CHAPTER 8

TRUST IN EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE

A Risky Undertaking

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INTRODUCTION

Newcomers who strive to achieve some institutional reward, or who work to become accepted members of some institutional group, will frequently struggle with conflicting norms or blurred practices. I take learners in school to be an example of such struggle. As newcomers, they face qualitatively different aspects that are covered (and partly disguised) by the institutional umbrella role of being a teacher. As children entering school and becoming 'pupils,' they are supposed to normally learn that their teacher is a good-natured adult who not only has knowledge to share, but will also take care of their interests (cf. Marková, Linell, & Gillespie 2008 on 'basic trust'). This initial learning situation is generally low-stake for the pupils. As they grow older, however, stakes become higher, and pupils gradually come to realize that their teacher is not only a friendly coach, but in fact also a judge. This gradual transition invites an issue of trust that they need to fig-

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ure out: How do you as a pupil know what role aspect is currently dominant, in which teacher, in what situation (cf. Marková, Linell, & Gillespie 2008 on "context-dependent trust")?

Genre researcher Ongstad (1997) has observed that one challenge pupils face is that classrooms are institutional sites where any topic or activity is typically recontextualized in such a way that it tends to become a task to be given, carried out and evaluated. This pattern of recontextualization introduces an "as if" dimension in the classroom that combines with blurred teacher roles. Even if Ongstad does not directly address the issue of trust, it seems justified to suspect that the above combination may make trust a rare commodity in educational discourse.

In this chapter, I shall explore issues of trust in an educational setting where teenagers in lower secondary school are learning to write argumentative prose. I first present a small set of earlier, related studies. These studies do observe the expected "as if" nature of educational practice, as Ongstad found to be the case, but also point to a need for qualifying overly general claims. Not all communication in educational writing is dominated by an "as if" dimension, it seems. Quite to the contrary, there are cases where communication seems to be "genuine" in the sense that it is trustful (cf. Zitoun, 2013). As an applied linguist, I take particular interest in such cases, since they may imply paths towards improved educational practices. In the ensuing empirical section, I next outline the action research study that my material is taken from and reproduce data excerpts that form the empirical basis for my analysis. These excerpts show that assumedly trustful discourse may be extremely challenging, and at times quite provocingly so. In the discussion section, I try to first eke out methodological principles that make it possible to demonstrate trust even in contexts where it is not explicitly thematized. I finally move to my main objective — to point out some theoretical benefits from including trust as a necessary element in a valid approach to understanding written interaction.

EARLIER STUDIES

In one of the first large-scale empirical studies of educational writing, Britton and his associates (Britton et al., 1975) analyzed the writing of secondary school children (ages 11–18) in relation to categories of "sense of audience." Here, the blurred nature of teacher practices was taken empirically into account by developing a set of subcategories for "teacher as audience" ranging from "teacher as trusted adult" through specific or general "dialogue partner" in school to "teacher as examiner." The specific dialogue partner in this classification was characterized by sharing a specific interest or extracurricular experience with the pupil. This category was observed with older pupils only (secondary years 5 and 7).
In classifying 2104 written utterances of 500 secondary school children on the basis of textual analysis, classroom observation and interviews, the research group was able to produce quantitative data on the relative frequencies of each subcategory. In their material, only 1.6% of the written utterances were found to be addressed to 'teacher as trusted adult,' and 1.0% in the category of specific dialogue partner, whereas 48.7% were found to be addressed to 'teacher as examiner' and 38.8% to 'teacher as general dialogue partner.' In this distribution, the 'trusted adult' category remained relatively constant across secondary years, while the 'examiner' category increased steadily from 40% in year 1 to 61% in year 7, at the expense of the general dialogue partner category.

One salient finding in this study was thus the low frequency of both a trustful and a specific relationship. Nevertheless, the study did show that trust is in some cases achieved in educational writing. The 'as if' mechanism in education (Bongstad 1997) brings out, thus does not seem to totally rule out trust. But how is trust achieved and revealed? Britton et al. had little to offer in terms of defining trust or providing tangible discourse evidence, but note (1975:68) that the degree of trust is influenced by feedback in class, as when a teacher reads something aloud without having first asked for permission. There is thus a link between this early study and the claim recently made by Linell and Keselman (2012) and others that trust is an interactionally achieved phenomenon.

