project within which we were involved. These new data were then added to the previous tentative findings and final analysis was done.

Analysis

When all data had been gathered and transcribed, the process of analysis began. It was a process of “bringing order to the data” (Patton, 1987, p. 144). In this process the data were carefully examined in order to find categories, sub-categories, and themes which were seen as ‘meaning units’, ‘analysis units’, or ‘segments’, which are embedded within the data (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). An initial conceptual framework (Table 1, near the end of this chapter) was used in this process in order to assist in establishing the main categories and meaning units. Saville-Troike (1985) provided categories of silences which were used for this initial framework.

A category is a classification of concepts, whereby, through comparisons with one another, certain concepts are found to pertain to a certain phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). A coding system was used to identify these categories. Theoretical saturation was watched for, whereby no new or relevant data or categories were emerging. Through this process, well defined categories with clear coding were developed.

When various categories had been established, “theme analysis” was done in order to discover the emergence of themes and patterns which would fit well with these categories. Van Manen (1990) wrote, “theme analysis refers then to the process of recovering the theme or themes that are embodied and dramatized in the evolving meanings and imagery of the work” (p. 78). A theme may be seen as an emerging subject or element or experience which is repeated and which carries a resonant cord of common meaning. What is relevant in that particular area is seen as the emerging focus (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

Pattern matching was used, whereby patterns from the data matched one another, or matched predictions made ahead, through the initial conceptual framework. This is a type of refined selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Metaphors, (such as the patchwork quilt used in this study), also assisted as “pattern making devices” in that they provided a decentered and creative approach to connecting findings (Miles & Huberman, 1984). When emerging categories, themes

and patterns of silences and signs and signals for breaking silences were established, it became apparent that the initial conceptual framework was not adequate. Therefore, an 'adjusted conceptual framework' was developed. This adjusted framework can be found in Table 2 near the beginning of chapter four. When the framework had been adjusted and all categories, sub-categories and themes organized within that framework, then reporting followed.

Reporting usually follows one of two styles: reflective reporting - the use of literary approaches to bring the case alive for the reader, and to demonstrate the presence of the researcher's voice in the report; and analytic reporting - an objective writing style, where the researcher's voice is subdued or silent, and conventional organization of topics occurs, including introduction, review of the literature, methodology, results and discussion. Combining the two approaches often works well (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996), and I chose to use this combined approach.

Limitations

Several limitations are noteworthy in this study. The video camera may have caused some nervousness or camera shyness on the part of the teacher-participant as well as the students, even though they did not report this at any time. This may have slightly altered the instructor's teaching style and communicative interactions. As well the video camera may have slightly altered the communicative interactions of the students, not only with the teacher but also with each other.

The audio taping of some of the sessions may have caused some nervousness on the parts of some of the participants who chose this recording method over the note taking. However, no one reported any nervousness.

As well, a slight limitation was involved with the taking of notes during stimulated recalls for those participants who chose notes rather than audiotaping, due to shyness. Some exact wording was captured in my notes, but not as many rich comments could be captured and written in this method, due to slowness of note taking by hand.

Students may have altered their uses of silence and their signs and signals for breaking silence, due to their knowledge about the focus on communicative interactions of the study.

Difficulties with speaking English, or embarrassment of proficiency levels of English, on the parts of some participants, may have altered the uses of silence, especially while being videotaped.

Difficulties with reading English on the part of some participants may have been a limitation in the reading of and understanding of the tentative findings of this research project, even though each point was carefully read aloud, described, and discussed.

Different teaching styles as well as student learning styles may influence choices of silence as well as signs and signals for breaking silence in classroom contexts. As well, different classmates may affect silence and speech patterns.

Researcher biases may be a limitation in the researcher observation section of this study. However, focus group feed-back may have lowered the levels of biases.

The heterogenous nature of the group of participants in this study would limit generalizability.

Conceptual Framework

An initial conceptual framework was used to establish main categories as well as to enhance the assembling, organizing, and analyzing of the data. A fairly extensive classification of various types of silences was provided by Saville-Troike (1985, p. 16-17). This included a number of etic categories (researcher's conceptual and theoretical understanding of a social reality). Saville-Troike suggested that this classification may provide insights for examining silences of a broad range of types with a number of levels and domains. These classifications provided a conceptual framework for the initial analysis of the data.

However, during the analysis process, it became apparent that these silence classifications did not fully serve this study which has the focus of silence in classroom contexts. As well, the classifications did not include all of the themes which emerged

from the data. Furthermore, some themes could be discussed more clearly if they were gathered in sub-categories that varied from Saville-Troike's sub-categories. As well, my analysis and perceptions of sub-categories and themes were informed by: Bruneau (1973) who discussed three major forms of silence including psycholinguistic, interactive, and socio-cultural; Jones and Gerig (1994) who discussed controlling environment and avoiding risks; and Richmond, McCroskey and Payne (1991) who discussed psychological, thinking, and respectful silences. These authors offered various perspectives which helped clarify categories, subcategories, and themes that were appropriate for a framework that would accommodate this study of meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. Therefore, the framework was adjusted to meet the needs of this study. This adjusted framework, which also facilitates the outlining of the discussion and findings, is found in Table 2 near the beginning of Chapter 4. Details on the nature of the adjustments made in the framework are discussed in Chapter 5. Saville-Troike's 1985 classifications which were used for the framework and initial analysis of the data, are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Saville-Troike (1985) Classifications and Initial Conceptual Framework

<p>A. Institutionally-determined silence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Locational: temples, libraries 2. Ritual (except for duly authorized speakers and occasions): religious services, legal proceedings, funerals, classes in school, public performances (operas, movies) 3. Membership: religious groups (nuns, monks) with a vow of silence 4. Hierarchical/structural: lower-status (less powerful) members of a society or organization, versus higher-status persons 5. Taboo: strict rules; persons in certain statuses (e.g., chief) or defined relationships (e.g., wife's mother) with whom communication is proscribed <p>B. Group-determined silence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Situational: access to speaking privilege is allocated by group decision, which may be delegated (legislative bodies, committees) 2. Normative: differential speaking privileges allocated to individuals or classes of individuals (shunning as punishment, children, audience members) 3. Symbolic: communicative actions <p>C. Individually-determined / negotiated silence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interactive <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Socio-contextual <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) role-indicative (e.g., auditor in conversation) 2) status-indicative (e.g., deference, superiority) 3) situation-indicative (e.g., context-structuring, tension-management, social control) 4) tactical-symbolic / attitudinal (nonparticipation, anger, sorrow, respect, disapproval, dislike, indifference, alienation, avoidance, mitigation, concealment, mystification, dissimulation, image manipulation) 5) phatic (emotional sharing) b. Linguistic <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) discursive (prayer, fantasizing, rehearsing) 2) propositional (negation, affirmation, consent, agreement, refusal, acknowledgement) 3) didactic ('fill in the blank') c. Psychological (timidity, embarrassment, fear, neurosis) 2. Noninteractive <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Contemplative/meditative b. inactive
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This conceptual framework contributed to the analysis and organization of the data that were gathered from the seven participants in this study. Saville-Troike (1985) suggested that further elaborations and testings of various settings, relations, functions, and contexts, may lead to a more complete descriptions and understandings of uses of silence in a particular society or in certain given contexts. This study has been carefully designed to contribute to this cause, and an adjustment of this framework facilitated the process.

Conclusion

This qualitative research design was carefully developed and tailored in order to enhance the inquiry into the meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults, as well as to enhance the discovering of signs and signals for breaking silence in classrooms. Ethical issues were of essence at each stage. The multiple case study approach, backed up by the triangulated methodological approach, provided insights from several perspectives into the research topic. Various conceptual approaches to the data provided rich, valid and thick descriptions of the phenomena that were being researched. The findings of this research and the discussion are recorded in the fourth chapter of this document, and summaries and recommendations follow in the fifth chapter.

Chapter Four

Findings and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter includes the findings and discussion of the study of meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. As well, this chapter includes a discussion on the findings concerning the signs and signals for breaking silence in classroom contexts, as described by participants. The multiple case study qualitative research design that was developed for this inquiry into silence has facilitated the discovery of several main categories with many sub-categories and themes or 'meaning units' concerning various aspects of silence in a multi-ethnic classroom of older adults.

In this study the focus has remained on various aspects, perspectives, and meanings of silence, with talk as the background to silence, as opposed to much research that centers on talk, with silence as the "out-of-awareness phenomenon - the ground against which the figure of talk is perceived" (Saville-Troike, 1985, p. xi). We may envision this as the shifting of our focus on a patchwork quilt from the viewing of only the colourful patches and patterns of the fabric pieces themselves, to the shifting and sharing of the focus with the intricate needle and thread applications of hand-stitching that have been carefully applied to display creative designs which not only lend beauty to the quilt, but also serve to unite various important components of the quilt. These hand stitches and designs are frequently unnoticed, yet along with their importance of unity and beauty, they often display some of the most powerful, yet subtle, expressions of the quilter. So also, our silences in our communicative processes may be some of our most important and powerful expressions of self, and of teachings of our society and culture, yet these silences are often unnoted and poorly understood. We as educators may therefore become more enriched and effective in

our teaching endeavors, if we move the colourful intricacies of patterns of silence into the foreground of our awareness concerning classroom communicative interactions.

In this study, the seven participants provided a colourful array of information about silences, as well as about signs and signals for breaking silence. These offerings of vital intercultural communicative information come from participants who are from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds which include the countries of: Nigeria, India, Greece, England, Cuba, Hong Kong / China, and Canada. Most of the people involved had only recently immigrated to Canada from their homelands, although one person originated in Canada. In order to avoid stereotyping, it must be emphasized here that although culture and ethnicity influence the individuals involved within those societies, this does not imply that everyone in a given society or culture is programmed in the same way. Wide differences between individuals in given cultures or ethnic groups can be found. On the other hand, these participants bring communicative information from their cultures which may help us expand our intercultural understandings of silences in intercultural communication.

A conceptual framework (Table 1, p. 90) was used for initial analysis of the data. In the process of giving order, design, and appropriate presentation of the data that were provided by these participants in this study, the framework was adjusted in order to facilitate the inclusion of all data that emerged. As well, several other key resources were used in the development of this adjusted framework. These included: Bruneau (1973) who discussed three major forms of silence including psycholinguistic, interactive, and socio-cultural; Jones and Gerig (1994) concerning controlling the environment and avoiding risks; and Richmond, McCroskey and Payne (1991) who discussed psychological, thinking, and respectful silences. These authors offered various perspectives which helped clarify categories, sub-categories, and themes that were appropriate for a framework that would accommodate this study. This adjusted conceptual framework, which also serves as an outline for the findings and discussion, is presented in Table 2 which follows.

Table 2. Adjusted Conceptual Framework:

<p>A. Institutionally-determined silence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Locational: churches, temples, libraries, some school contexts 2. Ritual: classes in school, learning silences, public performances (entertainment and movies) 3. Hierarchical/structural: lower-status (less powerful) members of a society or organization, versus higher-status persons; respect; silenced 4. Taboo: Strict rules; persons in certain statuses (e.g., chief) or defined relationships with whom communication is proscribed or forbidden <p>B. Group-determined silence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normative: differential speaking privileges allocated to individuals or classes of individuals (children, women, men, older persons) 2. Symbolic: communicative actions (ways of quieting children or crowds) <p>C. Individually-determined/negotiated silence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interactive <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Socio-contextual <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) status-indicative (e.g., deference, superiority) 2) situation-indicative (e.g., context-structuring, tension-management, social control, social graces, listening) 3) tactical-symbolic / affect / attitudinal (anger, sadness, happiness, respect for elders, disapproval, dislike, disagreement, alienation, avoidance, concealment, image management) b. Psycholinguistic (silent prayer, reasoning, thinking, language problems, wait time, turns) c. Sociocultural (cultural, societal, manners, politeness) d. Psychological (loneliness, shyness, fear) e. Sociophysical (tired, worried so not feeling well, not feeling well) 2. Noninteractive (not to be confused with non-productive) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Contemplative or meditative b. Reflective <p>D. Signs and Signals for breaking silence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Verbal 2. Nonverbal 3. Combined verbal and nonverbal

There are sometimes subtle nuances or delicate shades of differences between the meanings of the silences, and only the perspectives from which the meanings are viewed lend insights into those delicate nuances. The discussion concerning the findings of this study now follows, with the four main categories being: A)

institutionally-determined silences; B) group-determined silences; C) individually-determined / negotiated silences; D) signs and signals for breaking silence.

A. Institutionally-Determined Silence

In this category, meanings of silence are viewed from the perspectives of influences of institutional contexts on communicative interactions.

1. Locations: Institutions often inspire specific types of communicative actions and responses, according to what has been taught in the culture or society concerning appropriateness in those institutions. Participants in this study spoke of several locations or institutions in which they often felt they should be more silent. Some of these included: churches and temples, some restaurants, some contexts in schools, and libraries.

Len explained his thoughts about silence in various locations:

Len: Special, uh, in the quiet place, just like the high class restaurants, library and office, these place, the quiet place. You must keep silent.

Researcher: Ah huh, okay...

Len: In the, in the, just like the library, you must be silent or you must talk very quiet. (The last part was said in a whisper that softened increasingly as he neared the end of the sentence).

Researcher: Oh, okay, at the library.

Len: You cannot wah wah wah! (does this very loudly).

Researcher: Yes, no, okay, ah huh...

May also commented about her silences in certain locations and about the training she received at an early age concerning her silences in certain places:

May: When I was very young I used to talk a lot (laughs)

Researcher: (clarifying) Used to talk a lot, okay.

May: But the teacher didn't like it and my Father punished me and I began to (squeezes her lips together and becomes silent).

Researcher: Oh, your Father punished you and you began to, not to speak. Oh, you are squeezing your lips. Yeah. Okay. So, you learned...

May: I prefer to do what my Father said (laughs).

Researcher: I see, ah huh, okay. So you learned a lot about silence maybe then, from your Father?

May: Yes.

Researcher: Um hum. Okay. What other times would he teach you to be silent? In what situations or locations?

May: Well, when I go to church..., when it's needed, you know.

John noted two locations where he was often silent:

John: I'm silent in church most of the time and often silent in school because I'm listening.

Dirk spoke of being silent in temples.

Dirk: In special places must be silent (pause) temple.

These were some of the locations that were mentioned by participants as they discussed appropriateness of communicative actions and responses in certain contexts.

2. Rituals: A ritual may be viewed as a procedure which is regularly followed. The sub-categories that are involved in this section include: classes in school with learning silences; and public performances, entertainment, or movies. Within classroom contexts, the ritual of being silent or quiet in order to learn was a communicative procedure which was discussed by Pat.

Researcher: ...So, in the classroom, when you are silent, when you're quiet, how would you interpret your silence?'

Pat: Well, I think somebody else should know that, because I think here, in Canada, ah, (tape ended and needed to be turned over).

Researcher: Let's see, you said, 'here in Canada we learn', I think...

Pat: I think you do learn more to talk because then the teacher feels that you are contributing.

Researcher: Um hum.

Pat: I think equally well, you have to learn to be quiet to learn. Well, they have prepared, you know, lessons, and they can teach, and you don't notice if you're talking all the time. It's sometimes difficult to get it.

Researcher: Yes, um hum.

Pat: Well, some teachers like to talk a hell of a lot! (laughs).

As well, Jan explained the ritual of learning through her listening silence when she excitedly spoke as she watched the video of herself during the stimulated recall interview.

Jan: And ah, she's (the teacher) talking and I'm not going to interrupt her because she knows more about the subject than I do, and I'm learning a lot from her! And this is what you do in the, in the classroom or anywhere around your life: if you listen, you're gonna learn. If you don't, well, it's too bad!

Along with the silence of learning from the teacher, Jan elaborated on her silence in order to learn from her classmates.

Jan: Oh, to be honest with you, I like to listen to, to the different people and hear their, what what they say. Because they make ah, well those people make a lot of sense. Like this one, he is from Hong Kong (points to classmate on video).

Researcher: Um hmm.

Jan: That was the one that was going to sell his house? (intonation raised at end of comment or question).

Researcher: Um hmm.

Jan: Well, why is he selling his house? He wants to travel around the, the world and through Canada. So you can see that ah, the reason why he wants to sell is because he wants to get money out so he can go around. He's not going to buy anything else. He's going to use the money.

Researcher: Um hmm.

Jan: And ah, this is what, what I was learning about (points to video and to herself as she sat silently).

Jan: (later concerning learning) And ah, that is another reason that I ah won't speak ... because you, you don't know lots of those people in their cultures. I don't know their cultures because I've never been there! So I don't have those ideas. And so we listen to them and learn because they can relate so much. And then we can find out what they think in their way of life too." (video analysis showed that this concentrated attention to teacher and classmates was demonstrated in the classroom context by Jan through the nodding of her head occasionally, saying "ah huh" intermittently, while intensely focusing her eyes on each person who spoke).

And, in the second focus group, one participant (names not recorded with specific comments in focus group discussions) said:

Participant: Silence is not a solitary thing. If you are silent, you are learning.

In complete contrast to the ritual of silence, Pat noted that for her, sometimes the ritual of speaking up rather than remaining silent in the classroom was very important to her.

Pat: Well I think of it as, I suppose the golden rule is that I, (if) I am interested enough in the situation, and, (I therefore) have a contribution to make. Lots of people, I'm sure, don't really, ah, feel

that speech, ah, has a purpose. And yet it's part of you, just as much as the colour of your hair, or whatever it is.

Some participants spoke about their silences for entertainment. Silence, or perhaps sometimes verbal interactions with entertainment, may also be viewed as rituals that are learned in particular ethnicities concerning appropriate responses to entertainment.

Researcher: ...Okay. Now, here's a few more (questions). What might be the meanings of your silence?

Jan: Well that's about it... yeah. If I listen to something on the radio that I like to, and be silent, yes, because I want to hear what they are saying. Ah, music is another one that I like to listen to, so I'll keep silent with that. 'Cause I love music. Well, I like everything. There isn't anything, really, that I don't like! (long pause) Except nuts! (with emphasis)

Researcher: Except nuts!? Oh!

Jan: I have to throw that one in. I am allergic to nuts.

Researcher: Oh are you? Oh, well, you wouldn't want those then.

Jan: No

May also noted the fact that she had learned to be silent for entertainment.

May: ...or when I go to the movies. When it's need(ed), you know.

Researcher: When It's needed, um hum. Okay...

As well, John briefly talked about silence in movies. When asked to speak more about his silences, he said:

John: Silent, in movies, here (with emphasis on 'here'). (John's Italian daughter-in-law, who was present during part of the interview chimed in and said that in Italy there is much talking and swearing in the movies.)(much laughter)

In the second focus group members also spoke about movies and the fact that people are not always silent in them.

Participant: In some countries some people are not silent in movies, but rather are very vocal.

Other participants: [Agreement by several others.]

This exchange demonstrates that differences can occur in various cultures as to what is the appropriate ritual concerning silence or speech in various communicative contexts.

3. Hierarchical / Structural: In institutions there are hierarchical structures with levels of status and authority which rank some people higher than others. Several participants explained that they saw the teacher as being ranked in a level above themselves as students, and therefore, the appropriate response toward the teacher was to show her or him respect in every way possible, including through communicative interactions. It was explained that the meaning of silence in the presence of the teacher is a strong communicative expression of respect for the teacher in some cultures. Thu (1988) noted that in the Vietnamese culture the students demonstrated their highest respect for the teacher by sitting silently in class, obeying orders and asking few questions.

Connie spoke of silence for respect in a stimulated recall interview when she explained:

Researcher: With whom do you use silence?

Connie: Oh, with your classmates, if you are in the class. And then with teachers and with somebody in authority above, you keep silent and let them talk ...so that's...and then most people carry that aspect of our culture into the classroom. When you start to school, the teacher is regarded as an elder and more knowledgeable person. And the teacher speaks and you keep quiet and you listen attentively.

Connie later explained more about silence as she engaged in communicative interactions in the classroom.

Researcher: And if you think about yourself as a student, Connie, what do you think about the interpretations of your silence? If you're being silent when you're being a student in class or...

Connie: When I was small?

Researcher: Yes, when you were small or when you have been an adult and been in a group studying anything at all or learning anything or discussing anything.

Connie. Mmmmmm. Well, occasionally when I'm with people like here (motions towards the video where her classroom interaction is showing) occasionally, when we will be talking for a long time in the classroom, and ah, and I would say, when the teacher comes in, she would say, would you like this to be like this? And some parents will say, better keep quiet. There is no need doing that (talking). And when the teacher comes in, she will see we are not quiet. She says, 'why didn't you keep quiet?' That's a sign of awe, fear, fear or awe? Awe, in the presence of the teacher.

Researcher: Fear or awe?

Connie: Uh huh, fear or awe in the presence of the teacher.

Researcher: Oh, okay.

Connie: And, ah, also, it's a sign of willingness to learn.

Researcher: Oh, a willingness to learn. Yes. Oh, uh huh.

Connie: Fear. Um, okay, respect. Respect that, because that comes from the tradition. The tradition that when an adult speaks, the young boys (children) listen. That's the basic thing, then...like I said before, too, out of respect I keep silent for long time.

Dirk commented on the meaning of his silence when he explained that it was a respectful silence for the teacher in a hierarchical position:

Dirk: School, oh, classroom, teacher talks. Students silent, no speak. Only teacher ask (me), I speak... Children, school, not talk. Silent. Working. Teacher talk.

