

From Gutierrez, Rymes, & Larson - p. 456
(1995)

1b) T: U::m. ↑Start with some
pretty easy ones here,
(1.8)

T: This week, for the last few days in fact.
In fact it's on the front page of
today's Los Angeles Times,
there've been a lot of, uh,
people pretty excited in
Petaluma California.
What are they excited about
in Petaluma California.

In the excerpt above, the very definition of "easy ones," or "default knowledge," may be paraphrased as "those facts that have appeared on the front page of the *Los Angeles Times*." In fact, the teacher later reveals that the item in question is about a whale who swam up a river from the San Francisco Bay to Petaluma and refused to turn around and go back. Clearly, it is not the important content of this news story that makes it worthy of the current events quiz. Rather, it is the particular cultural context within which it occurs that makes it a relevant question. Specifically, this teacher expects his students to engage in his cultural practices: for example, reading the *Los Angeles Times* every morning. The selection of the whale story is arbitrary and designed to determine if the students read the paper. However, since this classroom is not full of middle-class adults, this is not a cultural context or "world" that most of the students in this classroom share with the teacher. Thus, and as will be elaborated below, this presentation of cultural knowledge as if it were universal, or "world" knowledge, constructs the students as ignorant. By presenting the teacher's internalized cultural norms as monologic, his own internal dialogization remains unexposed and the potential for social heteroglossia is extinguished.

S = Student
T = Teacher

Tan = Tania
Pet = Peter

((students have begun guessing about the Petaluma event))

- 1d) S: Isn't that guy going to jail or something?
 T: No::::::?
 S: Check out ()
 T: Yes?
 S: Is there a man getting executed or something?
 T: No::::::[:::::
 S: [(((imitating))No:::::,
 T: But that's a good guess, I'll give you another hint.
 There's a river that runs through Petaluma.
 That river drains out into the San Francisco Bay.
 (0.2)
 U:h, does anybody figure out, what's going on in Petaluma.
 ((misc. student side-responses))
 T: Tania.
 Tan: They're cleaning it?
 [it's clean now
 T: [Na::w, it's a good guess.
 (0.8)
 T: Peter.
 Pet: Is there a new Dam, or something?
 T: No::::::::::, it's-

In the above excerpt, while student responses do show an awareness of current news stories insofar as their responses refer to a much publicized kidnap and murder in Petaluma (Isn't that guy going to jail . . . ?), the students are not getting close to the correct answer, as determined by the teacher. Nevertheless, the teacher encourages their continued participation as long as they are following the teacher's script. Each "No" response ends on a rising intonation, encouraging the students to raise their hands and offer yet another wrong answer. In the following segment, the students' sense of their own constructed ignorance increases ("We don't know, no one knows"), as does the impression that the teacher holds the important knowledge in this classroom. By continuing to field their wrong answers, the teacher constructs the students according to his previously implied assumptions; that is, most students "probably don't know" what is going on in the "world." In fact, the continuation of the wrong-answer sequence finally forces the students to plead ignorant, as shown below:

2a) TEACHER SCRIPT

STUDENT SCRIPT

S: Is there a man getting
executed or something?

T: No:::[::::

S: [(((imitating))) No:::,,

T: But that's a good guess,
I'll give you another hint.
There's a river
that runs through Petaluma.
That river drains out into
the San Francisco Ba.y.
(0.0)

U:h, does anybody figure out,
what's going on in Petaluma.

S: They- peed in the river.

As this layout suggests, not all student contributions are part of the student script. The first student contribution ("Is there a man getting executed . . .") is fully within the teacher script, as it continues the line of questioning in the teacher's key. Only when students appropriate and re-key the teacher script do they create a separate counterscript in which their multiple voices are raised.

The first boldfaced student response begins to indicate their frustration with wrong answers, or, perhaps worse, they have begun to display their impatience with a game they deem pointless; rather than continuing in the same key as the teacher script, this student has re-keyed the activity (as signaled at first, by his change in intonation) as a chance for joke-making, or Goffman's key of "playfulness" or mocking intonation.¹² The student's mocking intonation (No:::) transforms the teacher's utterances into an object for jokes; this new key is then taken up in the next student utterance, which doesn't show any attempt to guess the correct answer for the current events quiz but successfully continues the joking key.