The Britton et al. study put the issue of trust on the agenda in applied writing research, but left a need to look more closely at how trust may be revealed in pupil writings. In my first published case study from the project to be reported in more detail below (Evensen, 1997), the focal writer 'Elzbieta' chose to indirectly address a very difficult aspect of her background in the second of her project writings. She was an immigrant girl who was struggling with psychological problems. This was a point that was first revealed to me by one of her fellow pupils, who had chosen to write about a feared suicide. When I gave oral response to this fellow student's first draft as a researcher-observer, she confided that her text was written with Elzbieta in mind. I take this voluntary combination of dangerous topic (suicide) and direct address (in this case oral), to be one empirical indication of trust.

'Elzbieta,' on her part, seemed to indirectly reveal her story when writing about a situation where the protagonist is the object of attempted rape during a summer outing arranged by a church organization. For reasons of space, I offer only my English translations of this excerpt (as I shall in all other excerpts in this article). The excerpts are translated in such a way that spelling mistakes and idiosyncrasies are rendered to the best of my ability. For more detail about translation and other background information, cf. Evensen (2000, 2013).
Excerpt 0: Elżbieta

Mistreatment and us. [date and year] ... 

I don't know what and who I shall write to. It may be to you [her teacher's first name]. I think to write about mistreatment of children and how one shall avoid and protect oneself against such things and cases. I know a person who was mistreated (not mistreated really, mistreated, but mistreated if you understand what I mean).

...

In this excerpt, Elżbieta directly addresses her second language teacher twice about a personally pressing issue, and then tells an illustrating story that thematically is not quite in accordance with what is normally discussed between a pupil and her teacher in class. I thus take also this text to demonstrate a level of trust in which a risky topic (sexual abuse of children) is voluntarily combined with a specific reader address that is not common in argumentative prose. This initial level of trust is not, however, kept throughout her multi-voiced text. In moving from the story and into an advisory final part, the addressee is no longer clearly her teacher, but rather a general teenager girl audience (one that is still addressed in the text as you). That the audience has changed, can be seen in her brief coda. After having presented a final list of five pieces of advice, she ends her text with a separately spaced line:

These were the ones, so thanks for me! See u!

Here the style is characterized more by teenager talk than by specific teacher address.

A range of similar indications of educational trust occur in the material from a QAL sub-study (Andersson & Hertzberg, 2005). Their study was based on a nationally representative sample taken from all first language exam writers in grade 10 over four consecutive years (1998–2001). Even if the data were taken from a formal and somewhat high-stake writing situation (the pupils' final exam after grade 10), a sizeable minority of the students chose to nevertheless write about risky topics (like sex or street crime); they might use swearwords or street slang, or in other ways indicate attitudes (for example on religious issues) that were in clear opposition to the school curriculum. The researchers took such non-sanctioned attitudes or ways of expression to be indications of educational trust. It may be objected that trustful pupil writing is just a symptom of institutional naïveté in cases like these, but analysis of the assessment reports attached to each student text shows that these pupils were actually right in assuming that their attitudes or ways of expression would not be held against them, granted that these were made textually plausible.
THEORETICAL APPROACH

Issues of trust in institutional communication would seem to invite an organizational-historical theoretical approach, one that Nystrand (1992) has termed a ‘social constructionist’ approach. What characterizes such an approach, is a focus on group-related and relatively stable discourse practices (like genres), in contrast to a ‘social interactionist’ approach which focuses on dyadic meaning negotiation in the immediately situated here and now. As I have tried to show in my earlier research, however, neither approach can possibly form the basis for a valid theory of verbal communication (Evensen, 2002, 2004, 2013). A valid theory needs to incorporate aspects of both approaches, in a principled way.

In my own theorizing, I have explored a dialogical alternative (Bakhtin, 1986; Linell, 1998), where an utterance addresses not only immediate interlocutors, but simultaneously also other utterances and communication practices. There is in other words some form of a two-dimensionality to dialogism that needs to be explored (see Figure 1). I suggest that it is an important theoretical issue to explore how the two dimensions are related.