When discussing this with Len he briefly mentioned something about silence with the teacher and we then had this exchange:

Researcher: Do you think you need to be silent with the teacher?

Len: Yep!" (immediately and emphatically).

Researcher: You ...ah ah (motioning with hand to encourage him to comment further).

Len: Must. I say must (be silent with the teacher)!

Researcher: You must? (wanting more clarification).

Len: Yeah, because it's public, no, proper (a confirming tone and a nod of his head). Everything, everything the teacher (with extra breath forced out around every word to emphasize the significance of the respect for the teacher).

During the first focus group a participant reported on a strategy of speaking to the teacher after class in order to maintain a respectful silence in class:

Participant: In the past time, when I'm a school boy, I did not ask, in the class I did not ask the teacher any questions. Ah, I think, stop the teacher, if I ask a question, ah, the teacher must stop his talk... if I ask the question, if I ask the teacher, I will spend m-m-many many people's time, spend the teacher's talking time. So, I will, after the class, then to ask the question. But now, I think the culture is changed. Everybody when, when he did not know the question he must ask. Ah, I think now the culture is dead. Maybe I, my thinking is wrong.

Fonua (1997) reported as well that in classroom situations in some Polynesian cultures, the students maintain high levels of silence in the classroom and try to get answers for their questions after class, either through discussion with classmates or, as a last resort, with the teacher.

Along the same lines, in the first focus group discussion Len noted the hierarchical status of his principal and how that affected his choices of silence and speech.

Len. Ummm, might be if I, if I'm in a school, my principal, ah ah, for a meeting, ah I listen about things and I keep silent.

On the other hand, Pat reported that she occasionally enjoyed engaging in communicative interaction with the instructor during class time, although much of the time it was after class. Pat recalled an incident whereby she told her friend that she was going to stay after class and speak to the professor.

Pat: I remember the first time I went to a lecture at the University and I went with a friend whose house I was living in, and ah, we both went to the class, and I, as we left, I said I just wanted to have a word with the professor. And she (my friend) said, "Oh you don't do that!" (in whispered, shocked voice). I said, "I don't do what?!" And she said, "You don't go up and speak to the professor!" (whispering). "Oh well," I said, "time to change a rule then!" (laughing).

Hierarchical ranks often carry structural rules that participants follow, sometimes very consciously and carefully, and sometimes unknowingly or unconsciously. These participants have explained, through their words and animated intonations and inflections, how silence for respect carries much power into communicative interactions in multi-ethnic classrooms. These respectful silences are not easily understood in a culture where verbal interactions are valued highly and where individuals have not been trained to show respect through silences. As well,

teachers have not been trained to recognize someone's silence as a sign of respect, and therefore teachers may interpret these silences in other, sometimes negative, ways. Incorrect interpretations, especially negative interpretations, can lead to negative responses towards students who are striving diligently to show deep respect through their silences. These types of misunderstandings can inhibit effective communication and learning.

Nwoye (1985) noted that, "silence can be very eloquent" (p. 185) and that often it is a sign of respect among the Igbo people of Nigeria. These cultural and communicative meanings and rules about silence may also, at times, be seen as taboos.

4. Taboos: A taboo is a type of ban or prohibition on something that is regarded by societal custom as not to be done. Jaworski (1993) wrote that cross-cultural uses of silence are rooted in observations of different types of taboos. Some of these participants reported that it was a taboo or that they were culturally prohibited to speak in the classroom unless they were spoken to by the teacher. Dirk explained:

Dirk: Same same, now, senior, (as when I was a boy), (in) class, teacher tell me, I speak. Not ask, no speak. Good student! (smiling widely with last words while placing all ten finger tips on his slightly expanded chest).

Connie also commented on the taboo of speaking in class without permission:

Connie: Then, when he (teacher) gives you permission, only then you ask questions or you talk. That's it!" (She nods her head for emphasis).

As well, Len emphasized the importance of not speaking in class unless the teacher indicated that he could break his silence and speak:

Len: If the teacher here, I ra ra ra ra, (it's) not properly (proper).

Researcher: Not properly. Not proper. Okay. I understand. So it's proper to be quiet or silent with the teacher?

Len: Yeah.

Researcher: And so for you, you, if you want to speak, you feel the teacher must ask you to speak?

Len: Oh, the teacher ask, when the teacher ask me, I must talk. Not before.

Jan remembered back to her early training and the taboo of speaking when it was not appropriate:

Jan: Well, I was always taught in, in, at home, always make sure that you don't talk until you are spoken to. And ah, that has always been in my family and school. And if, when, we are eating, don't speak with your mouth full!

These people were very clear about the cultural rules that had a strength that was similar to a taboo, which governed their choices of silence or speech in the classroom. These are some of the institutionally-determined silences which were played out in this multi-ethnic seniors' classroom, or which were remembered by these participants in their reflections on their past experiences in classrooms.

B. Group-Determined Silence

In this category, the normative and symbolic influences of groups on choices of silence are discussed and illustrated. The focus of this perspective differs from the perspective of institutionally determined silences which were influenced by certain beliefs concerning communicative appropriateness in certain institutional contexts. In this section, more emphasis is placed on the normative or symbolic influences that the group of communicative participants may exert on the various members involved in that particular context.

1. Normative: Normative expectations are intricately developed from various standards, norms, or patterns considered to be appropriate for a particular group. In

this section, normative patterns of silence concerning children, women, men, and older persons are discussed.

Children: Many normative understandings begin to develop in early childhood when parents, extended family, or teachers begin instructing the children as to what is considered appropriate in particular group contexts. Rosenthal (1977) noted that in some cultures it is often more appropriate for children to be seen and not heard, and that this is almost universally signaled by placing the forefinger vertically against the lips and emitting a hiss.

A discussion with Connie concerning normative patterns of silence in certain groups in her culture brought this story to light concerning children.

Connie: And that one I said at the first is very, very common. Like um, half a word is enough for the wise. Like when (what) you give a child, they will tell you half a word (you will tell them half a word). It's what you give the well brought up child. Like, if your child were here, and ah you are in another place (points to a place nearby and then to other side of room) and that is a danger, or it doesn't belong to you, and the child is play with it, I don't mean a year or two, maybe from five or six (years old). And then you do like this (stares hard and knits eyebrows and snaps fingers) and the child should understand straight away she's to leave that place and come to you. Ah, huh, because you have brought up the child to listen and to know what is wrong or right. So, or you just, you can just say, 'Ho' (raised volume) to the child and the child knows, maybe he is to leave there or something. I'm just giving that as example so that...you don't have to say 'oh, leave that, we are in another person's house' (last phrase said with elevated intonations and volume). You don't have to say that. That shows it's just half of what you should have told the child, that you tell the child. And the child within himself just interprets that you are not pleased with his behavior or something.

Researcher: Yes. Fascinating. In a way it's a short bit of verbalizing and then a large piece of silence.

Connie: Yes! Yes! There be a silence with just a little bit of other. That's it!

Researcher: Yes, a small (verbal) signal, a large silence, and they understand.

Connie: Yes! Yes! Ummm.

When asked to remember back to some of her early training about silence, Pat discussed some of her early memories of learning to be silent as a child.

Researcher: So, what can you tell me, Pat, about ah, some other things that you remember that you were taught, ah, anywhere in your life, from a young time to ah, present time, basically, ah, about whether, when you should be silent and when you can speak? It's usually in a group or a classroom situation.

Pat: I think you remember most of it from your childhood. When I was taught to be quiet. It's getting to know when you can make a contribution.

Researcher: Um hum.

Pat: And for a child, I think that's a pity, because you can't be spontaneous when you are young and it's very important. But grown-up doesn't necessarily want any interruptions.

Researcher: Exactly. I'm going to lower this video (of classroom) sound a little bit more here so it doesn't compete with your voice (lowers volume).

Yes, so the grownups don't want any interruptions, and so they sort of decide, don't they, how they...

Pat: Yes, they don't, I'm not sure that they listen to what we say. It is an interruption and I think as a child, you don't view it as that. You view it as a contribution to what is being said. And I think that is

difficult for a child to learn. It's a different, what should I say, it's a different aspect of what you wish to say. And so, that is what you have to learn, I think, first of all. It's almost accepting the role you are to play in life. It's not getting personally involved. And a child tends to get personally involved (laughs). So then it's very important.

Researcher: Yes. Uh huh.

These examples illustrate how normative patterns of silence in certain contexts are established with children. These patterns of communicative interactions may then carry over into communicative choices and meanings in classroom groups.

Women and Men: Gender issue comments were made from several perspectives concerning normative patterns of silence in group settings for men and women. Pat explained her views in this way during the stimulated recall interview:

Researcher: So, what do you think about if your gender makes a difference as far as your choices of speech and silence? Do you think that being a woman makes a difference about when you would choose to be silent or speak in a group setting like this one (points to video with Pat and her classmates in their classroom) or other classrooms that you are in?

Pat: You're up against a, a political issue right now, aren't you?

Researcher: Mmmm.

Pat: And I would think that, ah, I tend to think that there are certain subjects that men, ah avoid. I certainly think that there are certain things that women should not have any opinion on at all. It doesn't come within their jurisdiction.

Researcher: Mmm. What might some of those things be?

Pat: Well, I think men are very... they don't get as emotionally involved as we do, and I think one should respect their judgment on that account, because we can't be men. They tend to see things very

differently. I'm not saying though, they see them right or wrong, but they certainly see things very differently. And...

Researcher: So, in those particular topics or areas, then you would choose to be silent, is that what you are saying?

Pat: Yes! Yes! I mean you can have a negative silence or a positive silence. Or you could make a suggestion, but, and I think the other important thing, I have a daughter who's a lawyer, so, she often says, what's the purpose of your objection, Mom? So I have to be very careful (laughs)!

Researcher: (laughs) Oh, I see.

Pat: Otherwise, what she's really saying is, 'you have to substantiate why you are disagreeing with me.

Researcher: Oh, right! Ah, I'm just going to turn this off (the video of classroom) because it came to the end, and I'll rewind, I'll just put it on...

Pat: I think it's good to know that Connie has been in charge of this class.

Researcher: Ah huh. Yes! Hmm. Yes. Oh, and I know what I wanted to ask you. Can you think of, ah, one or two topics that you think are more men's topics for discussion?

Pat. Fine arts is one of them.

Researcher: Okay, ah huh.

Pat: And I think that, that must be quite a problem, because I think so many of the things are, so many of the everyday things of life have been put at men's door, which should be open for discussion, because I don't think, ah, I don't think that they can get rid of them, any more than they want to take them on!

Connie also spoke about the normative patterns of women's silences in some groups in her culture, along with what she observed in Canada:

Researcher. Yeah, okay. Ah, what about your gender? Does that have any meaning in your choices of silence?

Connie: Oh yes! That reminds me of... ah, here, or back home?

Researcher: Both, I'm interested in both places.

Connie: Okay. Back home, women are seen, more seen than heard. You are not supposed to assert yourself as a woman at home. Either at a gathering of people. You hardly see any woman around. Or if there are women, they keep quiet, because the men are take (make the) decision. The woman, it is the man of the home that takes every decision, that talks more, that does everything that needs to be done. The woman is to just cook and keep house. And if she goes to work, she goes and comes back and cooks and keeps the house. But in most cases, the women are not supposed to assert themselves and speak up, but ah, with the advent of education in most parts of Africa, the women who are educated will come out and assert themselves, but the men don't like it. They don't like it when women are very adamant. But they (women) don't care; they come out in politics and other areas of work, but, but there are not too many. (long pause)

Connie: But here, I don't think there is any,.... because of my gender here..... I think there is so much liberty here and equality, you can talk if you are a woman. Nobody cares what gender you are. I think. Since I have come here, I haven't come across, here, somebody who says, "Oh, so what's all this woman? Woman go!" Ah huh, in my culture, that's, that language is very common you see, "Oh, why it's a not married woman that's lording herself here", you know that type of thing.

Researcher: Lauding or lording?

Connie: Lording over. That means you are the chief over them, you want to be. Ah huh.

Researcher: Oh yes, I understand. So you notice that comment. That happens back in Nigeria, but that doesn't happen here?

Connie: Yes. No it doesn't happen here. At home, in country, people must keep quiet, women mainly keep quiet. We didn't want to talk where there are men. If you read some books written by Africans, you will see that most of the books are talking of men, of certain men. They are all a gathering of men. When men are talking you are behaving like a woman. You know, things like that. We are not expected to talk.

When we (women) talk, they can talk like, "oh, that's a woman talk. It's not a serious talk".

Researcher: So, its not considered to have value?

Connie: No. Except those who are now educated and who are really good at saying they are going to have a voice. They will speak. They have reason. And some are going into professions that, where men are found, so, people are getting to accept, but very slowly.

Even in educated areas, it is still there, that the men would rather not have the women come in and voicing an opinion and talking that.

And if you are married to a real traditionalist, you are not supposed to be, to talk in public, even if visitors come and they are all talking or sharing, and whatever news there is, at times the woman is not supposed to say anything. You just stay there. Except maybe to just stay and watch.

Researcher: So you watch and observe them, but you don't talk.

Connie: Uh huh. You keep quiet, yeah.

On the other hand, Len saw things differently from his cultural upbringing and his discussion about his perspectives went like this:

Researcher: Ah, does your gender have meaning in your choices of silence? Does your gender?

Len: What does mean 'gender'?

Researcher: That means you're a man, not a woman. Because you're a man, do you think you can speak more in your culture or less in your culture? Does your gender, this means you're a man, your gender means you're a man or a woman.

Len: Mmmm. In my head, ladies first, and very deep.

Researcher: In your head, ladies first, and it's very deep (clarifying)?

Len: Yeah.

Researcher: Oh! Okay. So you try to let the ladies speak first and you will be quiet when they speak. And after they will speak?

Len: Yeah.

Researcher: Oh, that's very interesting. Uh huh. And who taught you that? Where did you learn that?

Len: In Hong Kong.

Researcher: In Hong Kong.

Len: I study in Hong Kong, when I young boy.

Researcher: You learned that when you were a young boy?

Len: Yeah. So ladies first, and then I speak.

Researcher Okay. Very interesting. So then, in a classroom, if you were in a classroom, now, oh here you are talking (in the video), you speak very nicely. Let's see if we can get this... (turns volume up on video and we listen for a short while).

Len. No, no no! (meaning he doesn't think he speaks nicely).

Researcher: Yes you do, uh huh. Okay, that's very nice. Ah huh. Okay, so if you are in a group now, in a classroom, ah, do you still think that a woman must speak first, uh, deep in your mind, that the women are allowed to speak first and after you may speak? Or can you speak equal with women in a classroom?...

Len: Oh, sometimes ladies first. But, not every, when, now, you and me, I think no the same, when we talk...

Researcher: Not the same?

Len: Ah, ah, ah, I, ah, you, like a person, not the same. I see you as the men now.

Researcher: Yes. So we are equal and we speak any time?

Len: Yeah.

Researcher: Okay, yeah. So, only certain situations when you see woman must go first. Ah, you learned very young, women first.

Len: Mm.

Researcher: So, ah, different in the classroom or like with you and I now. Yes, we're more equal? You speak, I speak?

Len: Um hum.

Researcher: Um hmm. Okay. Very good...

When asked about gender issues, Dirk explained that things could vary in different situations:

Dirk: Man and woman, oh! Sometimes man very much talk, woman no, silent. Other time, woman talk, man no, silent. School, same, man and woman, sometimes talk, sometimes not.

A long discussion among the participants took place in the first focus group concerning gender issues. An excerpt from that discussion is included here:

Participant. Friday morning no have, have. Friday morning woman's group. I didn't go because I go to class. Ah, Monday to Friday, full time (sighs). One time ah go...

Participant. Oh yes. There was one time I brought them into the women's group. We had something together. When that group was really active. Yes.

(Silence)

Participant. There is something I want to say about being afraid to talk. In my culture, in real deep down culture, not educationed

adulterated African culture, in real African culture, when there is a gathering of women and men, the women, especially the younger women, are afraid to talk when men are talking.

Researcher. Okay, afraid to talk when men are talking. I wonder if it's the same now.

Participant. I don't think, I don't know. When men talk, the women keep quiet, they are supposed (with emphasis) to keep quiet.

Participant. Men talk? Men talk women keep quiet? I, I (motions with hand as though demonstrating that words are coming out of her mouth and that she talks).

Participant. Ah (laughing with all others) she said "I will talk!" (claps her hands with delight).

Participant. The same thing with me! I talk, I don't keep quiet! They say, "Oh, this one is..." (stops talking, waves her hand, and begins laughing).

Participant. (interrupts) In Hong Kong, men and women is same.

Participant. Ah, that's very good. I like that! In Africa man and woman aren't the same. If in modern time...

Participant. Oh, at home the woman is higher than the man.

Participant. Chief! Ohhh!

Participant. At home woman is chief!! (Much laughter from all).

Participant. Ohhh! At home. At our own home the man is higher...

Participant. Home, at home the men sometimes keep quiet. Don't say anymore!

(All participants laughing heartily).

Researcher. Oh I see, okay! And in a group, in a classroom or group, who will speak more, the men, the women, equal?

Participant. Same, but at home, the woman is higher than the man...

Participant. Very good! (claps hands).

Participant. In England, "ladies first, ladies first", (in chiding, sing-song voice) but woman, woman maybe is lower.

Participant. Woman is lower.

With these comments the participants highlighted some of the differences and incongruencies, as well as the implicit and explicit communicative rules, that are often involved in the normative processes of group communicative interactions. They also illustrated the fact that in gender issues, sometimes women had higher communicative status and more opportunities to speak and sometimes men had more status and opportunities.

When participants in classroom contexts do not feel they can equally choose between silence or speech in their communicative processes, but rather that they have silence forced upon them through normative communicative infra-structures, then they may feel that the weight of silence "chokes" them (Lorde, 1984). And, as McCracken and Appleby (1992) wrote, women as well as men have been harmed by the expectations and limitations of gender that are involved in our societies. Yet Sadker and Sadker (1995) argue that at an early and formative age, American classrooms often provide boys with more opportunities for speaking and fail to provide fair opportunities for girls to speak, thus forcing the girls into undesirable, negative classroom silences.

Older Persons: Two people made personal observations about themselves in their aging process and in their choices and meanings of silence in group contexts. Connie, who came from a strong extended family orientation, spoke about her silences as she observed herself as an older person:

Researcher: Does your age affect your silence? As you mature and grow older, do you see yourself changing in amounts that you speak or are silent?

Connie: Oh, yes, as you grow older, and you have seen so-o-o many things, like, you want to keep quiet in many instances. There were things that ah, that were very very, that affected me when I was small,

(far distant gaze in eyes and silence)... and ah, and I would flare up and talk (with emphasis), but these days, because I have seen so-o-o much with age, as I grew up, I, I just keep quiet.

And there are certain behavioral ah things in kids around here, that, such as in my own culture, you would have to talk! Even if it's not your own child, every child is regarded as your child, as a mother, your children are mine, mine are yours, so, if I see a child doing the wrong matter, talk back, and bring the child out of danger, or out of that. But if you do something like that here, so, a little child comes tell you, and parent says, "is that your problem?" So that makes me keep quiet! (Laughing). So I just keep quiet, whatever you see a child doing, you keep quiet. Uh huh. So those things make me keep quiet, uh huh.

Researcher: Yes, I can understand that, and I experience the same thing, too.

Connie: Okay.

Researcher: Before, when I was younger we might say something to other people's children, but now, no, yeah.

Connie: Okay, but now, yeah. So as society goes along, and ah, and expands in technology, then children are also changing.

Researcher: Yeah, uh huh.

Connie: I'm happy to hear that, because people also told me that when they were growing up, the school, the children weren't like this in the school the same. Ah.

Researcher: Yeah. The same for me. I see there has been a big change. And ah, I think many things in change are very good, and I think some things are not good, and we never know how it's going to turn out until it starts to turn out, you know?

Connie: Yeah, that's true.

Researcher: And ah, it is difficult, because we were raised in different times, it's difficult to keep quiet. Very difficult. It takes a lot of energy!

Connie: It is, yeah! Lots of energy! (with emphasis).

Pat reflected on her age and on the meanings of her silences in classroom groups. Silence sometimes meant that as an older person she just couldn't find her way into the discussion.

Researcher: Yes, uh huh. What do you think about... I'm just realizing for me that, with my age, that that changes things too, as far as silence. How do you think, ah, age, for you, affects your meanings or choices of silence and speech?

Pat: Well, you find you don't always know everything!... And I think as you get older you realize that they all want you to be the way they see it. And you can't be. I have to grow too!

Researcher: And therefore, what does that do to you about your choices of silence and speech?

Pat: Well, I think maybe that you don't feel that you fit in, because if you'll notice, that's a time of life, and youngsters are not like us. It is difficult to find the context of richness. And if they are all University people, they are all married into the University group, and I tend to think, Mary Ann, that, ah, ah, your choice of partner, or the choice of ah your learning, whatever it is, that it's a kind of a cocoon that you ah, learn to share with another partner, or another... It, it's a, I don't know what word you would call it, but it's like all being interested in baking, or all in music, or all in.... It's a focal point, and it's a help, isn't it?

Researcher: Um hum. And when we don't have it, it can be a struggle.