With social interactionism, this model accepts that there is a dialogue going on between specific writers and readers. This foregrounded dia-

![Diagram](image)

FIGURE 1. A dialogical model of written communication
logue, however, does not exclude other, backgrounded dialogues that are going on simultaneously — dialogues between the ongoing dialogue and earlier dialogues (for instance through intertextuality) and dialogues with sedimented symbolic resources available for the creation of discourse (for instance through contextualization cues). Simple interactionism captures essential aspects of communication, but needs to be transcended.

Thus, as social constructionism highlights, there are cultural conventions that are relevant when we communicate. But these conventions are not something fixed that we use, as the term 'language use' implies. Conventions are not straightjackets in everyday sociocultural life. Whenever the need arises within informal communities of practice, we may cross the borders of convention, and verbal innovation may take place quite freely (see a list of examples in Evensen 2001).

This model assumes that communication involves a co-constitutive relation between two fused discourse dimensions. An interactionist, horizontal dimension, is related to a constructionist, vertical dimension, in two different ways. First of all the two dimensions are related through grounding, where the interactionist dimension forms a foreground against a constructionist background. Secondly, there are specific phenomena that act as a bridge between the dimensions. One such bridge is intertextuality; a second is contextualisation cues. I assume that there may be other such bridging phenomena, but these two are the only ones that, so far, I have been able to identify. If such a model is relevant for studies of trust in discourse, data about trust should be illuminated either by the grounding relation or by one or more bridging phenomena.

THE STUDY

The 'Invisible teenagers?' study (Evensen, 2000) was designed in consort with three lower secondary school teachers. The project group was interested in expanding the educational horizon of 'process oriented teaching of writing' (POW), a then popular didactic approach that gave priority to individually and experientially based teaching, as well as personally oriented narrative forms of student writing. Our focus was on argumentation, however, as a way of fostering democratic involvement through prose writing, while maintaining a clear authorial voice.

We planned the project as a series of incrementally constructed stages, where each consecutive stage incorporated the preceding stage. In order to allow normal school work to continue while the project was in progress, these stages were weeks or months apart in the participant teachers' individual plans for the term. The stages of our project design were the following ones:
• At stage I, students were asked to write a traditional set of writing assignments, like they do in pre-POW teaching of writing, but here they pre-wrote and wrote drafts that were presented to a peer response group and then revised. This stage was intended to ensure comparability of data with an assumed minimal platform of POW.

• At stage II, students were invited to write about an individual topic of their own choosing, a topic that was individually felt to be highly relevant. To invite thematically relevant writing, students were given several colloquial, but written prompts to choose among, like
  – God, it ticks me off when...
  – One thing I would be willing to fight for is...
  – And that’s final!

  This stage was meant to ensure individual relevance of topic as well as comparability with somewhat more elaborate approaches to POW.

• At a more communicationally oriented stage III, the students wrote for readers in a sister class located in a different part of the city. At this stage each student got an additional response from either their teacher or the researcher, focusing on discourse coherence. This stage offered an audience of unknown peers as well as response geared to communicating with unknown, but socio-culturally similar readers. It was thus meant to catch any effects of beginning to establish a more genuinely communicative setting.

• At a follow-up stage IV, the students wrote in reply to an argumentative text of their own choosing from a sister class writer. Through this step, a genuinely communicative setting was expected to be established.

• At the final stage V, we established a discourse forum with our pupils, where solutions to recurring, but specific discourse problems were discussed in class between response and rewriting during continued writing to peers in a sister class.

Contrary to my perhaps naïve expectations at the time (1992–1998), this programme in the majority of cases did not lead to genuine pupil involvement or written interaction among the pupils. Rather, as suggested by Ongstad (1997), it was taken as a set of ordinary educational tasks to be performed and evaluated. In many cases, the writing was in accordance with the observation of Marková, Linell, & Gillespie (2008, p. 21): “Communicative partners can pretend trust and involve themselves in anything ranging from a fake dialogue to a window-dressing or camouflage that is intended for the third party to whom the content of dialogue may be passed on.” There was, however, a handful of cases that were different, and it is these cases that I have chosen to focus on in my research, and that I shall offer excerpts from below.
DATA EXCERPTS

When piloting the second stage of our design, a weakly performing tenth grade writer was spurred by our writing task. "O. K." chose to write a critical and fairly offensive piece which initiated a series of texts involving himself, his teacher, a second teacher, his father and the school headmaster. The background for this pupil’s critical involvement seemed to be the fact that his mother was an unemployed social worker, and his father was also out of work. In a political situation where teachers were involved in a strike over working hours, O. K.’s family has discussed this strike over meals several times, comparing the working conditions for teachers to those of social workers. As a consequence of this background, O. K. had a personal interest in this issue, as well as some cross-institutional knowledge. The excerpt below is meant to illustrate only the controversial aspect of his writing (challenging the professional cause of his teachers), which I take to presuppose some level of institutional trust:

Excerpt 1: O. K.

Through attitudes created by teacher organizations I get an impression that teachers take everything negatively. Say no to everything. Scared of new things and changes. This I think is horrible with respect to [the fact] that it to a large extent is they who have power over the future and (over me). I write this in the hope that the teachers will consider the consequences of being victim to these attitudes.

Teachers’ working hours in relation to their wages have now been referred to a lot. It is quite arrogant to claim that one has a harder workload than other professional groups. (The weaver of the shoe knows where it hurts). As an example the teachers almost always compare themselves to groups who earn more than them, and according to them have less workload. I have never heard teachers compare themselves to groups who earn less, for instance health care personnel...

Since the issue of offering a genuine audience was important in our action research project, O. K.’s teacher chose to move immediately on to our planned stage III in this particular case, without my knowing until later, and brought the text to a local representative of the teachers’ union, who wrote the following in reply to the student:

Excerpt 2: T (second teacher)

Rather than entering an argument to your specific points, I choose rather to offer a general comment.

1. A text is not argumentative by characterizing others’ arguments and using derogatory words about them. This is a trap which is easy to fall into when one takes a position on an issue one does not know anything about.
5. Your last paragraph starts with "what should be done?" Here there is no single constructive proposal. Instead •••• your characterization of others' positions.

6. On the basis of this I do not wish to argue against your different claims as there first needs to be created a basis for such an argumentation.

This negative reply spurred O. K. on to writing a comment back, at the teacher this time:

**Excerpt 3: O. K.**

To T [teacher's first name]

Your reaction to my essay shows that its content was better than I thought in advance. In this letter I want to comment briefly on the content of your opinion about my essay.

Pt. 1: It may be the case that I have fallen into a trap, but then you have fallen into a bigger trap with your reply.

...

pt. 5: If you read the text, my proposal is clearly and evidently written. Otherwise I hope you take the time to read my composition until you have understood its content. I want you to read the last sentence of my first paragraph particularly well. It was in good faith that I wrote this text.

Regards

O. K.

At this point O. K.'s teacher could no longer refrain from taking part himself. He wrote a quasiformal letter to his pupil, including a diary specifying what he had done that far during this particular day up to the point of writing, at midnight. He concluded with an appeal: 'Well, O. K., do you see the point? I take a full holiday during X-mas and other "holidays" with a clear conscience! This was enough about teachers' holidays' [which had also been one of O. K.'s initial arguments, LSE].

On the basis of this development in the educational process, O. K.'s teacher received a letter from O. K.'s father, who could not refrain from taking part either:

**Excerpt 4: O. K.'s father**

Conc. argumentative composition written by O. K.

I refer to composition about [name of teacher organization], comment from T. and reply to T. from O. K.
The only firm [ground] I have in this case are the abovementioned texts. The rest is built on scattered impressions. If my impressions are correct, though, I have to address you as homeroom teacher.

O. K. has been given the task of writing argumentative compositions. When he chooses a topic which concerns the teachers, however, he gets unappreciative reactions. One may then of course be tempted to think that the composition must have been good. From what I understand, O. K. thinks so. However, we cannot allow ourselves to ignore that which may develop in a pupil—teacher relationship as a consequence of attitudes forthcoming in the letter from T... I expect other [kinds of] reaction from one positioned to be the teacher of my son, and I am confident that this issue will be discussed with him by the rector of the school.