Pat: Yes, and people tend to be nervous or something, and say, "you're not saying very much!" Well, no I'm not, but it isn't that I don't have... They're making in a way, I think, the wrong assumption. It isn't that you don't have anything to say, but that what you have to say hasn't found the little niche that you would like to have.

Researcher: Um, that's lovely. I like that. Yes. That's lovely.

At another point in the discussion Pat referred again to her age and how that affected her silence and speech in the classroom.

Pat: ...speech is very important, and to be, to think at a certain age, you aren't quick and concise, and yet in a classroom, you have to be quick and concise (to have the opportunity to speak).

The participants' perceptions of themselves in their aging process as well as their meanings of silence in groups, sheds light on the changes that can occur in silent patterns of the communicative process. It appears that for a variety of reasons, older persons can become a little more entrenched in the communicative processes of relinquishing talk time to others, even when they have something that is of value for contributing.

The normative meanings and choices of silence, as described in this "group-determined" silence section, portray a variety of underlying influences that affect people in their classroom communicative processes. As it is reported by these older persons themselves, there is a variety of situations where normative regulations, both implicit and explicit, govern their choices of silence.

2. Symbolic: Certain types of communicative actions, including silence, may be used in symbolic ways for communicating in groups or crowds. A symbol may be considered a thing or an action that is regarded as suggesting something or representing certain things or having special meaning. Connie elaborated on a communicative symbolic ritual which was used for quieting a group of people or a

crowd, in order to have meaningful silence so that the Chief or leader, or sometimes the teacher, might speak.

Connie: Ah, that varies from culture to culture. There are some people that, there is a call, like a call to a story, or a call to a, there is a call to a story, that shows you want to speak. You just say something like "Toe heo!" (phonetic spelling; and said with volume and emphasis), and everybody answer the response and they keep quiet, and they will speak.

Researcher: Oh, so its a call to...

Connie: Yes, a call to a story. That's a , so that's a story session. But in another session where if its a meeting of the village elders, then there are things that they will say, like, in the Ebo area, the eastern part of Nigeria, that's, they are very well known for the way they talk to get attention or to say that they want to speak. They will say things like, "Amo fiah quin, fiaaa! (Deep voiced emphasis; phonetic spelling)" Then the people answer, "Yah!" They say, "Quin Yah, Quin Yah, Quin Yah! (phonetic spelling)" Three times. And then they keep quiet for a lo-o-ong time and the chief gets up and speaks.

Researcher: Oh, yeah! Uh huh.

Connie: Or, or, or, there are some other areas where it comes from, its more, its a bit longer, like, the ear, they will use the ear. They will say, "my people!" Especially if its a sensational news they have prepared. "Oh! how many ears have you?" They, it becomes a question and answer. "How many ears have you?" You say "two!"

Researcher: Ah huh.

Connie: "And what do you do with them?" "You listen!" (laughs). "Now listen properly!" That's what. Then, silence, and he speak or she speaks.

Researcher: That's beautiful. It sort of brings everybody's mind together.

Connie: Yes. Together. Mmm hum... Or they have different tribes have different ways.

Connie explained another situation which demonstrated the use of symbolic silence which produced an effective communicative interactional process on the part of the teachers who wished more silence from the students.

Connie: In my early secondary, we call them secondary or high school, like um, upwards of grade 8 here, the students can be very noisy in class. But I was taught by the muns, reverend sisters we called them. They would come there and stay in the dining hall. We made noise. They tried to teach us table manners and all that. Don't talk to your neighbors while you are eating, or fork and knife must stay here. And and when they are not around, we just do all the things they say we shouldn't do. But when we are doing that, and if there's noise in the dining hall, somebody just will come and stand (symbolic silence). And the noise goes down. And she stays there for a long time (emphasis). People will hardly have the courage to even chew, when you see her (laughter). So, you keep quiet for a lo-o-o-ong time, and then, and it was really very, very effective, because she would just see all of those who were making noise were handled. And then somehow like we were hypnotized, we were handled.

Researcher: Ah, so, you really learned the power of silence, didn't you, in helping bring silence.

Connie: Yes. Umm hmm.

With these symbolic uses of words and silences, people in particular groups and contexts, who understand the symbols, can become induced into joining the silence, in order for the next steps of the communicative process to transpire appropriately. Cultural and societal teachings have a heavy influence on these symbolic, as well as normative group-determined silences. In the next category, the

perspective shifts to a more intense focus on individual choices and meanings of silence.

C. Individually-Determined / Negotiated Silence

Individually-determined silences are viewed from the perspective of an individual deciding to be silent or to speak in order to enhance the negotiation of an interactive communicative process with another person or persons. As well as interactive silence, there can be non-interactive or more self-oriented silences which are not promoting communicative interaction with others but which may still involve classroom participation and learning.

Negotiated silences come through reaching an agreement or arrangement between people concerning the meanings and uses of silence and speech which are necessary in any given situation for appropriate communication to occur. This negotiation process often occurs through verbal or non-verbal signals. These individually-determined communicative negotiations may be seen as distinctive patterns which are established by individuals for getting through a challenging communicative process. Silence often assumes a powerful position in this colourfully patterned communicative process.

Within the category of individually-determined / negotiated silences, there are two main sub-categories which are discussed, with various themes and meaning-units involved in each. These two main sub-categories are: Interactive silences; and Noninteractive silences.

1. Interactive: To interact in communication is to have two or more people have an effect upon each other. Interactive silences involve the nature of the message sharing process. Within interactive silences, many cognitive and affective decisions, inferences and judgments may be made. One of the main decisions made in interactive silences is the decision of who will have the responsibility of speaking and who will have the responsibility of being silent. This is negotiated and determined by each individual as they take part in a dyad or group. Bruneau (1973) wrote that these decisions may be a function of each member's concept of self, as well as a function of

deciding to reveal or conceal oneself. Communicative interaction is a vital aspect of classroom learning. Within this category of interactive communication and silence, several sub-categories of silences are discussed. These include: socio-contextual; psycholinguistic; sociocultural; psychological; and sociophysical silences.

a. Socio-Contextual: Socio-contextual silences are interactive communicative aspects which are viewed from the perspective of an individual making choices within a given context within a society. Within this socio-contextual framework of interactive communicative silences, various aspects of communication are discussed. These include: 1) status-indicative; 2) situation-indicative (e.g. context-structuring, tension-management, social control, social graces, and listening); and 3) tactical-symbolic/attitudinal (anger, sorrow, respect, disapproval, dislike, indifference, alienation, avoidance, concealment, and image manipulation). These socio-contextual aspects can be intricately involved with the concept of “face” which is tied closely to the need people have to maintain a sense of self-respect in any social interactive situation (Ting-Toomey, 1994). The saving of face may be related to the face or respect of self, or it may be related to the face or respect of the other person who is involved in the communicative interaction. Choices of silence may be involved in these socially sensitive matters.

1) Status-indicative: A status-indicative silence may be used by an individual in a socio-contextual situation in order that a person may interact with another or others so as to establish a superior position. This phenomenon is often occurring in communicative interactions in various societal contexts. It is also often occurring in the classroom with the teacher (though not always) assuming the superior position. In interactions and negotiations for this position on the part of the teacher, the students assume the position of deference, or compliance with another person’s wishes, namely those of the teacher.

Sometimes in interactive status-indicative processes, silence means power. Connie explained this quite clearly when she spoke of her uses of silence when she was in her role as teacher:

Connie: ...There have been cases, as a teacher on call. As a teacher on call, there have been cases when I enter the classroom, knowing that the students know I'm the substitute teacher for the day and they feel it's a holiday time, and they start making noise and doing so many things (laughs). And that is a time I use my silence to subdue them (silence and gaze drifts into distance, as though perhaps to her homeland). I just stay there. If I have been talking I stop talking when they are making noise and throwing paper balls at each other. I just keep quiet. No expression on my face. And I just stay there for a few minutes. And gradually everybody looking at my face and keep quiet. Then I go on. (pause)

In that situation there are some students who are not noisy. They keep quiet. Even if their friends are making noise, and I think it's children who have been well brought up from home and who are very polite... Or when I want attention or silence in the class, I use silence to get it, you know, I do that.

Connie's status-indicative silence facilitated the power or strength she wanted in her communicative negotiation process in her classroom. With her powerful silence, she summoned the silence she wanted from the students in her classroom. Everyone's understanding of her status as teacher helped in the negotiations of these silences. Gilmore (1985) also noted that teacher's silences were sometimes very effective in dealing with students in the interactive communicative process.

2) Situation Indicative: Socio-contextual silences include situation-indicative silences. These involve sets of circumstances where an individually-determined interactive silence is viewed from the perspective of being an indicator of some communicative interaction such as context structuring, social control, social graces or attentive listening.

Silence in context-structuring involves a focus on context or circumstances in which an event occurs, and structuring which is a way in which the communicative

process is organized in that context. In a classroom context a major part of the communicative structuring or organization evolves around the teacher as speaker and the students as listeners. May explained about her silences with teachers in her classrooms and how the communicative context was structured by the teacher, mostly. The focus is less on the listening silence and more on the structure that is created by the speaker and the silent listener. The meaning is embedded mostly in the interactive structure of communication from this perspective.

May: Well, I don't know how to tell you that, how to explain to you, because they (teachers) have to come and did (do or teach) their classes and then we have to listen ...

Researcher: And then you have to...?

May: (Makes a hand motion as though pulling words out of her mouth).

Researcher: Oh, to speak? Okay.

May: Yes. First she speak, and then we have to ah, to, to follow her (speaking).

Researcher: Oh, okay...

Connie's thoughts shed light on this concept of context-structuring when she briefly commented on giving room to others in communication:

Connie: Then, ah, the silence is mainly to listen to others talk. We give room to others to talk or to do things and we'll keep quiet. But ah, some of the time we all talk. The silence at times is when somebody is talking, you know you (must) listen.

In the second focus group one participant noted:

Participant: Silence allows the other person to operate. We must give silence a chance to operate... You can't do two things at once, so (be) silent.

In these examples, through implicit or explicit training, the student allocates time for self as listener while allocating time for teacher, or other, as speaker. At other times, students may negotiate for the role of speaking and teachers will have the role of maintaining the silence in the interactive process. Thus a structural communicative framework is determined within that particular context.

Tension-management is also part of the situation-indicative aspect of interactive silences. Tension or tenseness is a condition when feelings are tense or uneasy. This may be produced in the communicative arena when talk and silence forces are pulling against each other. This often involves the participants' struggle, verbally or nonverbally, to negotiate within the communicative process, as to who will speak and who will be silent. Jan's discussion about the meaning of some of her silences exemplified this tension-management perspective:

Researcher: ...Okay, and ah, let's see. Do you think you are talkative or quiet in classes most of the time?

Jan. Oh, I think I'm more quiet than I am talkative. Yeah, 'cause I do listen.

Researcher: Um hmm. Any other reasons of why you might be more quiet in class?

Jan: Well, other people are talking, so, so keep quiet!(said with high-noted emphasis on 'quiet' and eyebrows raised with eyes enlarged).

There are an awful lot of people who like to say something, so let them do it. And you listen, and you can laugh at them. (chuckles).

Researcher: Okay. What helps you determine when you will be silent and when you will speak?

Jan: I don't know. You don't know what's going to happen 'till you get there. So you really don't know.

Researcher: Um hmm. So you sort of have to wait and see what happens.

Jan: That's right. Yeah. Yeah. I'm sure you agree.

Researcher: Ah huh.

Jan demonstrated that the meanings of her silences can be wrapped up in tension-management as well as listening, as she chooses silent when some individuals are speaking, rather than engaging in the tension of vying for a speaking position at that particular time.

Social control is another situation-indicative aspect of interactive, individually-determined silences. While working in organized contexts or communities such as classroom groups, students develop their individually-determined approaches to social control in communication through choices of speech or silence. During the stimulated recall interview Len noted that his listening silences gave him feelings of power and control.

Researcher: Okay. Can you tell me, when we look at this video (motions towards the television), can you tell me why you were choosing to be silent sometimes? For a long time you were sitting silent. Can you tell me why or what that means?

Len: Ah, I want to (pause), just as I say (pause), I want to listen other person to talk, what they talk about.

Researcher: Yes.

Len: Ah, if I listen I can get more power.

Researcher: If I listen I can get more power. Yes! Oh!

Len: I can, I can, I can know the other people, what they think, what they want, what they, what they, what's their culture, everythings. So listen is very important. To know the people, and you can got the power.

Researcher: Um hmm.

For some people knowledge provides feelings of empowerment and a sense of being in control. In this context, the social control of remaining silent in order to listen facilitated the gathering of the information and the gathering of power. As well, Dumont (1972) noted that Cherokee and Sioux children reported that their silences

also gave them more feelings of social control and power in the classroom. Another aspect to be considered here is that along with these feelings of social control and empowerment through silence, on the part of the students, tension levels can be lowered and thus learning enhanced, through the avoidance of vying for speech.

Social graces are often involved in choices of interactive silences. Having communicative social graces may be seen as having an elegance of manner, or of being able to choose what is right and proper in certain communicative situations. Jan found it very important in her social graces to be silent, listen, and to focus on each word of the speaker. It is a type of social gracefulness which has a subtle elegance in communication that is sometimes appreciated by the 'listened-to'.

Researcher: Um hmm. Okay, and ah, how might you interpret your silence?

Jan: Well, I guess by, by listening and making sure that you, that ah, you hear every word...

Len's social graces came in a different form through the use of his silence in communicative interactions. He noted that when one person wishes to talk, a listening silence is appropriate.

Len. In Hong Kong, ah before the China government had been for a long time, so the Hong Kong had two culture. Like English and China, both, together, so many cultures like Canada.

Researcher: Um hum, interesting, yes. And in those cultures, with the two together, ah, were there some times that you chose to be more silent or more quiet around people, maybe?

Len. Ah, if ah, only talking, only talking, ah, sometimes there is one person wants to talk. Other person like to listen. Yeah.

(And a bit later).

Len: Sometimes I will keep silent. Let the person talk to (the) end (with emphasis on last word).

Researcher: To the end, yes.

Len: I think this is important.

Researcher: Yes, um hmm.

In both situations the silence displays or indicates a social gracefulness which may be seen as having an elegance of manner or perhaps of being right and proper, according to the teachings of the culture or society. In this perspective, the focus remains on the delicate interactions which can make communicative interactions smooth and graceful as opposed to bumpy, abrupt, or dismissive. This differs from the next sub-category of attentive listening, where the focus is from the perspective of the meaning that is derived from the listening itself in the communicative interaction.

Attentive listening is yet another aspect of situation-indicative silences in interactive communication. Listening involves making an effort to really hear something and the giving of attention to what is being listened to. Pat was candid in her descriptions of her attentive listening which included the giving of attention not only to the words and sounds, but also to nonverbal expressions.

Researcher: When you are silent in the group like this (pointing to the video), what would be the meaning of your silence?

Pat: To listen!

Researcher: Um hmm.

Pat: I think very few people listen. And I, I would go on to say that they don't trust that listening.

Researcher: Mmm. Can you explain more about that? Not trusting to listen?

Pat: Well, I think that, often that in our thoughts, ah, you express it, but, but you don't necessarily verbalize it. I don't know if I'm making sense.

Researcher: Oh, can you tell me more? We express it but we don't necessarily verbalize it.

Pat: Well, I gave you an ex, an expression. Well, an example. My husband used to do tapestry, and ah, he was quite upset that he never

found anybody here who did tapestry. But I found somebody in the navy who did. But Jeffrey (husband) had a way of moving his little finger, and one day, we'd had some people to tea, and (when they left) he said, "thank heavens they're gone!" (Pat laughs). I (Pat) said, "Well, I'm very sorry, I got rid of them as soon as I could". And he said, "How did you know?" And I said, "Well, I know that you have a habit of moving your little finger when something is, well, is disturbing you in some way". And he said, "I didn't know that I did that! Now I shall stop it!" And I said, "no, don't do that".

Researcher: Okay, so...

Pat: So, I think if you sit with people long enough you begin to know people. They either talk too much, or they don't communicate, or something.

Researcher: Um hm. And also, sometimes they are expressing, but they are not verbalizing?

Pat: Yes.

Researcher: Uh huh. And so, when you are sitting and being quiet or silent, then you are listening.

Pat: I'm listening.

Researcher: And you're probably watching and ah, listening to the non-verbal too then? Would you say that?

Pat: Oh yes, I would. That interests me really! More than what they say (laughs).

Pat's perceptions of the nonverbal signals, along with her attentive listening to the words, describes what Hall (1990) referred to in Understanding Cultural Differences as "high context" listening. This is where little information is needed through codes such as words because information is transmitted through nonverbal channels. As individuals in various groups get to know each other more, these nonverbal codes contribute much to the attentive listener's perceptions.

Connie had a unique and different way of describing her approach to her attentive listening silences:

Researcher: Okay. How might you interpret your silence? If you were to have to interpret your silence to explain it a little more, what might you say?

Connie: In the classroom? This classroom? (points to video)

Researcher: Yes, this classroom or another one, if you want to think about another time when you were in a classroom. How we might interpret your silence.

Connie: Well, it's um, (pause) one, (pause) it works for me.

Researcher: Oh! It works for you? (requesting more information)

Connie: ...Ah huh. It's a sign of allowing others to speak. To listen. A sign of giving your ears to others, to listen.

Researcher: Oh, I like that, giving your ears.

Connie: (laughing) That's a translation from my language. (more hearty laughter)

Researcher: That's beautiful. Thank you.

This type of attentive listening that is described by Connie is very similar to the Chinese concept of “wun” which means opening the door to the ears. As well, the word listening or the Chinese concept of “ting” means listening attentively to the other person with ears, eyes, and heart. It is an indication that “one person is attending to the other person’s needs...” (Ting-Toomey, 1994, p. 369). Connie and Pat both demonstrated through their attentive listening silences that they were attending to the other person’s needs.

Connie spoke of the direct opposite as well, as she reflected on the changes that her home culture is experiencing.

Connie: And the elders use this (speaking or proverbs) to settle a lot of cases in the villages, back home, because when two parties have misunderstandings, and then you bring them together. The elders are

there to settle this... But when all of this is getting eroded, that's why we have wars... so that's why we have a lot of problems in Africa now. (silence)

People no longer speak. No! People no longer listen when others are speaking. (sadly laughs a little) It's like that.

There are sometimes dramatic dichotomies in how we see things and how we feel about things, depending on what perception we are using at the present moment for viewing the situation. Connie demonstrated this with the sharing of her perceptions of attentive listening, along with her sad realizations that some of this important listening is breaking down in her country and causing many problems.

3) Tactical-symbolic / affect / attitudinal: Within interactive socio-contextual communicative approaches, tactical choices are often being made. These are tactical or planned procedures which are adopted in order to achieve some type of communicative results. During this type of communication, particular silences, words or gestures may be symbolically used to suggest something without being completely direct in the interaction. These communicative aspects are usually filled out or plumped up, like a quilt with a fluffy inner-lining, by the affective and attitudinal aspects of the communicators involved. An attitudinal approach is an individual way of thinking or behaving while communicating, both verbally and nonverbally. Affect has to do with feelings and emotions, especially ones which lead to some type of action. Silence and speech are both communicative actions which may be involved in these various communicative perspectives. Meanings of silences, as explained by the participants of this study, fell into a number of themes in this sub-category. These themes include: anger, sadness, happiness, respect for elders, disapproval, dislike, disagreement; alienation, avoidance, concealment, and image management. Discussion on these themes which emerged from the data now follows.

Anger is an affective or emotional aspect of communicative interaction. It is an emotion that is sometimes present in the classroom. Some participants mentioned this emotion as they discussed the meanings of their silences.

During the stimulated recall session Connie discussed the meaning of her angry silences.

Researcher: Oh, I see. The video (of your class) just came to an end so I'll just rewind it while we are talking. So let's see, ah. We talked about what your silence is used for. What do you think you're trying to express or say with your silence sometimes? What might you be trying to say or express? (Pause). Can you think of anything different than what you have said already?

Connie: Umm. Oh, it can be anger or resignation.

Researcher: Umm. Anger or resignation?

Connie: Yes. Like if you have problem with your husband or so, instead of answering him back or talking and these things, you just keep quiet. And that means for frustration, resignation or anger. At times we feel its better to just keep quiet and let them know you're quiet.

Researcher: Um hum. That could happen in a classroom too, I think maybe, with a teacher that was being unreasonable or something like that, do you think?

Connie: What might happen ...

Researcher: Yes, if you were a student, could you have those same kinds of feelings of anger or resignation, ah,...

Connie: Yes, of course.

Researcher: Ummm. I have felt that also.

Connie: Yes. You feel you are right. And then the teacher just keeps on going, and we wait and feel angry. And just, we try to keep quiet. (with softened voice).

Len discussed two of his communicative choices when he was dealing with the emotion of anger in the classroom.

Researcher: And what is your silence used for or what does it mean? I think we talked about that. You said it's for listening and such. Can you think of anything else?

Len: Um. When I angry (long silence) ummm, two way: sometimes I continue keep quiet...

Researcher: Okay.

Len: You do (the) talk(ing) yourself, I keep quiet.

Researcher: Okay. Umm.

Len: Usually I talk what I think - ra ra ra ra ra. (loud fierce voice)

Researcher: You talk what you think. Okay, uh huh. So two ways to show that you are angry, yeah. One way you are silent and one way you talk about what you think?

Len: Nods (silence)

Researcher: Yes. I understand.

Len: Um hum. But, I think the first is better.