At this quite dramatic point, O. K.'s teacher decided to write a joint letter to his class co-coordinator, to the rector, to T. and to O. K.'s father, giving a thorough account of what had taken place and what the educational aims behind the process that far were. Following this, a very difficult and prolonged process of clearing up matters took place, with T. writing an extended joint letter to O. K. and his father, the father writing a joint letter in reply to all teachers at his son's school, and so on.

A second, ensuing case proved to be even more dramatic. As a newcomer to O. K's class, 'Arnie' had watched the writing process of his new classmate enfold, and then opted for writing a controversial piece in the following third stage. Arnie was a timid and weak pupil with dyslexia who had been mobbed in his previous class at a different school and recently transferred to this class. His first text turned out to be both surprising and provocative.

**Excerpt 5: Arnie**

**Immigrants are a problem**

The immigrants are a problem to us. They come here and receive a house, a car and a log cabin. Our jobs they receive as well. Some of them may have a hard time, but they come to sponge us.

What happens with a refugee is that he is placed in a refugee center and stays there until he gets a residence permit. I know somebody who worked as a cook at [...] refugee centre. The refugees were *not* satisfied with Norwegian meat cakes and potatoes, *neither* would they have soup or bread with cheese. They demanded ox meat and rice cakes. The manager once could not eat his homemade lunch basket with liver paté, they held that he could be punished by allah. This goes too far. Even I would not have given a nigger even the *leftovers* after me.
This ideologically very dangerous text provoked our project teacher to openly confront Arnie, by bringing a newspaper article about neo-nazis into class for discussion, specifically referring to Arnie’s composition. This class session provoked Arnie into writing a formal letter in reply to his teacher:

**Excerpt 6: Arnie**

Concerning your statements on November 25, 1992

After you showed us this excerpt from VG [a Norwegian tabloid newspaper] about neonazism I was furious by your characterizing me as a neo-nazi and that I hate the Jews. True enough I am a racist, and I evidently do not like the immigrants. But I do not hate the Jews for this reason and I am in no way planning to kill one somebody.

...

His teacher wrote a formal letter in reply:

**Excerpt 7: Arnie’s teacher**

CONCERNING YOUR LETTER 26.11.92

I did not characterise you as a neo-nazi, but I said that the copy from VG from Saturday 21.11.92 was dedicated to you because I get the impression that you hold opinions that are close to what a nazi would mean and regrettably means today.

...

The texts from Arnie’s class were then brought to a sister class at a different school, where the pupils were asked to read the texts and to write a response to one of them. In this sister class, ‘Thi,’ a very shy, quiet and culturally “invisible” Vietnamese girl encouraged by her fellow students, wrote the following response:

**Excerpt 8: Thi**

TO YOU WHO WRITE ABOUT “RACISM”

I think <that> you have written a good text, but I shall tell you one thing, that I am myself a foreigner. Your text hurt me a lot, even if you only have written about Negroes. Let me tell you <that> all the names that you think are strange, are as strange as your own name.

Me and my family do not come here to take anything from you. We were chased out of our country, and it was that Norwegian boat who was willing to receive us (and we are grateful).
I have lived in Norway all my life, and like it very much here. I have now been to primary school for 8 ½, and am glad that nobody in my class is like you. We are in fact two in my class.

During the next stage in our project programme, Thi stayed with this topic and wrote her text on the basis of Arnie’s earlier text:

**Excerpt 9: Thi**

**THOUGHTS ABOUT BEING A FOREIGNER IN NORWAY**

... 

Me and my family had to flee our home country 
Because that my father had helped the amerian 
Soldiers. If we had not fled, then the communists would have locked him up for lifetime. My parents do not want me and my brother to experience this. They just hope that we shall have a bright future, when we arrive at a different country. But what help is in that? Even if we lead a happy life now, this will not mean that things will work out for the rest of our lives.

... 

My teacher of Norwegian has read a racist text for the whole class once, and none of us liked what this person wrote about.

I can admit that I think it is a very good text. But deep inside I hate him so intensely that nobody can express themselves about it. He surely thinks it is fun to bother people.