Researcher: You think the first is better, to be silent when you are angry. Uh huh. Okay.

Len: If I keep silent, cannot be... I have to say this ra ra ra ra ra.

Researcher: Arguing? It might be arguing?

Len: Arguing. Ah huh.

Researcher: Okay, I understand.

Len: I, I sometimes use this way for my wife.

Researcher: Yes. I do for my husband sometimes too!

Len: (much laughter)

Researcher: (much laughter) Maybe in the whole world it's like this! (laughing together) Okay. In a classroom, if you feel angry with the teacher or with the other students, will you be silent also?

Len: I also silent.

Researcher: Yes, uh huh. And I am too sometimes.

Len: Ah, I, I keep silent, and sometimes after the class, I will talk with they.

Researcher: Okay, yes, very nice. So then you talk. So then you break silence and you speak, after class. Beautiful. Okay, ah huh.

As well, the topic of anger as a meaning of silence came up in the first focus group. This is some of the dialogue that transpired concerning classroom anger.

Participant: What, when one is angry, when I am very (heavy emphasis on 'very') angry, I always keep silent. Because when I talk, then I start ahh, ahh, ahh (she makes this sound with raised volume and emphasis). Then I keep silence to control myself, to control my anger. When I'm ve-e-ery angry (greater emphasis), then I...(claps hand over mouth while her eyes open wide with an angry, blazing appearance).

Participant: This is good idea.

Participant: You understand?

Participant: I understand.

Along these affective communicative lines, Bruneau (1973) noted that silence may be a language of strong passions or emotions.

Sadness or sorrow was another affective meaning of silence that was reported by some participants. John spoke briefly but demonstrated this emotion with his physical presence also.

John: When you are sad, you keep silent. (stated as his body curled forward and he folded his arms over his chest and allowed his head to drift forward.)

In the first focus group, there was also a discussion about emotions and meanings of silence.

Researcher: And what about when you're sad? If you feel sad. Will you be silent?

Participant: Yes, that's emotional. (silence) Keep silent. (points at own shoulder to indicate speaking about herself)

Participant: When he's sad (points to other participant) he keeps silent.

Participant: Oh! (laughs) That's true, everybody does that, he does do that. When my children speak to me, I don't answer. When I'm sad, like this (demonstrates hanging head and sad face).

Researcher: Ah, okay, yes.

Shearer, Wallbott, and Summerfield (1986) noted as well that silence often accompanies large emotions or attitudes which include sadness.

Happiness, which is feeling or showing pleasure or contentment, was also mentioned as having meaning when a person is silent in class.

Researcher: Since I would like to understand more about your perspectives and viewpoints, can you think of some other underlying reasons for being silent or meanings of silence in a group setting or classroom? Some other ideas or thoughts?

Connie: Oh! In group setting. If we're happy in group, that's one. (we) Can be very silent throughout the day. (very broad smile).

Respect for elders is an attitudinal theme in this sub-category which found its meaning and expression in silence. Connie spoke about respect for elders in the very beginning of her interview.

Researcher: What do you remember from your cultural teachings about the meanings of your silence or when you should be silent?

Connie: In my group setting, it is when I...(pause) I came from my home which is where we had a chief (father was a chief). So the Chief can stay home and there were always people around, meeting or in

deliberation - we call it deliberation. And when my father gave a speech, or when someone older was going to speak, everybody would just shout and say, (with emphasis) 'keep quiet, the chief is speaking!'

That's one. (long pause)

Well, the main thing in my culture is, ah, when an older adult is speaking, you must listen. You have to listen, especially if that adult is far older than you are. You be silent. And then you don't talk until the adult finishes. (shakes index finger to make this point stronger).

Connie spoke further about this respect for elders at a later time in the interview.

Researcher: Can you tell me, why do you choose to be silent at particular times, for example in this group or in any other group or classroom that you are in?

Connie: I think, I am still carrying my culture, (laughs gently) about my culture, indirectly, it still follows me about. When I speak, (and then) an elder person speaks here (points to video), I would like to be silent. And then these people in the group, all of the others are older, so (my silence is) a mark of respect for them. I want them to speak, to be happy... It's because of that culture in me, that we must always listen to elders. In Africa, we listen a lot to our elders. I mean the traditional African setting. Not in the modern town. The urban section is already eroded, culture is getting eroded. But in the real traditional setting, you must listen to the elder when they speak, and you don't respond to their speaking. Let them finish... And ah, but with the seniors, it's a sign of ah, what we call that, submission, no, it's a sign of, it's a sign of respect.

Dirk also conveyed the importance of maintaining some respectful and perhaps symbolic silence when in the presence of elders in his homeland.

Dirk: Respect for elders, much! (nodding head for emphasis) Silence in classroom, and outside classroom, to show respect for elders.

In the second focus group, when the topic of respect for elders was read from the tentative findings list, one participant said:

Participant: In my culture, this is very rampant (respect for elders).

Ishi and Bruneau (1994) as well as Fonua (1997) discussed the attitudinal and symbolic silences that were often used in the demonstrations of respect for elders in various cultures.

On the other hand, Jan reported that she had not had any special cultural training concerning how to relate to elders.

Researcher: ...Is there, do you have any kind of cultural teachings about relating to people that are older than you?

Jan: Well yes, when we're supposed to, yeah, ah, I matter of fact, I got some of my Mother's friends still, and I phone her up every day, 'cause she lives now in Comox. And I got some other ones that are 96, 97, yes, and Pam too, that is a lot older than I am. And ah, it's not hard. I try to treat everybody the same.

Researcher: Um hmm.

Jan. Ever(even if) it's, young, old, whatever.

Researcher: So your teachings were basically about the same for the age of people?

Jan: Yeah, exactly.

Dislike is also an attitudinal aspect of communication which is sometimes portrayed in classroom contexts. May spoke candidly about her silence and feelings of dislike in a classroom context when she had been a teacher in her homeland.

May: ...I am behaving the same (in Canada) as in Cuba. And, well, I was raised, in, very strictly. (makes a fist and shakes it and turns it slightly)

Researcher: Very strictly. I see you are making a fist and turning it. Ah huh.

May: Yes. And sometimes I was raised in, a society, that when I didn't like something, I have to...(claps one fist into other hand) I had to make a silence, no? And try not to show my emotions.

Researcher: Okay. So you squeezed your fist and you said, 'make a silence'. And to not show your emotions, ah huh. Would it be that way in school too, sometimes?

May: Yes. I had a boy who was one of my students, and I had to ah, restrain myself, because I wanted to kill him! (much passion in her voice and raised volume)

May: Ah huh. I see, you wanted to kill him. Ah huh.

May: I wanted do this (motions like grabbing his genitalia and twisting her wrist). (laughs).

Researcher: Yes, uh huh.

During a focus group discussion, two participants briefly mentioned that their silence, at times, could mean disapproval or dislike.

Participant: Next time, if we, if there's some people I don't know or don't like, I am keep silent.

Participant: Yes, if you don't know them or don't like them you keep silent (wrinkles nose and face).

Participant: Yes.

Disapproval was also an attitudinal aspect of silence that was reported. This came in the form of judgments about how much others talked or were silent in class.

Researcher: What do you think about students who talk a lot in class, and what do you think about students who don't talk a lot in class?

Connie: Mmmm. Well, at times, students who talk a lot make a lot of mistakes, occasionally, or maybe only seem... It depends on the talk... But usually if they talk a lot in class (students), they, they are not serious.

May reinforced this type of judgment or disapproval of people talking a lot in class by answering a question very quickly and then elaborating further.

Researcher: What do you think about students who talk a lot in class?

May: I hate them! (laughs)

Researcher: You hate them. (laughs also)

May: That was a, a quick response. (laughs)

Researcher: That was (emphasis) a quick response. (laughs) Yes, ah huh.

May: But I knew that I did that too at times (talked a lot in class).

(laughs). Well, I try, I tried to use psychology, with them (when teaching), and with that, it was very very good for me. (laughs). Using psychology, because I studied psychology to be a teacher. It was part of the curriculum.

Researcher: And so, you would use psychology to help the students be more silent then? When you needed them to be?

May: Yes.

Researcher: I see, um hum. Can you think of what psychology you would use?

May: Well, I, I told them, I explained to them what it means to be a teacher, and to explain to them many things about teaching, and they understood! (laughs).

Researcher: Um hum. Wonderful. Yes.

May: So, I had very good students and very good promotions. From that moment on. Many years. 15 years.

Researcher: 15 years?

May: Yeah, 15 years as a teacher.

Researcher: Um hum. Yes. And what do you think of students who don't talk a lot in class?

May: They are very intelligent.

Researcher: What?

May: They are very intelligent.

Researcher: They are very intelligent. Okay. Ah huh. Okay. So you are thinking that if they are being silent, that most of the time they are very intelligent?

May: Yes.

Researcher: Can you talk a little more about that, or...?

May: Well, ah, they can get the meaning of what you are teaching, and then don't forget it in the exam (laughs).

During the second focus group discussion, one participant noted that there are sometimes judgments across generations and that silence is maintained.

Participant: (There is a) generation judgmental gap, where olders think poorly of youngsters but keep silent, and vice versa.

These types of judgments, on the part of classroom participants themselves, can create underlying motivations for remaining more silent in class. The meaning of silence may then be a dislike of too much talk in class and a concern about the disapproval of themselves, of the teacher, or of other classmates, for not maintaining enough silence in the classroom.

Disagreement was another theme in this sub-category that was discussed by one of the participants. John spoke about respect and disagreement at the same time.

John: Sometimes, if I have respect for someone but don't agree with them, I'll be still, keep silent.

For John there appears to be a struggle here in that the meaning of his silence may be respect for another person. However, if he disagrees with that person on some issue, he may wish to break silence and speak about his opposing views. Yet, due to his respect for this person, he chooses silence. This, then, is an example of where silence may mean disagreement, or it may mean respect, or perhaps it means a person is caught in a struggle about what is the best thing to do in the communicative process at hand. There is not only a disagreement with another person, there is an internal disagreement with the various voices or perspectives that are vying for attention and consideration within a person's own mind. It is a type of cognitive dissonance or a state of tension that occurs when a person holds two cognitive views which are inconsistent (Wade & Tavris, 1996). Silence may mean that a person is grappling with this internal dissonance.

Alienation may also be an aspect of silent behavior in the classroom. Several participants reported that if they felt alienated by other members of a class, or sensed unfriendliness or hostility at times, they would remain silent.

Len: If this group is friendly, friendly, I will talk more. If not friendly, I sometimes will keep quiet.

Dirk continued this theme when he stated:

Dirk: Friends, ah, anything (anybody) can speak. But with no friendship, no friendship (emphasis on 'no'), then keep quiet.

Thus silence may mean that feelings of alienation are being feared or actually experienced in the classroom. As a response to these feelings, silence is used as a tactical approach in the communicative process.

Alienation may be more overtly demonstrated and experienced when a member of a class or group makes fun of another person. A discussion about this took place in first the focus group.

Participant. No, like if I go, if I know somebody, he like to talk too much (about) another people 's, like a joke, joke, like a joke. (for example) Oh, somebody this and this and this (in high pitched frantic voice and pointing at another person). If you know this one in the group, you keep silent.

Participant. You keep silent (same time as above person says it.)

Participant. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher. Because they make fun of you. They make a joke about you. Yes, okay, I understand.

Participant. Oh yes. Let me write it (Goes to chalk board and writes it).

Researcher. Yes, very good.

Participant. Just she say, ear talk.

Researcher. I don't understand ear talk.

Participant. Make fun, make fun, say, "oh look at it ha ha ha!"

Making fun of us.

Chatter among the participants.

Participant. If everybody happy, no problem. But, if do do do do do (in high pitched voice and pointing at others), not good, not funny.

Researcher. Yes, not funny, no, yes, not funny.

Participant. If you know somebody like this, you keep quiet.

Many voices. All agree. Yes.

Participant. Then you are afraid to talk.

This is an example which demonstrates that a student may be silent in order to cope with the alienation and humiliation that may be occurring in a classroom. In a multi-ethnic classroom, there is the possibility that this alienation is due to racism

whereby certain individuals may be alienated due to their cultural or ethnic background, and people may be made fun of due to their ethnic heritage (Olson & Wilczenski, 1995). It is essential that teachers be alerted to all forms of alienation that may be transpiring in the classroom. Silence on the part of some individuals may be communicative clues to some of these occurrences.

Avoidance, concealment and image management were all mentioned as some of the meanings of their silences by participants in this study. Image management means that an individual strives in the communicative process to maintain an image of self in the group which is acceptable and not foolish. Concealment and avoidance are tactical strategies which may assist in this management process. John exemplified the fact that his silence might mean avoidance and concealment with the teacher if he was not sure of an answer when he very briefly said:

John: I'm silent when I don't know the answer.

Along these lines Jones and Gerig (1994) noted that students felt better in class if they avoided speaking when they wanted to conceal that they did not know the correct answer. Maugham (1915) discussed this phenomenon more dramatically when he described the "sick, white apprehension" that a student felt as he sat silently in hopes "to not excite a storm of abuse from the teacher, by giving a wrong answer" (p. 89).

Avoidance and concealment and image management were themes that were displayed in Jan's description of being silent due to not knowing much about the subject matter that was being discussed in class.

Researcher: Mmm. Okay, yes. And since I want to understand silence more from your perspective, perhaps you can, ah, talk a little more about some underlying things or reasons that you remember about silences, what you were taught about silences in class.

Jan: Well, when um, again, my, my own father was a city archivist... and ah, he would always say to us, don't speak until you are, you know (emphasis on know), until you can, ah, somebody... (losses train of thought) ...and he was fun to be with and ah, he, very knowledgeable. And ah, read a lot. (silence) And that is something! (catches train of

though). You have to know the subject too. If you don't know the subject, keep silent! 'Cause somebody else might know it better than you do!

Jan had a lot of passion about this topic of silence for avoidance. Later in the stimulated recall interview the discussion went like this:

Researcher: ...When a teacher asks you a question in class, how do you feel?

Jan: Well, if I know the subject it's fine, but if you don't, well, ah, keep quiet, and hope that they'll, you hope they'll go on to somebody else. (laughing)

Researcher: Yeah (laughing).

Jan: What about you? (laughing).

Researcher: Yeah, the same thing (laughing). That's a good time to be silent.

Jan: Absolutely!!! (with much emphasis). Best time. And, and try and sp... and try and put your head down, yeah, and and get down and, so they can't see you, at all! (laughing)

Researcher: Exactly, try and disappear! (laughing)

Jan: Absolutely! (with much emphasis) No way! (laughing)

Researcher: Oh I love it, that's great, ah huh. And what types of things affect your choices or underlying meanings of silence?

Jan: Well, (sighs), oh there is one thing, is when you don't know the subject. Absolutely, keep quiet, because you don't know it, and somebody else knows it far better than you do, so... Yes. Don't speak!

Researcher: Okay.

Jan: Yeah, 'cause you're going to make a stupid ah, mess of it anyway! (laughs).

As well, Jan noted another meaning of silence, which was to avoid saying the wrong thing.

Jan: Well, actually, what ah, we got messages from, don't talk very much because ah, we might be saying the wrong things.

These are some tactical-symbolic, affective and attitudinal aspects of silence in interactive communication which were shared by the participants of this study. They are individually-determined silences that occur within socio-contextual realms. They appear to have deep meaning for these older persons as they deal with the complexities of communicating in multi-ethnic classrooms.

b. Psycholinguistic silences in interactive communication are embodied within individually-determined / negotiated silences. From this communicative perspective we examine the linguistic aspects which involve the study of language and its structure, development, and use, within the context of psychological meanings of the mind and its workings, choices, and thinking, concerning silence themes. This focus is inclusive of internal talk or mental discussions within one's mind. The silence themes in this sub-category include: silent prayer, reasoning, thinking, language problems, wait time and turns or turn-taking. Bruneau (1973) noted that psycholinguistic silences are constantly being used in interpersonal communicative interactions.

Silent prayers or remaining silent while others are praying were aspects of silence which were discussed by one participant.

John: Sometimes there is a moment of silence in class to honour someone who died. (silence) And silent prayer.

Psycholinguistic silence from this viewpoint is interactive in the sense that the students have some understanding of the central meaning of their unified group silence. As well, they may be unifying their minds in thinking about the issue at hand, either through some mental process of each person's choice, or through silent prayer, which will have its own individualized perspective with each person involved, yet still be unified on the topic. This psycholinguistic communicative activity may involve

internal talk, language, thinking, or discussion in each person's mind. Yet with the individual diversity within silent prayer or group thinking, there is the interactive psycholinguistic unity which has been initiated through one central group focus.

Reasoning is a process of attempting to understand, to draw conclusions, to make some good judgments, or to decide what might be right, practical, or possible. Communicating in a multi-ethnic classroom can require a lot of reasoning energy. Connie explained a little about reasoning and about teaching in a multi-ethnic classroom:

Connie: ...Umm, at times um, silence (means) trying to reason or figure out what next to do. If we come across a very difficult thing. Like at the beginning many of them (in class) were not able to communicate. I had a lot of silence. So. I would keep quiet, like, time to reason, or so. (silence) How to go about making them happy.

Thinking was also described as a meaning for silence in the classroom. Thinking is a type of moving or exercising of the mind in order to form connections of various ideas. Jan observed herself in the video during the stimulated recall session, and when asked about the meaning of her silence at a particular time, she said:

Jan: And ah, that's what I was doing, thinking!... 'Cause, 'cause, a person's (she points in at the video to others in the group who were talking) got different ideas. And then you can go through it in your own head and, and think! (strong emphasis on 'think') That's why I was being silent.

(A little later in the interview) Jan: I guess for myself, my silence is so I can think and, and, ah, take things in that ah, when people are talking to me.

May thought for a long time before she made a comment that dealt with her thinking silences.

May: Oh, sometimes we need to be in complete silence to think.

(laughs)

Researcher: Um hmm, I agree.

May: But other things I want to emphasize, you have to concentrate your thoughts. (extra force on 'concentrate')

Researcher: Yes... emphasize and concentrate. Anything else you can think of?

May: Not really, because I'm now, not prepared for all this! (laughs)

John waved his hands in circles near his head while stating simply about his thinking silence:

John: Deep thought. Brain is full of what I've learned. Need to think. (smiling and nodding head as finishes).

Through these contributions, the participants demonstrated that silences can have important meaning in the process of allowing time for thinking and reasoning in the classroom.

Language problems were discussed by several of the participants as they contemplated the meanings of their silences. Silence sometimes meant that a participant did not understand what was being said by others, therefore they were not comfortable about speaking. Len spoke with discouragement in his voice during part of the interview:

Len: And... (clears throat), my English not so good.

Researcher: Okay.

Len: I, I cannot talk more. And, and, I, many things too bad. So sometimes I cannot understand what the peo, what the person talk about.

Researcher: Uh huh. Oh because you are listening... Or not understanding?

Len: Uh huh.

Researcher: You cannot understand? Okay.

Len: Uh huh. So I did not understand what they talk. So I can not (know) what to talk about.

Researcher: Okay. So you can not ... so you don't know what to say to talk about?

Len: Uh huh.

Researcher: Because you didn't understand?

Len: Uh huh. If this discussion is Chinese, I will talk many more. (emphasis on 'many more')

Researcher: Okay. Yes. Because you have more of the language. Yes that makes sense. Okay.

Len: Uh huh (nods)... So sometimes I did not understand, so I keep quiet (whispers last part).

John spoke about not understanding the language and the meanings of his silence when he said:

John: If there is no communication, (because) I don't understand someone, I keep silent.

(And later) John: When not understand language or ideas (I'm silent).

This topic came up in the first focus group as well when participants were asked to speak about the meanings of their silence.

Participant: When you don't talk, why?

Participant: Um, when not understand.

Participant: Oh! If you don't understand, then you keep silent. Um hmm.

Researcher: Ah! Um hmm. Yes.

Another participant noted a similar, yet different struggle with the language during the focus group discussion, when asked about another meaning of silence or reason for silence:

Participant: You don't know what to say (you're silent). And when you don't know the English..

Pat also spoke briefly about this situation when she commented about the struggle with language problems.

Pat: And so, it's, it's very difficult, because if you haven't the language to impart the knowledge, it has an effect on you!

Silence from these two language perspectives, then, means that a person is lacking the confidence and the communicative competence with the language and is therefore not clear as to how they should make meaning from what has been said to them by others. As well, they are unclear as to what they should say or how they should say it, if they choose to break their silence and speak. Silence, then is the chosen interactive communicative response.

A similar aspect of language problems was explained by Len as well. He discussed the difficulty of not being understood by others when he did finally choose to speak.

Researcher: Sometimes, in the class, when you are silent, what else, what other reasons are you silent? Are you quiet?

Len: (Clears his throat). When they not understand.

Researcher: Yes, okay...

Len: In the classroom the teacher say I'm very accent (with sadness showing on face).

Researcher: I'm very accent?

Len: Yeah.

Researcher: Oh! You have an accent?

Len: Yeah.

Connie reinforced this struggle of not being understood when she explained that some people have many problems with learning a new language.

Connie: Also, I had some languages. Some languages so dominate the speaker that behind it... (it's) tough to speak other language. ...I've met somebody whom I've tried to teaching English, but it was very tough because within the language, it's so, (with smile in voice) I don't know how to describe it, so dominating, domineering, (laughs and giggles through next part) that other languages have no time on their own tongue. So...

The psycholinguistic features of these communicative struggles held much power and meaning for these participants in their decisions concerning choices of speech and silence in classroom communication. Feelings of communicative incompetence impeded their verbal interactions and nudged them into the not-necessarily pleasurable choice of silence. These linguistic problems are heavy weights which affect the mind and its workings as an individual negotiates within the classroom in an interactive communicative process.

Wait time, the postponing of the action of speech for some particular reason, was also mentioned by participants in this study. In communicative interactions, wait time is allocated by the listener when another person has ceased speaking, in order to maintain silence for an individually determined, particular reason. Connie described two differences in this theme when she discussed the meanings of silence in the wait time of her communication.

Connie: After someone else has finished, it depends on what that person said. If it's something provoking, you wouldn't wait. If it's something that provokes, you wouldn't have a long silence.. But if that speaker is a good one... how do I translate... oh, everybody will keep quiet and ruminate about that for a while... before the next person speaks.

Silence then is a psycholinguistic respectfulness which is portrayed through the waiting time of silence that is maintained before other speakers interrupt the listeners' ruminations of thought. This respectful wait time may also be viewed as a response latency which is "the time it takes a person to begin speaking after another stops" (Richmond, McCroskey, & Payne, 1991, p. 104). However, Connie noted that if something was provoking, then there was not respectful wait time and a person will jump in and speak immediately.

In the respectful theme, however, John also mentioned the cultural communicative need for waiting before speaking.

*John: When waiting a time (after someone speaks), respect for others.
Silent, then speak after time.*

Dirk also spoke about this respectful waiting time:

Dirk: Others talk, I wait. Silent, silent, silent (in a rhythm), then I talk. They see I think, (about) what they talk. Maybe I say h-m-m-m (demonstrates with nodding head, looking down at floor) when thinking, not words. Thinking, silent, silence, then talk.

Along with his respectful, waiting silences, Dirk also provided some backchanneling with his h-m-m-ms. These are cues that are given to the speaker without requesting the floor for speaking (Burgoon, Buller, and Woodall, 1989).

Pat complained a little about her timing and wait time in communication in classroom settings.

Pat: And I think that is possibly why, um, speech is very important, and to be, to think at a certain age, you aren't quick and concise, and yet in a classroom, you have to be quick and concise, because of what, 30 to 35 pupils, and not everybody (pause) has the opportunity to speak!

Along these same lines Hatch (1992) wrote that these types of varying communicative constraints and customs are important aspects to be considered.

Turns or turn-taking can be slippery business, especially in intercultural communicative interactions. Each culture, each society and each classroom context may have its implicit as well as its explicit linguistic rules about how and when and where someone can take their turn to speak. Pat reflected back on some of her early memories of turn-taking in a group. She and her siblings were expected to be silent except for the time when it was their turn to speak.

Pat: And we were each allowed to have our turn at speaking. And my brother was the youngest, and his turn never came quickly, so I often remember him saying, 'Can I have my speak now?' (laughter with the last phrase).

Pat's reflections bring forth the importance of appropriate time and space for everyone to have their turns at speaking.

As well, turn-taking signs and signals are vital in communication and often they are not noticed or understood, especially in a multi-ethnic group. Therefore confusion may prevail concerning when a person can "have their speak" or take their turn in speaking. Along these lines, Pat mentioned:

Pat: The ah, oh I think the teacher can just see for two or three rows, and not the rest, and so... that kind of thing has a lot to do with whether you speak! For sometimes, ah, you don't speak, and it (muffled words)... I also think they (teachers) are not aware of the manner, the mannerisms you have!

Silence then, may mean that a person, perhaps the teacher, did not understand the appropriate cues or mannerisms which were given to signal their time for breaking out of their silence and having their turn to speak. Richmond, McCroskey and Payne (1991) noted that there are many types of turn-taking cues which communicators must learn to understand in order to negotiate their turns effectively in the interactive

communicative process. (Turn-taking issues are discussed further in category “D” - Signs and signals for breaking silence.) Turn-taking has cultural, societal, and contextual rules which require finely tuned linguistic perceptions in order for participants to communicate effectively (Brown, 1994). Umiker-Sebeok (1980) noted the importance of more clarity about “what goes on between turns - both the signs of silence and silent signs” (p. 313) in order to enhance communication. When communicative participants are not aware of these communicative cues or signs, they may feel locked out of conversation (Tannen, 1984). These intricate psycholinguistic communicative dynamics, with their complex, illusive, web-like patterns, create large chasms where unhappy silence may dwell. With more appropriate understandings about the meanings of silences, as well as signals for turn-taking, students in multi-ethnic classrooms may be prevented from plummeting into unhappy depths of silence that are unwanted, unsatisfying, and incompatible with communicative competence and a rich learning process. The data from these participants make evident the fact that turn-taking, as well as wait times, language problems, reasoning, and thinking, are individually-determined, psycholinguistic silences which profoundly affect language considerations and thinking processes within interactive communication in multi-ethnic classroom contexts.

c. Sociocultural silences are also interactive silences which are embodied within the category of individually-determined / negotiated silences. In this sub-category silence is viewed from the combined perspectives of socio, which according to Hawkins (1988) means, society, participation, or organization within a group due to common interest, along with the perspective of cultural, which involves habits, skills, customs and civilization of a particular people. These silences are related to particular manners in which societal and cultural rules dictate that individuals refrain from speech and remain silent due to some form of societal or cultural reasoning (Bruneau, 1973). Some of the silence themes of this sub-category that emerged during the analysis of the data include: cultural, societal, manners, and politeness silences.

New cultural and societal influences may affect communicative choices. Culture shock, which is a state of dis-ease (Barna, 1994, p. 344) and which relates to

the struggle of living in a new and differing culture, was a phenomenon which was not named as such by the participants, but which was described by them as they discussed their struggles with silence and speech in a new culture and society. Silence assumed a larger part of the communicative patterns of these people's lives as they dealt with cultural differences that made them uneasy about how or when they could speak, and in what mannerisms. Pat spoke with a sadness in her voice when she talked about her silences while she was in a new culture.

Pat: ... but ah, I think you do change when you go somewhere.

Researcher: Oh, I think so too. And I think culture does affect our roles that way...

Pat: Oh yes. Ah huh. Yes, because, it really, I don't think you, you take into account how much affect you have on somebody else and how much they affect you. I think we never know.

Researcher: I think so too. We never know.

Pat: We're not necessarily able to, ah, control the events that follow.

Researcher: Um hmm. Yes, ah huh.

Pat: And in a way, I don't think anybody wishes to appear childish, and yet many times, we are, because we don't know.

Researcher: Um humm. And I think being in a different culture where we don't know the language makes us feel... I feel like I'm about three or four years old when I go to another culture and I don't know their language.

Pat: ...You know you're lost basically. You feel lost. It's not a very happy experience at that time. I don't know how we get 'round that.

Researcher: Oh no. I don't either, but it's a tricky one... (later) what do you think you are trying to say with your silence?

Pat: ... it could be nervousness if you're in a foreign country. You're waiting for, what should I say, some expression that will allow you to participate, but ah, sometimes that never comes, does it?

Researcher: Yes, uh huh, that's right.

Thus, silence can predominate in the interactive communicative process of the person who is struggling with the shock of being in another culture and not knowing how to appropriately participate.

John commented about being new or getting started in a different culture and his communicative response.

John: When you start in a new country, you don't know anything. You don't talk!

Connie also discussed her silences that evolved as she grappled with living in a different cultural and societal context.

Connie: There are certain things that also keep me quiet here, (long pause), like um, from the place where I came from, it's um people are very warm and loud in the public place. If I see you as my friend, I just shout, 'Mary Ann, come, wait!' (in shouting voice)' And the next person saying this (says this also), and so, the loud voices and nobody cares... But here, I tried things like that when I came, like things like (in shouting voice) 'Oh! Hi!' Then the cold response will make me just recoil. (laughs). And then there is in the bus. When we are in the bus in my country, everybody will talk. Some, you don't know them, you just came into the bus stop, and then, somebody raises a topic... and everybody will talk. And then you go for here, when you enter the bus you are forced to just keep quiet-e-e-et. So, and that's... because out of not knowing what the behavior, I'm forced to keep silent most of the time. Even in a class situation here.

Dirk briefly noted that being in a group in a new culture meant that he would remain silent in order to let others from that culture speak first.

Dirk: In group in Canada, all others speak first - all Canadians first, then maybe I speak. Better if teacher or leader ask. Then I speak. This is proper...

This was a type of cultural or societal politeness that Dirk imagined was important in order to be communicatively appropriate. If every Canadian (as he envisioned Canadians) had not spoken in the group, Dirk would be confined to his silence in order to not break the cultural rules as he understood them.

In order to have a deeper understanding about the meanings of silence, the participants were asked about where or how, in their culture or society, they learned to be silent. Len, after exploring numerous possibilities about his early teachings about silence, finally said:

Dirk: Oh, no, no, no! I don't know where I learn (about silence in my culture). I think many together let me have this culture.

Len was aware of the complexity of the network of people who had influenced him in his cultural and societal upbringing concerning the choices and meanings of his silences.

Manners and politeness were socio-cultural themes that appeared several times in the data. Manners are viewed as social and cultural behavior and politeness, along with social correctness or refinement. In this study silence sometimes meant that a participant was being polite and demonstrating good manners by being silent. Jan found it essential to remain silent if someone else was speaking.

Jan: If there is nobody speaking, then you can (speak), but you have to listen and don't interrupt or anything. That's what I'm trying to say. Don't interrupt the person that's speaking, to talk to them. I know a lot of people who do that, and it's rude! (a tone of disgust in her voice).

Connie's cultural teachings about meanings of silence and politeness served as a patterned transparency which she overlaid on her visions of classroom teachings about silence. She expressed her silence - politeness connection this way:

Connie: ...there are some students who are not noisy. They keep silent... I think it is children who have been well brought up from home who are silent and very polite.

In this situation, silence was linked with politeness in a bond that would be difficult to tear apart, just like it would be difficult to tear apart two delicate pieces of cloth which had been heavily and tightly sewn together with tough, durable thread. When someone is trained to be silent in order to be polite, then when is it appropriate to make a contribution through speech without appearing impolite? Are the cultural or societal 'politeness' rules being broken with each word or sentence spoken? When we choose to say something, is it important enough to risk the fact that we are now speaking in order to contribute, yet we may be demonstrating impoliteness or poor manners through this almost radical communicative choice of breaking our silence and choosing speech? These are the types of struggles that participant's comments bring forward to the light. These types of meanings of silence warrant careful consideration in interactive communication.

On the other hand, Len spoke of politeness and silence from a different perspective.

Len: Ah, I think (to) keep quiet, (to) keep silent, may be polite. But, when, when you talk, you must talk. Sometimes keep silent, but when teacher want(s) you to talk, you must talk. I think this is the, ah, polite.

Len's comments illuminated the idea that silence, as well as speech (when one is asked), are important aspects in the struggle for demonstrating appropriate manners and refined politeness in a given culture or society.

Much time and energy are consumed within these communicative struggles as members of a multi-ethnic group of students strive to communicate appropriately in a new culture and society. Cultural rules for manners and politeness in silence and

speech may differ dramatically from the home-land culture to the new culture. As Connie expressed so aptly:

Connie: I am still carrying my culture, (laughs gently) about, indirectly. It still follows me about!

The sociocultural implications of these differing aspects of culture, ethnicity, and society can force a student into silences, sometimes merely to grant their minds and spirits the time necessary for pondering how they are to take their appropriate places in this new context. As well, they must struggle with how they are to make the appropriate choices between silence and speech, in order to be heard, be polite, and to not offend in the various sociocultural contexts they find themselves in, including classroom contexts.

d. Psychological: From the psychological perspective of meanings of silence within interactive, individually-determined / negotiated silences, various aspects which affect the mind and its workings (as deduced by some communicative behaviors in this study) are discussed. Silence themes that emerged from the data in this sub-category include aspects of: depression and loneliness, shyness, and fear.

Depression and Loneliness: Some of the people in this study experienced loneliness, even though they were with others. Even when there is an opportunity for verbal communicative interaction in a classroom, some people may not feel like engaging and may remain silent due to depression and loneliness.

Silence and loneliness were discussed by Pat in the stimulated recall interview session as she observed herself in a silent mode for some time on the video while she sat with her classmates who were engaged in discussion.

Pat: But, the basis, that's why I often say I'm quiet. The basis essentially is lonely (with emphasis on 'lonely')... Well, I think maybe that you don't feel that you fit in, because if you'll notice, that's a time of life, and youngsters are not like us. It is difficult to find the context of richness.

During the focus group discussion, two participants had this exchange about loneliness, depression, and silence:

Participant: Um, yeah, not job, no friends.

Participant: That's true. Depression.

Participant: Lonely.

Participant. Lonely, yes, lonely. We are lonely.

Loneliness, then, had a powerful psychological effect of silencing some participants at some times in class, even when there was ample opportunity to speak.

Shyness is a type of timidity where there is a lacking of self-confidence in the presence of others and a desire to avoid observation by others (Hawkins, 1988).

Some participants of this study noted that their silences at times could mean shyness on their parts in particular situations in the classroom. John stated simply:

John: When you are a shy person, you are silent.

Connie's shyness was explained in terms of feeling unsure of herself in certain classroom contexts, and silence was sometimes her communicative response to this feeling.

Connie: If I'm very sure of myself, I'll be happy and I will answer or speak. Or if I'm not sure of myself, I'll keep quiet... When you are not sure of yourself you keep silent in the class.

Later Connie had more reflections on her meanings and choices of silence.

Researcher: Um hmm. Okay. And what types of things affect your choices of silence?

Connie: (silent for a long time while thinking about the question).

Does silence have any choice? In the first part of silence, I think okay, it might be what I said about anger... and when you want to resign yourself... and when you are afraid...and when you are not sure of yourself, you keep silent. Those are the choices.

As well, silence can mean shyness or unsureness which may relate to the particular individuals in the group. Jan tried to explain her shyness and the shyness of others in a new group or classroom when she said:

Jan: Or, if you don't know the person sitting beside you, (for example) I don't know you (points to someone), and you don't know her (points to another person), everybody keeps silent. You just, you know...(keep silent).

Through these comments it is explained that not knowing various people in the classroom can magnify the shyness or unsureness of some participants and cause them to be more silent. Once a person knows others in the group, shyness often subsides in varying degrees. Along these same lines Scollon and Scollon (1981) reported that even though Athabaskan and Apache communities had long silence periods in their interactive communications, they did talk more once they knew the other persons very well. Shyness and silence may be related to many of the psychologically complex issues which are involved with a cultural exchange, culture shock, and / or sociocultural communicative adaptations.

Fear is an uneasy psychological sense of anxiety, agitation, timidity, or concern about the nearness of danger or pain (McKechnie, 1962). This fear can be very strong in the interactive communicative process and can cause an individual to choose silence rather than speech in order to deal most effectively with that fear in the present context. Connie discussed silence and fear and explained:

Connie: If you keep talking you might be singled out and punished.

Her silence meant then, that she was afraid of the danger of some type of punishment from someone if she talked when it was not appropriate. Punishment in classrooms often comes in the form of humiliation which is directed towards the person who has been judged as not having chosen the appropriate time or mode of

communication. However, there are other types of punishment that cause fear in the classroom.

Fear in the classroom of older adults can be strongly connected to a fear that began to develop in an early stage of a person's life. The fear may be carried within a type of mental program (Hofstede, 1984) that continues to play itself out even in later years of a person's life. Connie mentioned her early memories of fear and silence in her classroom.

Connie: ... there is the fear that if you keep talking, you might be singled out and punished. ...But if you do anything against the school or the teacher, you can be warned, and the second time you'll be beaten. And because of that, many people fear to be hit by the cane, so they keep quiet. That makes them keep quiet! (eyes enlarging and head nodding vigorously).

(And later) Connie: ... But some children keep quiet out of fear. The country keeps quiet, the people keep quiet out of fear. From oppression.

(And later, in focus group) Connie: ...You're afraid to talk your mind, what's in your mind. You don't want to talk. Keep quiet.

Connie chose silence in order to censor her comments due to her uneasy fear that something bad or painful might happen to her. These early childhood mental programs of fear can be carried into senior years as well.

Jan remembered some of her early childhood connections with fear and silence when she described relating to some of her relatives.

Jan: ...but to go to my Grandmother's place, yes! She was very, very English. We were more scared of her, more actually I suppose than we should have been. And my Aunt too, because they were very stiff...

Researcher: More silent around them then?

Jan: Very!. Yeah. We were scared! Yeah.

Researcher: Okay, so that can cause silence?

Jan: Very, very, very much so. Yes.

May also carried early childhood classroom fears into her adult classroom reflections. As she looked back to her school in her homeland she noted:

May: When I didn't like something, I had to...(claps one fist into the other) I had to make a silence!

In another way, Pat's silence due to fear was quite different. It was a fear of criticism due to lack of ability to express herself well enough. She had noticed with herself and others that when they came from another part of the world they had memories of their homeland and it was very difficult to describe these memories and images. As well, there was no assurance that what they shared about their customs back home would be acceptable.

Pat: ...You have memories of it that you can't explain; and you don't want to be criticized. It's that.(decisive intonations) But that's you, isn't it?! (much expression in last words)

Fear of criticism, or the finding of faults by someone else in the group, had strong meaning in Pat's silences in the classroom, even though she seemed to want to share those memories because they were a real part of her 'self'.

From a different perspective, May observed herself in some of her silences and noted that the meaning of her silence might be that she was afraid about hurting the feelings of others. She explained quite briefly:

May: And I don't want to hurt people.

Due to this fear, May sometimes chose silence in order to avoid hurting others, which ultimately caused her pain as well.

The fear of not being valued as a significant person in a multi-ethnic classroom was shared by Pat, as she reflected on being from a different country that sometimes had different values. This fear was stronger in a new culture as well as in a new

situation where she was not sure of who was valued for what. She feared that what she contributed through speech might not be valued by the teacher or by others, and because of this fear, it was easier to remain silent rather than to share.

Pat: I don't think anybody wishes to appear childish, yet many times we are...the situation is different and you haven't had that situation at home! ...and you want to be a success... But how do you know? You don't know! (with much emphasis).

This type of silence and this type of fear can sometimes sprout from seeds of racism or racial prejudice whereby certain individuals may be valued more due to their cultural or ethnic background and others may be valued less due to theirs. Teachers and students alike may consciously or unconsciously fall into the trap of demonstrating more feelings of value towards persons of the dominant culture and less towards persons of non-dominant cultures. Tensions, fears, and negative attitudes arise in this type of atmosphere (Olson & Wilczenski, 1995).

At one point Pat's perception of the fear of lack of value seemed to be related to herself as an older person. She explained it like this:

Pat: ...I think this is where a great deal of attention should be given to elders, that whatever you want to say should be really valued, because you're at that age... well, you'll never be the same again, and so its very important for them to hear.

This type of fear can be borne out of an underlying societal phenomenon of ageism, which is a notion that people cease to be valued persons due to having lived long or having become older or elder individuals (Walden, 1992).

This sub-category has shown that depression, loneliness, shyness and fear are powerful and sometimes enduring psychological messages that are carried as mental patterns with older students into their multi-ethnic classes. These messages give meaning to the choices of silence which are incorporated into these individuals' intercultural communicative classroom interactions.

e. Sociophysical: In the sociophysical perspective of interactive communication within the realms of individually-determined negotiated silences, some social aspects of organized groups are considered, along with a focus on some physical aspects of the body. These aspects were reported as having an influence on the communicative interactions of some participants within classroom contexts. In this study, these sociophysical aspects include: tiredness, worried so not feeling well, and feeling physically unwell.

John connected some of his meanings of silence in classroom contexts to his physical state when he listed these things which influenced his communicative patterns and explained how he related to these.

John: Silent because tired. Worried, so not (feeling) well. Not feeling well. (long silence) You are there but you are not.

With this last sentence, John expressed a withdrawing or a retreat from speech, which seemed to help him in his dealing with the social demands of being in a classroom, as well as coping with feeling tired, worried or unwell.

Along similar lines, feeling physically tired which led to falling asleep was a phenomenon that influenced communicative processes and silent patterns in the classroom for Pat.

Pat: When tired, I usually fall asleep!

Researcher: Oh, ah huh. (laughs)

Pat: (with a smile in voice) That settles it! (laughs)

Researcher: (laughs) Oh, okay. In your sleepiness, then you're quiet or silent. Yes. So...

According to these participants, worry and tiredness can find their way into the physical manifestations and play themselves out in communicative forms. These physical manifestations, along with the mental worry, take energy which might otherwise be channeled into more interactive communication through speech. Silence,

then, may mean that a person just doesn't feel ready, both physically and socially, to channel energy reserves into speech.

Various aspects and issues concerning interactive communicative silences have been discussed in this section. These silences differ from noninteractive communicative silences which are now discussed.

2. Noninteractive: Noninteractive silences are silences which may involve pondering, considering, deep thinking, planning, or contemplation. With noninteractive silences people are not being directly involved with having a communicative effect upon one another, as they do with interactive silences. Rather, an individual's focus in noninteractive silences is more inward, rather than outward. This differs from interactive communicative silences where individuals are choosing silence and ascribing meaning to their silences while engaging in interactive communication with others in the classroom. With noninteractive silences, meaning comes from the engagement within. Classroom individuals may switch back and forth from interactive to noninteractive silences without anyone else or even themselves knowing about it. It is a switching from a readiness to engage with others, either verbally or nonverbally, to a readiness to engage at a deep contemplative level with one's own thoughts, which may be inspired by what is happening in the classroom. The sub-categories that are included in this category are: contemplative, meditative, and reflective.

a. Contemplative / meditative: To be contemplative is to be thoughtful, to ponder, and to observe or regard something more deeply. To be meditative is to think deeply and quietly or to plan in one's mind (Hawkins, 1988). These can sometimes be connected with day-dreaming states of mind where far-reaching possibilities are considered and many things are imagined, invented, and sometimes done quiet easily. Contemplative and meditative silence "is a great source of strength" (Heider, 1988, p. 9) These are noninteractive types of silences where a person chooses to abstain from speaking and remain silent in order to go inward.

Pat discussed some of her contemplative and meditative silences which she described as her personal dreams.

Pat: Yep. Because I don't know whether you agree with me, but, I think everybody has what I call their own personal dream.

Researcher: Um, um hum.

Pat: Ah, and in many cases they wished them to remain that way. It's a kind of comfort to them...

Researcher: Yes. And so, are you saying with our own personal dreams that, some of those, you don't speak about, that you are silent about those, or...?

Pat: Oh yes, I don't think... that, that, well you feel that by verbalizing it, you would lose.

Researcher: Um hum. Oh I think that's lovely. Yes. What might you lose? Can you talk more about that?

Pat: Well, I think, ah, I don't know, but I think lots, because, for instance, here he has (points to video of classmate), I think he has something inside too, but, ah, but when you come from, well, anywhere in the world, ah, you have memories of it...

Researcher: Yes, um hmm.

Pat: Well, I think that's a great comfort to you.

Researcher: Um hmm. The living in those memories? And...

Pat: Yes! Well, yes, I think, don't you?

Researcher: Yes, I do too. And sometimes trying to verbalize them makes them smaller or something. It's difficult to capture them in words.

Pat: Yes. Well, sometimes you can't!

Researcher: No, that's right. Yes. Um hmm. Oh, I think that's lovely.

Pat's comments show that silence can mean that a person wishes to keep her contemplative thoughts and dreams to herself. As well, individuals can take some comfort from these unshared, noninteractive silences. There is also the message of the

fear of losing something by trying to verbalize those special, personal, contemplative thoughts. Because of these perceptions, we see that contemplative or day-dreaming silence has an important role in the classroom. Through Pat's comments it is possible to see that some students in classroom contexts may be grappling with various things, and may fear losing something from their comforting contemplative thoughts and dreams, if they attempt to verbalize those contemplation's. Therefore they are more comfortable and content with their noninteractive, contemplative silences.

b. Reflective. Reflective silences were considered to be meaningful aspects of classroom participation by several individuals in this study. To be reflective is to fix the mind on some subject or concern, or to reflect on multiple variables which may surround a problem or situation (Lieberman, 1994). We might also see reflection as a throwing back of light onto subjects or events to which we want to give more depth of understanding, attention, and focus.

Pat discussed the value of taking the time to enjoy and appreciate various aspects of her life, now that she is much older. She explained that her reflective silences were becoming increasingly more meaningful to her, whether they unfolded in the classroom or in other contexts of her daily life.

Pat: And I think it reaches a stage in life, where really you really just want to reflect, don't you?

Researcher: Um hmm. And that's another part of silence, isn't it?

Pat: Yes, exactly. It's just where it fits.

Researcher: Yes, I think it fits so well with silence...

Pat: Yes, sure!

Researcher: Do you find that with yourself too?

Pat: Well, I like my reflection period! Well, otherwise, everybody is so, I mean in such a fast lane, today, that I really wonder if they benefit from that speed. Because, like I was saying to others of the students, "Bread has to Rise!" (much expression in voice). One there said, "Why?" "Well", I said, "if you want to eat some bread you have to let it rise! Well, otherwise, it's very heavy dough!" (laughs)

Pat sees her silent reflective time as the rising time for the bread dough. Reflection can give rest, space, lightness, new texture, new forms of richness, and new depth. Reflective silence is essential to this world, as rising is to yeast bread, or as stitching is to patchwork quilts, for as Peek (1994) noted, “silence establishes the foundation upon which meaning is made” (p. 475). Along these same lines Heider (1988) wrote, “allow regular time for silent reflection. Turn inward and digest what has happened. Let the senses rest and grow still” (p. 23).

Pat had further thoughts about reflection time and changing cultures.

Pat: And of course I think when you, when you come here to Canada, you can't be an instant Canadian.

Researcher: Yes, um hum. It takes time doesn't it.

Pat: Absolutely.

Researcher: Do you think that when we're new, ah, to Canada, ah, that we're more silent then, in classroom situations too, or what do you think?

Pat: Well, well I think often. I think so. But it, it cuts both ways because you have a vision of Canada, and you sort of have to reflect and un-learn that one, and find out what the reality is.

Pat found much value in her reflection time upon immigrating to Canada. Noninteractive reflective time is not traditionally valued as highly in some cultures as it is in others. Powell and Anderson (1994) noted that many Eastern cultures nurture beliefs that knowledge and insights come from reflection and meditation, while American students often use visual learning approaches, imitations, and verbalizations. Due to this diversity, educators would do well to give attention to the value, meanings and choices of noninteractive reflective silences which may have great importance to many students in multi-ethnic classrooms.

Many individually-determined / negotiated silences have been discussed from interactive as well as non-interactive perspectives in this category. Participants of this

study have brought insights and understandings about the meanings of their silences in the various categories and sub-categories of this section of the conceptual framework. The final component of this framework will now be discussed. This involves the signs and signals for breaking silence that were brought to light by the participants of this inquiry.

D. Signs and Signals for Breaking Silence

Signs and signals for breaking silence are intricate components of communicative patterns that develop in classroom contexts. A sign is something which is shown or which represents or indicates something. It may be an action or gesture through which a thought or desire is expressed. A signal is an indication or a sign given by a gesture (Hawkins, 1988). When students participate in classroom events, their silences have an array of meanings, as demonstrated by earlier categories of this chapter. Several participants of this study reported that they are often reluctant to speak or to request the opportunity to speak in a classroom context. Rather, they preferred to wait until the teacher asked them to speak. However, when students finally decided to break their silence and speak, certain protocol, rules, formalities or ritual constraints were considered in order for the students to feel that their interactions were communicatively appropriate. These types of communicative constraints regulate how a student breaks out of his or her silent communicative mode and embarks upon the speech mode. Signs and signals for breaking silence are governed by implicit or explicit ritual constraints which may vary from group to group and from culture to culture (Hatch, 1992). These communicative constraints, which are embedded within social class as well as ethnic backgrounds, often affect classroom talk and silence patterns (Edwards & Westgate, 1987).

Diversity in types of signs and signals for breaking silence in multi-ethnic classrooms can cause confusion and frustration. There may be frustration on the part of students who do not feel recognized, noticed, seen, nor valued, when they give a signal to speak and are not called upon by the teacher to speak. A teacher, as well as peers, can be surprised and confused by the frustrations of some more silent students,

because they didn't recognize the culturally different sign or signal that was given by those students who wished to speak. For this reason, there was an inquiry into the signs and signals for breaking silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults in this research project concerning silences.

Even though participants were given ample time to discuss and demonstrate their signs and signals for breaking silence and speaking, they often spent little time with this topic, as they seemed to have a small repertoire of choices for initiating their classroom communicative speech. The signs and signals for breaking silence that these participants described in this inquiry fell into three categories. These include: verbal; nonverbal; and a combination of verbal and nonverbal signs and signals for breaking silence.

1. Verbal signals can include words, phrases, or a simple utterance or sound with the voice. Various participants spoke about their verbal approaches to signaling that they wished to speak. John mentioned two ways that he broke his silence and began to speak.

John: Clear the throat. Just say it. Just begin (to speak).

The sound of his voice, either through the clearing of the throat or through the sounds for the words were the signals for the fact that John was ready to speak. Jan as well noted that her favorite sign or signal for breaking silence was to begin speaking. She explained it like this:

Researcher: Um hum. Okay and ah, let me see... How do you decide what signals are the best for when you want to speak?

Jan: Mmm. Oh, if I just want to speak, maybe I just go ahead and and talk, if I know the subject and I know that they aren't quite right, then I'll go ahead and put my own two bits worth in, you would say. Is that what you do too?

Researcher: Yes, um hmm.

Jan: Because, it, it's not right if, if somebody is wrong and ah you know that that is wrong, you want to correct it, and so you just drop in and tell them.

Researcher: Okay, and so you just basically start speaking. That's your signal, you just...

Jan: Yes. Right. Yes. And hope that they will keep quiet.

Jan later remembered that she sometimes says:

Jan: Pardon me, or, what did you say? or, eh? - Like the Canadians are supposed to say" (hearty laughter with last phrase).

Waiting for an appropriate break in the conversation was also discussed. Pat said, after thinking carefully for some time:

Pat: Well, I think I just... Well, I would wait for a break in the conversation and then say, "have you thought of this"?

Pat's question itself was her signal that she was ready to be finished with her silence for a while and to engage in verbal communicative interaction.

This discussion took place in the stimulated recall session with Connie concerning signs and signals:

Researcher: ...And ah, sometimes do you use your voice? Do you just begin to speak sometimes? Like, I've noticed with this group (points to video where Connie is taking part in classroom discussion) that when you want to speak you merely make a noise with your voice or you begin to speak. And then that means that you are breaking your silence and speaking?

Connie: Yes!. Yeah... Yes, uh hmm. Yes, then speak

In the first focus group discussion, a participant described both a reason for wishing to speak and a signal for this communicative transaction.

Participant: If teacher teach something I don't know, this, this question, ah, when he ah stop, sometimes, I will (say) 'excuse me' and then I speak. I ask, how use this word?

The verbal signal of “excuse me”, then alerts the teacher to the fact that the student is requesting a turn at speaking because he wants clarification on something. Richmond, McCroskey and Payne (1991) noted that when a person engages in signs and signals for turn requesting, the person who has the communicative turn then must decide if (s)he will engage in turn-maintaining, turn-yielding, or turn-denying. However, multi-ethnic communicative groups add much diversity, and sometimes much confusion, to the whole turn-requesting, maintaining, yielding and denying process. Before the choice of turn-yielding to the turn-requester can be implemented, the person with the turn must be fully aware that the turn-requesting signal is actually occurring. Any lack of clarity between the sending of the signal and the receiving of the signal can impede the communicative process between the two persons involved in that signaling interaction. Lack of appropriate knowledge and sensitivity on the part of the supposed receiver (often the teacher), about the signals being used for breaking silence or for turn-requesting, can impede the communicative process, along with the teaching and learning process.

2. Nonverbal signs and signals for breaking silence were reported and demonstrated in various forms. Connie noted that in her culture, standing up or raising the hand might both be appropriate.

Connie: ...you stand up. If others have been speaking then you stand up. But, ah, since I grew up there have been European influences in West Africa, so many people would signal by raising the hand up. And uh hum. But eh, ah, from tourists we hear and from history of the past we hear there are some people who use the gong or the drum to signal that there is going to be a meeting and then they use the gong to signal that the leader will speak. But in my own generation I know people are putting up their hands in the class to speak. Or, we just

simply stand up, and then while somebody is still speaking you will stand up and then the leader recognizes you and says 'what you want to say'.

Several others discussed the raising of the hand for signaling the desire to speak. Pat said:

Pat: You could always put your hand up (in class) and think nothing of it!

It was a signal that Pat seemed very relaxed and comfortable with. When May was asked how she usually chose to signal her wish to break her silence and begin to speak, she laughed and raised her hand high above her head while saying:

May: Raising my hand!

Jan laughed as well as she explained that to get attention for speaking she liked to:

Jan: Flap or raise up the hand or whatever...

(later) Ah, I just open my mouth I guess. Yeah. Somebody said I have a big mouth, so that's all right. I can do it! (chuckles).

Another nonverbal signal that was described by Dirk was the signal given by raising one finger. Dirk said, when asked for his comments on communicative signals for breaking silence and speaking:

Dirk: One finger up first - by shoulder (demonstrates with index finger up at shoulder height and in front of his shoulder).

(Also) Maybe finger - front of face (demonstrates with an index finger in front of his face, slightly off to the right of center, and the top of finger at about eyebrow level).

John signaled his wish to speak just a little differently.

John: Raise the hand, five fingers (demonstrates with flat of hand forward and all fingers and thumb up, elbow resting on table).

3. Combined verbal and nonverbal strategies for breaking silence were also discussed by the participants. Len noted that he sometimes tries to get the teacher's attention by putting his hand up and speaking. He explained:

Len: I think two signals. (raises hand, palm sideways, held low)

Researcher: um hmm. Hand up, one signal (watching him demonstrate)

Len: And the sound.

Researcher: And the sound. The voice sound, (is) other signal.

Len: Two signals to let the teacher know I want to talk.

Researcher: Okay, beautiful. I understand. Yes...

Len: First the hand. If cannot see, then, if I must to talk, then, I will say, "excuse me" (softly). If not much need to talk, I can keep quiet.

At another place in the interview, Len explained things this way:

Len: Mmmmm. Sometime, if the teacher cannot say, cannot see, cannot saw my hand up, mmm, if I want, I will say, "Excuse me" (very weak, tentative quiet voice).

In the first focus group one participant spoke about the custom in her homeland as well as what she does now concerning combined verbal and nonverbal signals for breaking silence.

Participant: Umm! It's that I've been a teacher for so long I, I think it's putting up the hand and not speaking because ah, I was used to in my country, teaching a very huge class. Children of about 70 at once in a class. So if they have to talk at the same time as putting up their hand, then they will shout, "hasma (phonetic spelling), me, I want to talk, yeah/I" (shouts loudly and puts up hand to demonstrate). So

there will be annoyance, so you don't entertain that. Putting up your hand, yes. But if it's me, I would talk. I usually talk at the same time as I put up my hand. I say, "can I say something?"

Some signs and signals for breaking silence are very clear, but some (such as clearing the throat, or raising one finger by the shoulder or the face) are much more subtle and can be missed by teachers and peers, especially in multi-ethnic classrooms where cultural rules and constraints have dictated various and diverse types of signs and signals for expressing the desire to be finished with silence and to embark upon speaking. The giving of intense attention in order to refine the recognition of these diverse signs and signals for breaking silence can greatly enhance communicative effectiveness in the classroom. This in turn can enhance the richness and effectiveness of the learning processes of all involved.

Conclusion

Participants of this study have demonstrated that there are many meanings of silences in a multi-ethnic classroom of older adults. This diversity of meanings of silence, along with the diversity of signs and signals for breaking silence, illuminates the fact that there is a need for much attention and understanding, from teachers as well as classmates, in order that the intercultural communicative process be effective and fulfilling for all members of the group. Often there were subtle nuances, or delicate degrees of differences between the various meanings of silence. These nuances lend themselves to subtle, yet sometimes powerful refinements in intercultural communicative practices. The rich, multi-perspective patterns, themes or meaning units that emerged from the data in this multiple case study design contribute to the knowledge pool concerning meanings of silence and signs and signals for breaking silence.

The four major categories, along with sub-categories of silence, that were discussed in this chapter were: A. Institutionally-determined silences, which dealt with locations, rituals, hierarchy, and taboos; B. Group-determined silences which

included normative and symbolic silences; C. Individually-determined / negotiated silences, which dealt with five types of interactive silences and two types of noninteractive silences; and D. Signs and signals for breaking silence which were inclusive of verbal, nonverbal, and combined verbal and nonverbal signals. Within each of these categories and sub-categories, various themes created colourful patchwork pieces of “silence information and knowledge”, which ultimately gave more depth, vitality, and understandings to the main categories.

Through this inquiry, new patterns of understanding have come to light concerning meanings of silence, along with deeper understandings about various signs and signals for breaking silence, in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. Ultimately the subtle nuances of this information and knowledge can lead to improved intercultural communicative processes, improved teaching and learning processes, and perhaps to improved quality of life. In order to more fully enhance the learning that can transpire from the findings in this study, summaries (which cover some aspects of the findings and the rationale for adjustments in the conceptual framework) and recommendations (which were inspired from the research project itself), have been written in chapter five.

Chapter Five

Reflections and Recommendations

Introduction

This inquiry into the meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults, along with the inquiry into the signs and signals for breaking silence, has yielded insights into intercultural communication, through the perspectives of a multi-ethnic group of older participants. This information contributes to the knowledge pool concerning silence in intercultural communication in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults.

Reflections and recommendations which are discussed in this chapter have been inspired by the participants and their contributions concerning silence in intercultural communication. Reflections are vital for the shedding of light back onto the findings in order to glean as much learning as possible from the data that were produced in this study. Recommendations are critical in that they suggest courses of action which evolve from the specific information that was gathered in the study, along with some insights from the academic literature. This is a culturally sensitive response to the data in that attention is given to each of the participants' cultural sharings concerning silence issues in multi-ethnic classrooms and then recommendations are made according to the insights that evolve from those cultural sharings. Reflections on various aspects of the study are discussed first and are followed by recommendations and observations. These are then followed by a few new questions that have been raised, and the conclusion.

Reflections

Reflections on various aspects of this study are discussed in this section. The categories for discussion include: reflections on key findings; reflections on the conceptual framework; reflections on methodological aspects of the study; and other reflections and observations.

Reflections on Key Findings

Participants in this study demonstrated, both through their own explanations and descriptions, and through researcher observations, that older adult learners from various ethnic backgrounds often carry with them into their classrooms, their cultural or ethnic teachings about silence and signs and signals for breaking silence in the classroom. The academic literature provided no information concerning older learners carrying their ethnic teachings about silences into their classroom contexts yet these are important aspects of communication and of teaching and learning, because this information may enhance improved educational opportunities for older members of society, from many ethnic and cultural groupings. Therefore, this study has provided vital information concerning some issues involved with silence in intercultural communicative interactions.

Issues of student respect for the teacher often caused the students to choose silence in their classroom communicative interactions. Respect was an underlying meaning of many of the silences that these participants described. Meanings of silence which centered around respect, fell under several sub-categories and themes in this study, depending on the perspective from which silence was viewed. Respectful silences were included in institutional rituals where participants felt it was essential to be silent in order to learn from the teacher, due to their cultural understandings of institutional rules of communicative interactions in classrooms. From the hierarchical / structural perspective, teachers were considered to be in a high position and therefore they deserved respectful silences from the students. Respectful silence had so much power, in fact, that it also easily fit into the taboo section where speaking without the

teacher asking them to speak, was practically prohibited by some. With individually-determined / negotiated silences, respectful silences were seen through the perspective of a student deferring power, through silence, and granting the superiority or power position to the teacher. As well, silence was used to subdue the students into maintaining silence, thus granting the superior, and sometimes respected position to the teacher. Respectful classroom silences therefore, appear to have much value for these older learners. This is vital information for teachers who are attempting to understand the meanings of silences of the students involved in the teaching and learning processes of their classrooms.

A fair amount of discussion that took place by these participants, both as individuals and in the first focus group, concerning silence and gender issues. It became apparent that these participants from various cultural groupings carry their early age gender teachings and rememberings about silence, both implicit and explicit, into the classroom, when they are older. Or, as Connie said, “we are still carrying the culture about.” It was found that sometimes women were expected to be silent and allow men to speak, and sometimes men were expected to be silent and allow women to speak. The literature revealed nothing concerning silence, gender issues, and older learners in multi-ethnic classrooms, and this information therefore contributes insights into these matters.

As older persons, it was noted by some participants, silence was maintained due to an individual being older and not being quick or concise enough, nor being able to find the right niche for making a contribution. The literature did not reveal information concerning these communicative aspects of older adults in classroom interactions. This sheds light on the need to refine awarenesses of time allotments for older learners in order that they may break their silences and speak in classrooms, without necessarily always having to be quick and concise.

This study produced a colourful array of emotional and attitudinal silences that these older participants said they might be experiencing in classrooms, and that might be the meanings of their silences. These emotions and attitudes included: anger, sadness, happiness, respectfulness, dislike, disapproval, disagreement, alienation, and

avoidance. As well, some of the psychological meanings of silences included depression and loneliness, shyness, and fear. The academic literature had revealed a variety of emotions and attitudes that might be expressed through silence, along with a variety of interpretations (sometimes correct and sometimes incorrect) that are often made about silences. However nothing was reported concerning silence and emotions or attitudes of older learners in multi-ethnic classrooms. Therefore, this study, through exploring the meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults, has extended the knowledge base concerning these emotional, attitudinal and psychological issues.

Classroom silences could easily mean that students were having language problems. Upon analysis of the data, it was found that a variety of language problems were involved. These included: not understanding what others said; not being understood when these individuals spoke; and not knowing how to express oneself appropriately. Connie noted that it seemed that there was “no time on their tongues” for the new language sometimes, and this led to silence in classroom communicative interactions. As well, lack of confidence often accompanies the language struggle and combines with culture shock and the sociocultural struggle to cope with the realities of a new and differing culture. According to these participants, these struggles lead to classroom silences which are not always satisfactory silences. This study offers more refined realization about these types of silences, and these refined realizations may assist teachers and fellow students in having more understanding about the meanings of these types of intercultural silences in communicative interactions.

Sociophysical aspects of this study revealed that these students may have silences based in physical discomforts, unwellness, or unwellness due to worry. In these cases participants noted that these physical struggles might be the underlying meanings of their silences in the social settings of the classroom. Again, the literature had not revealed any information concerning these matters.

Contemplative and reflective silences were also seen as having high value in the classroom. Since these contemplative and reflective silences had not been discussed in the literature concerning older learners in multi-ethnic classrooms, it is information

that warrants attention by those interested in deeper understandings of meanings of silences in classroom contexts with older adults.

The literature also provided nothing concerning signs and signals for breaking silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. This study revealed various types of signs and signals which were learned by each participant in his or her own culture and which they reported that they still use in classroom settings at times. These signs and signals included verbal, nonverbal and combined verbal and nonverbal signs and signals for breaking silence. Video analysis showed that there were only two times, (two persons, one time each), when someone spoke when they had not been asked to do so by the teacher. Otherwise the participants broke their silences and spoke only when the teacher asked them to speak or indicated to them that it was their turn to speak. Both of the persons who spoke without permission used verbal signals for wishing to speak with almost no wait time after the other person stopped speaking. Through this study of meanings of silences it has also been found that these cultural teachings of wait time and turn-taking rules have been carried through from younger cultural teachings into these older learners' multi-ethnic classroom communicative interactions.

Reflections on the Conceptual Frameworks

The use of a conceptual framework was of vital importance to this study. The use of the initial conceptual framework which was Saville-Troike's (1985) list of categories of silences, (Table 1, near the end of Chapter 3) facilitated the assembling, the analysis and the organization of the data that were gathered in this research project. Saville-Troike suggested that this classification may provide insights for examining silences of various types and this suggestion proved true in this study. This classification did indeed provide assistance and insights as to how to organize data concerning silences. However, during the analysis process, it became apparent that these silence categories did not fully serve this study which has the focus of silence in multi-ethnic classroom contexts for older adults. Therefore, the framework was adjusted.

Some parts of the initial framework did not relate well to this study, so they were removed or omitted and an adjusted framework was created. The sub-categories and themes which were removed or omitted include: religious services, legal proceedings, funerals, operas, memberships, wife's mother, situational and legislative bodies, committees, shunning as punishment, audience members, role-indicative, nonparticipation, mitigation, mystification, dissimulation, phatic, linguistic, discursive, propositional didactic, timid, embarrassment, neurosis, and inactive.

As well, the initial framework and classifications did not include all of the categories, sub-categories and themes which emerged from the data, therefore, some were added to the adjusted conceptual framework. These additions include: churches, learning silences, entertainment, women, men, older persons, ways of quieting children or crowds, social graces, listening, happiness, respect for elders, disagreement, psycholinguistic, silent prayer, reasoning, thinking, language problems, wait-time, turns, sociocultural, cultural, societal, manners, politeness, loneliness, shyness, sociophysical, tired, worried, not feeling well, reflection, signs and signals for breaking silence, verbal signals, nonverbal signals, and combined verbal and nonverbal signs and signals for breaking silence. Furthermore, image manipulation was changed to image management for more clarity of meaning. In these ways, the framework was carefully adjusted to meet the needs of this particular study.

As well, ideas from several other key resources were used in the development of this adjusted framework. These included: Bruneau (1973) who discussed three major forms of silence including psycholinguistic, interactive, and socio-cultural; Jones and Gerig (1994) who discussed controlling environment and avoiding risks; and Richmond, McCroskey and Payne (1991) who discussed psychological, thinking, and respectful silences. These authors offered various perspectives which helped clarify categories, sub-categories, and themes that were appropriate for a framework that would accommodate this study of meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. This adjusted framework (found in Table 2 near the beginning of Chapter 4) also facilitated the outlining of the discussion and findings.

It has been noted that even though the initial framework or list of categories, as provided by Saville-Troike (1985), was extensive, it was not adequate for this research project. There were some short-comings, due to the specific focus of this study, which led to additions in the framework. It is acknowledged here, however, that differing interpretations of terminology may have led to the removal of some sub-categories and themes from the first framework and to the addition of others in the second framework. As well, the additions to the adjusted framework may be seen as an outline of some of the contributions that this study has made towards a more comprehensive understanding of meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms. The information that was gathered and compiled within the categories, sub-categories and themes of the second framework provides insights and perspectives beyond the categories of the initial sub-categories and themes of the first framework. This information then adds to the knowledge pool concerning meanings of silence, and signs and signals for breaking silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults.

Reflections on the Methodological Aspects of the Study

This study used a qualitative research design. A multiple case study approach was used, backed up by a triangulated methodological design, for enhancing the research into communicative silences from different methodological perspectives. The multiple case study approach provided rich and diverse information from participants from seven different cultures (Nigeria, India, Greece, England, Cuba, China, and Canada) concerning the meanings of their silences and their signs and signals for breaking silence. As well, the process of triangulation (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996), which is the process of using multiple data-collection methods, and data sources, contributed well to the richness of the study and to the construct, external and interpretive validity (Yin, 1994, & Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996) of the case study findings. In the triangulation process, the stimulated recall sessions allowed each participant to reflect on his or her cultural teachings about silence, and then to examine their present beliefs as well as their present behaviors (in the classroom video) concerning their communicative silences. The focus group discussions then allowed

them to compare and contrast their own cultural teachings with those of their fellow classmates from differing cultural groups. The stimulated recall sessions, combined with the two focus group discussions, proved to be excellent research approaches for assisting the participants in the processes of sharing information that was relevant to the study. As well, the other sources of data, such as the transcriptions and analysis of the video recording of the participants in their regular classroom, and researcher observations, also contributed well to the gathering of vital data. The research questions, which were used during the stimulated recall sessions and the first focus group discussion, also proved to be extremely helpful in the gathering of pertinent information. Without these research strategies and processes, this study probably would not have provided such rich data. Each of these approaches was carried out in a manner that was respectful, ethical, and non-intrusive to the participants and each participant seemed happy to be involved in the study

Even though this study had seven participants from seven different countries who provided rich understandings about meanings of silence and signs and signals for breaking silence, it still might have been beneficial to have had more participants from more cultural or ethnic groupings. One example of this is that it would have been nice to have had a Canadian Native or First Nations older person in the study, in order that she or he might have contributed some insights into the cultural meanings of their silences. However, the classroom that was used for this study did not have such a person in it, and I did not wish to interrupt a regular classroom by adding other persons to that classroom.

The multiple case studies in this research project were informed and backed up by a triangulated methodological approach of using three qualitative research methodologies: 1) the ethnographies of communication; 2) ethnomethodology; and 3) interactional analysis of discourse. These are discussed more fully in Chapter 3. Through exploring various aspects of each of these methodological approaches, I as researcher became more sensitive and perceptive to the various cultural and communicative dynamics that were involved in the study. These research methodologies often overlapped each other, yet each one added different perspectives

to the research questions concerning communicative silences and signs and signals for breaking silence. Careful study and analysis of each of these methodological approaches revealed a few key terms that were beneficial in understanding the approach, and in assisting with my grasping of the concepts necessary for facilitating a more thorough analysis, arrangement and reportage of the findings. These key terms are now included: 1) ethnography of communication - patterns of a culture and ethnicity, characteristic features of communication, communicative conduct, how speech is used, codes, channels, expressions, public meanings, forms, norms, cultural codes, symbols used, and language interactions of speech and silence; 2) ethnomethodology - rules of social interactions, common sense strategies for communication, orderliness in communication, procedures, rules, norms, making sense, participants reflect, insights into normative background of own actions, cultural values, practical reasoning, actions, utterances, and silences; and 3) interactional analysis of discourse - communicative action, talk, thought, socially appropriate, cultural ritual constraints, turns, silences, speech acts, patterns and regularities in communicative interactions, gender issues, group size, turn-taking, silence and reacting, socioemotional behavior, elaborated and restricted codes, rules for turns, gaps in turns, and silences. These three methodological approaches have many similarities and yet some differences. As well, differing choices of vocabulary concerning similar issues sometimes offered new perceptions of ways to approach various aspects of the inquiry. Therefore, it was of great benefit to carefully study and use this triangulated methodological qualitative approach.

Other Reflections and Observations

It has been a wonderful privilege relating to each of the seven older persons who participated in this study. In my mental image of my imagined research quilt, each of them has a profoundly vibrant position in the rich, multi-ethnic pattern. I stand in awe of some of them who have left their homeland in their senior years, leaving behind most of their family members and friends who have profound value to them in their lives. Struggles with language barriers and cultural differences consume large

amounts of energy in their daily lives, along with some of the difficulties of aging. Yet amongst the struggles, these people are fun loving and exuberant about their possibilities in life. They engaged in much talk, laughter, caring, sharing, and encouragement with each other in the classroom and at our focus group meetings. Sometimes they arrived at the classroom in a semi-dejected or tired state, but after their enthusiastic discussions, language practice, songs, dances, plays, and international snacks, they seemed revitalized and vibrant. I was delighted with their immediate willingness to be part of this study, as soon as I had introduced my research topic to them. They each displayed a strong urge to understand just what I was asking, and to answer as completely as possible. An early trust was established among us and this trust grew and flourished as we proceeded with the various steps of the project.

My life has been deeply enriched, not only by the new silence knowledge which these people shared and which I craved so passionately, but also by the intercultural communication and contact that I have experienced through relating with each of these persons. For this and more, I will be forever thankful.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations have been developed through reflections on the patterns of intercultural communication that evolved from the data. The recommendations have been developed to enhance, improve, and refine intercultural communication, teaching, and learning, with a focus on silence in multi-ethnic classrooms. The recommendations in this section might be considered for use by administrators, educators, and researchers. As well, other members of society who deal with adults of various cultural and ethnic backgrounds may find this information valuable.

There are four main categories of recommendations in this section. These categories follow the central themes of the four main categories of the adjusted conceptual framework. This framework is found in chapter four near the beginning. These categories include recommendations from: institutional perspectives; group

determined perspectives; individually-determined / negotiated perspectives; and signs and signals for breaking silence perspectives.

Recommendations from Institutional Perspectives

Ask the students about meanings of silence in various institutional settings of their homeland culture. As well, local meanings and traditions concerning silences can be shared. Wade and Travis (1996) suggested that we reflect on our own culture and share, yet be open to the sharings and concerns of all cultures. Becoming more aware of our own cultural communicative habits and becoming more accepting of different communicative patterns is essential in intercultural communication (Lieberman, 1994).

Discuss with students the hierarchical structural communicative systems of various contexts and explain that silence is appreciated, yet is not always an appropriate expression of respect in every situation in this society and culture. Studying our own hierarchical institutional structures and roles can open us to learning more of the intricacies of another's structures and roles (Young, 1996).

Discuss the showing of respect for teachers through silence and the positive and negative effects that can transpire through those silent expressions in intercultural contexts.

Discuss and demonstrate various forms of showing respect for someone, other than being silent in their presence.

Praise and thank students for ritual listening or attentive listening. Encourage them to share, when they feel ready, so that others may provide attentive listening in return.

Ask for more specific clarification and information concerning rules of institutions, ethnic background, and meanings of silence. FitzGerald (1996) noted that intercultural insights can enrich the learning about different value systems and lower occurrences of intercultural misunderstandings.

Recommendations in Group-Determined Silences

Have multi-ethnic groups work together towards a common goal of improved intercultural communication as well as other meaningful goals. With this goal approach, individuals often feel more valued and respected (Olson & Wilczenski, 1995). This may also serve to establish a sense of solidarity among classroom participants (Mezirow, 1996).

Teachers can consistently observe themselves in their attentions given to students in the classroom. They may also refine their awareness concerning favoritism towards a particular ethnic group or gender.

Develop an atmosphere where time is provided for more silent individuals to share their ideas or ask their questions. As well, for some older persons, allow more time before changing the topic so that silent reflection and thinking may be completed and the option of speaking may still be available.

Teachers and students may become comfortable with longer silences during classroom discussions. In this way more quiet students will feel there is time and space enough to share.

Avoid setting patterns where silent students become entrenched in their silent roles. Brookfield (1990) noted that these patterns may be set early in a classroom group's life.

Ask students about what their specific silences may mean in particular classrooms at particular times, but ask with sensitivity so that they don't feel defensive or spotlighted in their silence. Showing genuine interest and asking personal questions enhances students' participation (Roth, 1996).

Have a discussion in class about meanings of silence on the parts of all people attending. This type of discussion may enhance understandings of similarities and differences among all students and nurture intercultural communication and bonding (Javidi & Javidi, 1994).

Create a group list of communicative behaviors which the students themselves believe will nurture their confidence in classroom communication (Fassinger, 1995).

Recommendations Concerning Individually-Determined / Negotiated Silences

Be respectful and accepting of persons who prefer more silence in their communicative interactions in classrooms. Make no negative judgments about those silences. Ask for feed-back on all assumptions that are being made concerning the meanings of an individual's silence.

Create some fun 'silence activities' which can help everyone value silence more. Crocker (1980) wrote that if silence is to be valued, then perhaps it should be taught.

Ask a student in private to discuss some of the meanings of his or her silences and work together and creatively with that knowledge. Silence on the part of some students necessitates accommodation (Plank, 1994).

Become familiar with silence patterns and meanings of individual students. In this study Pat noted in her stimulated recall interview, "I think the professor, ah, it is his or her responsibility. Because they should know the students well enough, what our silence means... That's when they have to ask! And not wait 'till the end of term either!"

Teachers and students can share the responsibility of working creatively with uncomfortable silences. Try to be clear about what issues and dynamics are transpiring in that shared responsibility.

Discuss superiority and deference so that the student is aware if he or she is dealing with this phenomenon when choosing to be silent. As well, teachers must convey their desire to shift from superiority mode to a "discovery mode" (O'Keefe, 1995).

Structure the classroom activities and discussions so each student has choices as to whether to be silent or to speak. Yet, if a more silent student wishes to practice speaking, structure times when everyone must contribute. Plan ahead with the more silent students so that these structured approaches feel safe and acceptable to them.

Ask about what might cause a student to be tense and silent in the classroom. Work creatively together to lower the tension.

Discuss social graces or social rules or constraints concerning silence, with classroom participants. Beginning with small groups or one-to-one discussions may facilitate a safer environment and nurture more sharing.

If a student does not seem enthused about being involved in the intercultural communicative process, perhaps discussing his or her expectations in the class will help in discovering ways to encourage them into the process (Brown, 1994).

Strive to discover the communicative needs that the more silent persons may be feeling. These communicative needs will be the gap between where they think they are at present and where they think they should be at the same moment. Some students feel the need to speak more in class but they are not sure how to begin the process. Work together on strategies for meeting the expressed needs.

Notice affect or emotional changes and gently and privately provide opportunity for the student to share if he or she wishes. Written forms, such as journals, may facilitate this as well.

Discuss the showing of respect through silence for older persons, both in the present classroom and in other contexts. Appreciate similarities and differences.

Discuss cultural classroom differences where some people display intelligence by being silent and others display intelligence by talking.

Assure students that it is acceptable to disagree with the teacher and other classmates and demonstrate various communicative approaches for agreement and disagreement.

Find sources of alienation that might be causing silence on the part of some students and deal with those situations.

Allow silences for those who do not know the answers or the topic being discussed.

Provide time for reasoning and thinking.

Work creatively with students who struggle with language problems. Williamson (1997) noted that older learners find language problems to be one of the major barriers to their classroom participation. Appreciate the different ways that a

person expresses herself or himself, and do not insist on a 'right' way of expressing. Rather offer alternative ways that may be more effective.

Establish a network of most commonly used words and phrases in each particular course and encourage the student to add to this list. Having appropriate words and phrases may encourage the silent student to speak.

Provide longer wait-times for those who need to be silent for longer periods of time before they speak.

Ask silent students if they want to be chosen to speak, even if they do not request a turn. Check back later with the students to see how they feel about the agreement. Continue to refine the agreement.

Give clues as to how others communicate effectively in classrooms in this society and culture. Point out examples by others which are particularly effective in that context.

If someone seems depressed and / or lonely, ask gently about this and ask what might help.

If some people are shy in their silence, have small group or one-to-one discussions in order to provide a more intimate and safe environment for breaking silence and speaking.

If a person expresses fear about sharing, find out what they fear and try to insure that those fearful things do not occur in the classroom. As well, provide positive reinforcement and validation that directly counteracts those fears. Have the student focus on the positives that are occurring when they do speak, rather than focusing on the negatives that either happened or that might have happened.

Be respectful of older persons or any persons who do not feel well physically and thus do not wish to interact verbally. Realize that they are probably still enjoying an uplifting learning process. The learning atmosphere may be providing them with a break from their feelings of unwellness.

Work with older adults' expectations and adjustments concerning silence, intercultural communication, and other issues in the classroom. Irizarry, Downing, and Elford (1997) suggested that meaningful teaching and learning for older adults

requires careful consideration and adaptation. John (1988) also noted the importance of Geragogy, where careful consideration is given to issues involved with helping older persons learn.

If someone has difficulty in explaining what (s)he is trying to say, when they tired of the effort, allow them to be at rest and be silent. Time and reflection may bring new insights to be shared later.

Build reflection time into the classroom activities and communicative processes, especially for older learners who have many experiences which they wish to incorporate, through reflection, into their learning. Heider (1988) wrote: "Allow regular time for silent reflection. Turn inward and digest what has happened. Let the senses rest and grow still" (p. 23).

Allow some students to indulge in reflective time, even if it is not built into the lesson plans. Kress (1997) noted that "we will not be able to do without reflection...We will not be able to do without the possibility of producing new insight, new understanding, new knowledge about our world" (p. 3).

Recommendations Concerning Signs and Signals for Breaking Silence

Practice looking carefully around the room for subtle signals that may indicate that someone wishes to break their silence and speak.

Practice listening for sounds, utterances or words which might indicate that someone wishes to speak.

Fine-tune perceptions of turn-requesting, turn-taking, turn-maintaining, and turn-denying. Discuss these concepts with students and practice them. Focus on commonalities between and among various ethnic traditions of turn-requesting. A focus on commonalities often enhances successful interactions and opens possibilities of mutual enrichment (Brislin, Cushner, Cherie, & Yong, 1986).

Give intense attention to small details of verbal, nonverbal or combined signs and signals for breaking silence and wishing to speak.

A Few New Questions That Have Been Raised

This research process has brought many insights to light concerning the meanings of silence and signs and signals for breaking silence in multi-ethnic classrooms of older adults. However, there have been a few new questions which have been raised concerning silence in intercultural communication. These now follow.

What might people from other countries say about the meanings of their silences?

What would a multi-generational as well as multi-ethnic older group have to say about meanings of silence and signs and signals for breaking silence in classroom contexts?

How does each teacher's communicative style affect the uses of silence, and the choices and meanings of silence in multi-ethnic classrooms?

What are other signs and signals for breaking silence in multi-ethnic classroom contexts that were not mentioned in this inquiry?

How can we become more culturally sensitive to the various uses and meanings of silence in our multi-ethnic classrooms?

How can we refine our understandings of chronemics or the timing, tempo and beat of silence and speech in various cultures.

How do proxemics or distance and closeness affect silence and speech patterns?

How can we become more aware of the participation and learning that is transpiring with our more silent students, in environments where talk is often highly valued?

These are questions which may lead to further research. In this way new levels of understanding concerning silence in communication in multi-ethnic classrooms may be developed.

Conclusion

Silence in the communicative process is often viewed as background to speech patterns, or is not viewed at all. In this study silence has maintained central focus, or center position, in the study of intercultural communication in classroom contexts with older adults. The group of older adults from various cultural backgrounds was chosen to participate in this study about silence because older learners carry with them their distinctive cultural and ethnic teachings, derived from group interactions and early socializations (Fry & Kieth, 1986). From these early socializations, cultural or ethnic texts and communicative coding systems are programmed into bodies, minds, and spirits, and are shaken or shocked by the transition of moving into another culture. Rules, judgments, and courses of communicative conduct suddenly become inadequate and ineffective in new cultural contexts. Communicative confusion grows with the expansion of migrations and immigrations of peoples from one part of the planet to another, and from one cultural framework to another. With these global and societal disturbances, communicative competence, adequacy and effectiveness are of extreme importance. Young (1996) wrote “there is, perhaps, no more important topic in the social sciences than the study of intercultural communication...it has never been as important as it is now...it is a matter of survival of our species” (p. 1). Patterns and meanings of silence in intercultural communication hold an important position in this vital communicative endeavor.

Intercultural communication provides rich challenges to teachers, learners, researchers, and all community members who are willing to engage in culturally sensitive modes of relating to persons with ethnic and cultural differences. The giving of intense attention to meanings of silence as well as signs and signals for breaking silence provides a pathway into this sometimes overwhelming maze of intercultural communicative complexity. Deeper understandings about intercultural silences provide opportunities for expansion in the promoting of effective intercultural communication. This in turn enhances the teaching and learning processes of all involved.

Through the opening of the mind and spirit to new understandings about diverse meanings of cultural and ethnic silences, we open our minds to the diversity of other cultural differences which can be appreciated and applauded, rather than ignored, shunned or merely tolerated. In this way the ethnic texture of our classrooms or societies becomes more enriched and colourful. In this culturally responsive way, we as educators, researchers, and community members alike can promote harmonious interactions amongst peoples of diverse cultural and ethnic groups, and create an atmosphere that embraces a vision of transformation and solidarity that is compatible with improving the quality of communication, of life, and of learning, for people of all ethnicities and ages.

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Appendix A

Participant Recruitment and Initial Contacts

Procedures for recruiting participants and making initial contacts included phone calls and personal introductions. These are listed below.

I contacted a key administrative person, Mrs. Tomoko Okada, at the InterCultural Association of Victoria and gave a few details about this study and asked for a meeting. At that meeting I explained my study more carefully and asked to be introduced to a teacher or teachers who were considered possibilities for cooperating with this project. Tomoko suggested the multi-ethnic group of seniors who had a course each Saturday, and I was introduced to the instructor. The instructor and I then discussed all details concerning appropriate participants for this study, with considerations for: older men and women students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds; teaching style in that class which allowed for student choices of verbal and silent participation; probable willingness by the students to participate in such a study; and English proficiency of the students which allowed for discussion. Upon invitation by the teacher, I then met with the students in their classroom and carefully explained the details and various steps of my study and asked them if they would be willing to be part of the study. Upon agreement from all, arrangements were made for a specific time for videotaping in their classroom. Later we arranged for the individual stimulated recall sessions and the focus group interviews.

A brief outline of my introductions follows. I introduced myself as a graduate student doing research in the Faculty of Education from the University of Victoria. I explained the purpose of my project, as well as my belief that this research might lead to improved intercultural communication and learning experiences in classrooms. I told the participants about some of the questions that they would be asked concerning communication, during the research project. I explained about videotaping, audiotaping and transcribing into written data. I explained about anonymity through code names or pseudonyms. The erasing of the tapes was also discussed. I told them they could refuse to answer any questions that they were not comfortable with. I answered all of their questions. I told them that four hours would be required of them for this project. I gave them my name and phone number, and the name and phone number of my supervisor who could verify the authenticity of the research project. This type of introduction worked well for appropriate and sensitive participant recruitment and initial encounters.

Appendix B

Letter of Introduction

November 24, 1997

To: Ms Lauren Sprague, Executive Director of InterCultural Association

From: Mary Ann Fenimore Ph.D. Student, University of Victoria.

Dear Lauren,

I would like to introduce myself to you concerning my study program at the University of Victoria. I would also like to introduce you to my proposal of working with you and the Intercultural Association in a research project.

I am at present in my fourth year of my Doctoral (Ph.D.) program at the University of Victoria. I am in the Language Arts section of the Department of Communication and Social Foundations, which is in the Faculty of Education. My studies are mainly focused on intercultural communication and learning in our senior years. I am enjoying my studies very much, and am looking forward to moving on to the next step of my program, which involves a research project. I have searched the literature concerning my topic of study and research, and have written two chapters concerning that information, plus a chapter to outline my proposed approach to my research project.

Both at a professional level and on a personal level, I am extremely interested in effective communication across and among various cultures. I believe that sensitive and informed language perceptions on the parts of teachers and fellow learners in classrooms can lead to more effective and rewarding teaching and learning experiences. Because of this belief, I have committed much time and energy to my studies, as well as to relating to people from many cultures. I have lived and worked in a Native village in South America, and I have lived and worked in a First Nations Village in Northern British Columbia. These four years brought me a profound amount of richness and learning. One of the major things that I learned was that there is always a need for more understanding about meanings that are conveyed across cultures through language, both spoken and unspoken. Silence is an important piece of the unspoken language in our classrooms. Different cultures teach different understandings about meanings of silence, and often these meanings are not understood by someone from another culture. This then leads to wrong assumptions and inappropriate responses at times.

With that in mind, I am planning to do a study on "Meanings of Silence in Multi-ethnic Classrooms of Older Adults". I will focus on various aspects of communication, including signs and signals for breaking silence, but my main focus will be on 'meanings of silence' in communication. I will not emphasize this to participants ahead of time, however, as this may make them more self-conscious about their choices of silence and speech in the videoing of their classroom interactions. Once the final videotaping is done, I'll gently explain my reasons for telling them about my study of communicative interactions but not the specific of 'silence' in those communicative interactions. I will be happy to discuss this in more detail with you to receive your input. My academic committee and the University ethics committee feel this is acceptable and appropriate. I would like your response to this also.

It is my hope that you will have a course that is in session at the InterCultural Association in early in 1998 which has mostly (or preferably) all seniors in attendance. I am hopeful that the teacher and the students would be willing and happy to cooperate in this research project. I am willing to visit the group as many times as necessary in order to: explain about the research; establish a comfortable rapport with everyone; and answer all questions and concerns that people may have. Each person would be asked to contribute about four hours of time in total, which includes the videoing of the class in session.

In brief, my research approach would include: confidentiality for all involved in the research; the use of pseudonyms for anonymity in the write-up of the findings; a carefully explained consent form that would let everyone know what was going to happen and what their rights are (please find enclosed); an introductory visit or visits with the selected classroom teacher and students; videotaping a one hour session of a classroom, preferably one which has class discussion involved in the format (the videotaping would only occur after I had visited enough that all students felt comfortable with me, and perhaps after I had done some practice videoing which students could view in order to become comfortable with seeing themselves on video); I would then have each student meet with me separately for one hour and view the video and speak to me about their choices of speech and silence in this class- I would ask them a few questions (which have been enclosed), and these individual sessions would be audiotaped; I would then have everyone meet together in a focus group (discussion group), to discuss the same topic - this session would be audiotaped as well; I would ask if anyone would like to keep a journal about things they remember that they have learned through the years concerning silence in communicative interactions; I would also make some notes of observations that I make when viewing the video. When all of this data have been gathered and transcribed verbatim into written form, I will do an analysis of the data and write tentative findings. I will then ask to meet with the participants again in a group to discuss these tentative findings and to ask for corrections, additions and other comments they may wish to contribute. This session will also be audiotaped. I will then transcribe this audiotape, add it to the other data, and write the final findings. Participants may read the final results any time they wish. I would feel honored if they did. This type of qualitative research has been reported to be a wonderful learning experience for all of the participants, as well as for the instructor of the class and the researcher.

I would be happy to let you read my methodology chapter which describes in more detail my qualitative research approach. You may also call my University supervisor, Dr. Alison Preece, in the Faculty of Education, for more information concerning this study. I will be happy to discuss any and all details with you, Lauren, concerning this research project, any time you wish.

Thank you very much for your time and attention in these matters. I look forward to discussing this further with you.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Fenimore
Phone 477-6122



INTER-CULTURAL
ASSOCIATION
OF GREATER VICTORIA

200 - 2504 Government St.
Victoria, B.C. V8T 4P7
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Fax: (250) 386-4395



December 13, 1997

Ethic Committee
Research Administration
University of Victoria

Regarding: Mary Ann Fenimore's project for interviewing members from ICA
Multicultural Senior Group

I am the coordinator of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services. The program is the vital front-line services to immigrant communities in Greater Victoria. The program provides reception, assessment, orientation, information, interpretation, counseling, referral, and advocacy. The objectives of the program is to assist immigrants in easier and successful integration into Canadian society.

It is my pleasure to acknowledge that my program is greatly interested in this project. It will be beneficial for the program settlement counselors to understand the issues immigrant seniors facing in the community. The settlement counselors have the knowledge, experience, and sensitivity to deal with the particular needs of immigrants. We blend methods that are indigenous to the immigrant culture with the techniques of contemporary Canadian social and communication skills on problem solving of the immigrant well-being. The program identifies that the issues facing seniors are significant and complex.

By all means, the program is excited and motivated to cooperate with Ms. Fenimore's project in recruiting the participants. Please feel free to call me, if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

Tomoko Okada
Coordinator,
Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services

cc: Lauren Sprague, Executive Director. ICA
Mary Ann Fenimore, Researcher

With my signature I demonstrate that I feel comfortable with participating in this research project, as I have specified on the previous page.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Experimenter: _____ Mary Ann Fenimore-Graduate Student
Phone: 477-6122.
Faculty Advisor: Dr. A. Preece: 721-7759.
University of Victoria

Appendix E

Research Questions asked of Participants

Each participants in this study was interviewed privately within a 'stimulated recall' context. As each individual viewed herself or himself in the video, a conversational type of interview was used, which often assisted the interviewee in feeling relaxed, and which facilitated reflections on the issues at hand (Williamson, 1997). During that time the participants were asked some semi-open-ended questions concerning the research topic. These questions are now listed.

(Note: The questions above the line are 'key questions' which were asked of all participants.)

Questions about the participants themselves:

Can you tell me why you are choosing to be silent at this particular time in your classroom participation?

Since I want to understand more about silence from your perspective and point of view, perhaps you might explain some underlying reasons for your silence at this time.

What is the meaning of your silence at this particular time in the class?

How might you interpret your silence?

Does your age affect your choices of silence?

Does your gender have meaning in your choices of silence?

Does your ethnicity affect your choices of silence?

Questions concerning signs and signals for breaking silence.

How do you usually signal or show that you want to speak in class?

What are the meanings of your signals or indications for wanting to speak?

How might you interpret your signals for ending your silence and speaking?

How do you decide which signals for wishing to speak that you will use?

The next questions may be used for keeping things going if the participants can think of nothing more to offer:

Further questions about participants themselves.

What might be some causes for your silence?

What is your silence used for?

What are you trying to say or express with your silence?

When or where do you use silence and why?

In what situations do you use silence?

With whom do you use silence more?

When the teacher asks you a question in class, how do you feel?

What types of things affect your choices or underlying meanings of silence?

Do you think you are quiet or talkative in classes and why?

What helps you determine when you will be silent and when you will speak?

I noticed that you were more silent in _____ situation and a little more talkative in _____ situation, can you tell a little more about that?

Questions concerning an individual's classmates and silence:

What do you think about students who talk a lot in class?

What do you think about students who don't talk a lot in class?

Some of these questions were developed and refined before and during the key informant and pilot study processes, which were described previously, and some of these questions were adapted from a study by Jones and Gerig (1994), about silence in several grade six classes.

Appendix F

Excerpts from First Focus Group

This is a small excerpt from the discussion about meanings of silence that took place in the first focus group.

Participant. That (silence) is respect. (She writes 'respect' on the board). Being quiet. Let me say something first, I will answer first, that will help you. In my culture, it is good to be silent when you want everybody to listen to the person speaking. Again, when elders are together in a group like this, everybody at the beginning keep silent, so as to allow the elder, the eldest person, the chief, to speak.

Or, they keep silent to to be able to think, to think what to say. So that is in African, general African. Here in Canada, you, you keep silent. It's more or less the same. You are trying to respect the person speaking, if someone is speaking. Or, if you don't know the person sitting beside you, I don't know you, you don't know her, everybody keeps silent. You just, you know... So, how, in your culture, or here, why are you silent?

Participant. Ummm, might be if I, if I'm in a school, my principal, ah ah, for a meeting, ah I listen about things and I keep silent.

Participant. Umm, you keep silent.

Participant. Next time, if we, if there's some people I don't know or don't like, I am keep silent.

Participant. Yes, if you don't know them or don't like them, you keep silent (wrinkles nose and face).

Participant. Yes.

Participant. What about chief. He is silent?

(Long silence)

Participant. When you don't talk, why?

Participant. Um, when not understand.

Participant. Oh! If you don't understand, then you keep silent. Um hum.

Researcher. Ah! Um hum! Yes.

Participant. And what else? Again. Another reason why.

Participant. You don't know what to say. And when you don't know the English.

Participant. Oh, he say, when he doesn't speak English. That's lack of communication.

Researcher. Okay. Ah huh.

Participant. Then listen too. And, when I can't speak English, so I keep quiet. (laughs).

Participant. That's true.

Participants mumble a bit.

Participant. No, that's the answer for her.

Researcher. Yes, and I understand. When you can't speak English, then you are silent.

All participants. Yes, yeah, ah huh. That's true. (All laughing)

Participant. What about Len?

Participant. Some Chinese talk. Different place.

Participant. Oh, when you are in a different location. Different place from what you are used to.

Participant. Some some place I can, I can talk. Some place, must keep silent.

Participant. Oh, it depends on where he finds himself. Umm.

Researcher. Okay, yes, uh huh. And what place will you be silent? In which place?

Participant. In classroom. In class. Maybe I will be silent. And let the teacher to talk.

Participant. And that's not the new... The new method of education is you should talk.

Participant. And, in a meeting, in a meeting.

Researcher. Oh, okay.

Participant. Yes, it's like that. Different place. Silence.

Participant. What, when one is angry, when I am very (heavy emphasis on 'very') angry, I always keep silent. Because when I talk, then I start ahh, ahh, ahh (she makes this sound with raised volume and emphasis). Then I keep silence to control myself, to control my anger. When I'm ve-e-ery angry (greater emphasis), then I...(claps hand over mouth while her eyes open wide with an angry, blazing appearance).

Participant. This is good idea.

Participant. You understand?

Participant. I understand.

Researcher. And what about when you're sad? If you feel sad. Will you be silent?

Participant. Yes. That's emotional; keep silent.

Participant. When he's sad (points to other participant), he keeps silent.

Participant. Oh! (laughs). That's true, everybody does that, he does do that. When my children speak to me, I don't answer. When I'm sad, like this (demonstrates hanging head and sad face).

Researcher. Ah, okay, yes.

In a later part of this focus group discussion, some other meanings of silence were discussed.

Participant. What of silence in a group?

Participant. No. If you know somebody, you you, if you know somebody you like, ahmm, ah, speak ah another one things to everybody, you need to keep quiet. Maybe you say something, you say like, ah, I'm I'm busy a lot, or ah, but ah, he, he, just ah, all all people to know this one.

Participant. Oh, like if you visit Europe?

Participant. No, like if I go, if I know somebody, he like to talk too much another people's, like a joke, joke, like a joke. "Oh, somebody this and this and this (in high pitched frantic voice and pointing at another person)". If you know this one in the group, you keep silent.

Participant. You keep silent (same time as above person says it.)

Participant. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher. Because they make fun of you. They make a joke about you. Yes, okay, I understand.

Participant. Oh yes. Let me write it (Goes to chalk board and writes it).

Researcher. Yes, very good.

Participant. Just she say, ear talk.

Researcher. I don't understand ear talk.

Participant. Make fun, make fun, say, "oh look at it ha ha ha!" Making fun of us.

Chatter among the participants.

Participant. If everybody happy, no problem. But, if do do do do do (in high pitched voice and pointing at other), not good, not funny.

Researcher. Yes, not funny, no, yes, not funny.

Participant. If you know somebody like this, you keep quiet.

Many voices. All agree. Yes.

Participant. Then you are afraid to talk.

Participant. Friends. Friends ah, anything can speak. But with no friendship, no friendship, then keep quiet.

Researcher. Yes, then keep quiet, more silent.

Participant. Yes.

Participant. It makes you afraid.

Participant. Public, public, no polite, polite! (emphasis on last word).

Researcher. Oh, polite, to be polite.

Participant. Ah, I think keep quiet, keep silent, may be polite, but when, when you talk, you must talk. Sometimes keep silent, but when teacher want you to talk, you must talk. I think this is the ah polite.

Researcher. Okay.

Participant. Um hum.

Participant. If this group is friendly, friendly, I will talk more. If not friendly, I sometimes will keep quiet. If in a group, talking about, if I, I know talking the things, if I know, I will I will talk. If I did not understand I keep silent.

Researcher. Yes, I understand. Yes.

Appendix G

Tentative Findings

Brief Notes concerning initial findings from the Data:
 Compiled from seven Stimulated Recall Interviews and First Focus Group discussion
 Presented to research participants
 In second focus group meeting
 For input, additions and corrections from participants

Meanings of Silence found in data:

Silence to show respect.
 Respect for elders.
 Respect for the chief.
 To Listen.
 When angry.
 Respect for the teacher.
 When we cannot speak the language well.
 When from another culture.
 To let others finish what they are saying.
 To interpret what others have said.
 When not sure about good communication in English.
 When we really want to learn, we listen carefully.
 To be polite.
 When teaching, use silence to get attention from the students.
 Silence from fear.
 Uneasy silence.
 Silence when trying to figure out what to do next.
 A sign of giving your ears to others, to listen.
 Silence in awe of a teacher or someone else special.
 Fear of punishment.
 To show a willingness to learn.
 To avoid having people recoil from you.
 Fear of negative judgments of others.
 When older, so many things to think about.
 When some men are around and you are a woman, in some situations.
 When a story teller tells a story.
 Thinking about what follows a special word: "half a word is enough for the wise".
 Respect for the king.
 Anger or resignation.
 Frustration.
 With people in authority, like the teacher or principal.
 When not sure of ourselves.

To avoid making mistakes.
 In the library or in church or in a high class restaurant.
 When lower class people are with upper class people, lower class more silent at times.
 In a high quality school, more silence in respect.
 To be proper with the teacher.
 To obey the teacher in keeping silence in classroom.
 To let anybody else speak.
 To show interest in what others are saying.
 When disagree with someone.
 When trying to understand what someone said.
 To understand the culture more.
 To understand the people more and thus have more power.
 To think.
 If a man, to let ladies speak first.
 When figuring out when you can make a contribution.
 When waiting your turn to speak.
 Waiting for the right opportunity to speak.
 Figuring out how to be concise.
 When too far back in classroom, not seen by the teacher enough.
 Feeling like a different personality in a different culture.
 Feeling like a 3 or 4 year old when not knowing the language.
 Being curious and listening.
 Giving another person an opportunity to explain.
 Feeling the comfort of our own private dreams.
 Having memories you can't explain and don't want criticism.
 For reflection.
 Lonely.
 Feel alone.
 Don't feel like you fit in.
 Can't find the little niche you would like where you feel comfortable to talk.
 Not feel what you have to say will be valued.
 Must be quiet to learn.
 In particular topics or areas, perhaps it's best for men to speak.
 Nervousness in a foreign country.
 The right time just doesn't come to participate with speaking.
 Silent because I wasn't spoken to first.
 When others are drilling or practicing lessons, we are silent.
 To concentrate our thoughts.
 To try to show my emotions.
 Waiting for the teacher to explain the lessons.
 When there is something I don't like.
 I don't want to hurt people.
 Silence in church
 Silence in movies.
 To avoid punishment.

To appear intelligent.
 To find out how people think and their way of life.
 To understand how people make sense of things.
 To go through things in my own head, to think.
 To make sure I hear every word.
 To learn.
 When feel scared of someone in class.
 Fear of saying the wrong thing.
 Don't know the subject.
 Silence in class to honour someone who died.
 Show respect for someone but don't agree with them.
 When I don't understand.
 When I don't know the answer.
 Shy.
 Tired.
 Worried.
 Not feeling well.
 Deep thought.
 Brain is full of what I have learned.
 When working hard.
 Show respect after a person finished speaking by waiting a while and then speaking.
 Silence to allow elders to speak.
 When you don't know the person beside you in class or a group.
 Where there are people I don't like.
 When I don't know what to say.
 When lack communication skills for that context.
 When feeling emotional.
 Depressed.
 Afraid to talk your mind.
 Afraid someone will make fun of you or make a joke about you and laugh at you in class.
 When there is no friendship.
 Not comfortable.
 Don't want to spend many people's time in class, so will be silent and ask after class.
 In school, teacher talks, student silent. Only speak when teacher ask.
 Same now as senior, teacher asks, I speak.
 In group in Canada, all others speak first - all Canadians. Then maybe I speak after.
 Proper, polite.
 Not feel well, so worried. Keep silent.
 Sometimes man talks, woman silent. Sometimes woman talk, man silent.

Signs and Signals for Breaking Silence and beginning to Speak:

Raise your hand.
 Stand up.

Raise one finger.

Raise 5 fingers and hand.

Say, "excuse me" in a very polite voice.

At a break say, "have you thought of this?"

Raising hand nice and straight and tall.

To flap your hand.

Just start speaking.

Open my mouth.

Say, "pardon me", or "what did you say?", or "eh".

Clear the throat.

Hand up along with saying, "excuse me".

Wave your hand and call the teacher.

One finger up by shoulder

One finger in front of face

Appendix H

Second Focus Group Meeting

Research participants' responses to tentative findings

These notes include what the participants agreed that they wanted included in or excluded from the research data, after examining the tentative findings (Appendix G) which were presented to them in the second focus group discussion. Participant names were not attached to the comments.

Notes were taken of the specific comments, as participants suggested that these notes be taken, due to their concerns. This focus group discussion was not audio taped because so much time was spent reading the tentative findings together and making sure that everyone was clear as to what each item meant. The participants were in agreement with all of the tentative findings which do not appear in this second focus group meeting appendix. That meant that the participants acknowledged that one or more persons in the group experienced silences in ways that were listed in the tentative findings.

However, a few corrections and additional suggestions were made by the participants during the second focus group discussion. These are listed here:

Corrections to the text:

- Page 2 of tentative findings. Concerning: "in a high quality school, there is more silence in respect". Participants asked that this be omitted. The participants didn't agree with this statement (above) and the original person who said this (Len) was no longer in agreement with what he had said and wanted it omitted.

- Page 2 of tentative findings. Concerning: "silence in movies". Participants noted that in some countries people are not silent in movies but rather are very vocal!

- Page 3 of tentative findings. Concerning: "silence to allow elders to speak". One participant said, "in my culture this is very rampant".

Comments at random as text was discussed:

- "Silence allows the other person to operate".
- "We must give silence a chance to operate".
- "You can't do two things at once, so silent"
- "Silence is not a solitary thing. If you are silent you're learning".
- "Generation judgemental gap - where elders think poorly of youngsters but keep silent, and vice versa".