Me and my family do not come her to take anything from you (the Norwegians). The only thing we are seeking is peace. I only want to say that those who are a racist will never be satisfied with what we foreigners do. You (the racists) think that we only stay at home to be idle, while you have to work, and when we work you say that we take your jobs away. What is it really that you are afraid of? We are not dangerous.

... 

At this next stage, Arnie, on his hand, wrote a more moderate, semiracist text, parodying the Norwegian King’s speech on TV and radio on New Year’s Eve, with an ironic twist to the King’s conventional term of address: ‘Dear fellow countrymen.’

**ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

Up to the point of writing, O. K. had been considered a weak performer by his homeroom teacher, who characterized the excerpted sequence of texts as O. K.’s second breakthrough as a writer. We may note that O. K. puts
some effort into his first text (Excerpt 1), elaborating some of his points with examples and contrasting teacher working conditions with those of other professional groups.

The second teacher, T, takes a problematic approach indeed when he chooses to only metacomment on O. K.'s initial attempt at argumentative writing (Excerpt 2). His metacomment implies that he refuses to enter argumentation proper. Instead he opts for a paternalistic approach which implies that O. K. is not considered a valid participant. He even claims that O. K. knows nothing about the issue at hand, a claim that is clearly not correct. Quite to the contrary, he unwittingly illustrates O. K.'s initial point about teacher arrogance.

For O. K. as a developing writer, however, it is only when his position is challenged by the second teacher that he starts arguing in a more elaborated way. We may note that in his reply to T (Excerpt 3), he first offers a plan for his text (In this letter I want to comment briefly on the content of your opinion about my essay) and ends it with a metatextual challenge (I want you to read the last sentence of my first paragraph particularly well) and a metacommunicative comment (see below).

O. K.'s risk-taking seems to presuppose some initial level of institutional trust in that the content of his text may be potentially dangerous when addressed to a teacher audience. His risk-taking is aggravated by his provocative tone, characterizing teacher attitudes as horrible, making quite arrogant claims. The choice of wording is perhaps less provocative in his second text, but he still makes the following first point: "It may be the case that I have fallen into a trap, but then you have fallen into a bigger trap with your reply."

The content of O. K.'s argument does not seem to convey much trust in teacher attitudes, but it still seems reasonable to assume that addressing a teacher audience with this dangerous combination of content and style presupposes some level of initial trust, in the sense that his controversial position would not be held against him as a pupil. This presupposition was explicitly thematised in O. K.'s metacommunicative final comment to the second teacher T's breach of the communicative contract of trust: "It was in good faith that I wrote this text." This underlying partial level of presupposed institutional trust was also brought indirectly into the discoursal sequence by a third party, when O. K.'s father wrote to his son's homeroom teacher that (Excerpt 4): "we cannot allow ourselves to ignore that which may develop in a pupil (child)—teacher relationship as a consequence of attitudes forthcoming in the letter from T... I expect other [kinds of] reaction from one positioned to be the teacher of my son..."

We may note that the O. K. case thus illustrates Britton et al.'s (1975) point that trust may be threatened when, for instance, a text is read out aloud in class without prior consent (see also Linell & Markova, 2013). O.
K.'s teacher committed a similar breach of trust when he brought O. K.'s piece out of class without consent and even added his own written argument in support of a reply letter from T that was far from being written in an understanding and respectful tone. Even in this situation, however, we note that O. K. and his father both attempt to reestablish trust by commenting explicitly on the breach.

When Arnie's first text (Excerpt 5) appeared, the teachers were faced with a moral and democratic dilemma. The text's content was of a nature that would normally not be allowed in school, and in public discussion racist utterances may be taken to court. Still, the affected teachers chose to allow Arnie's utterance, because suppressing it would jeopardize the whole ethos of our project as a genuinely communicative one, and pupils had been prompted to write freely about any issue of concern to them. Due to the democratic dilemma, however, his teacher chose to confront Arnie in class (Excerpts 6 and 7). Arnie's text provoked strong reactions even outside his class, particularly at Thi's school where students from the local teacher college served a period of school internship when Arnie's text was read in Thi's class. These students reacted very strongly against Arnie's utterance being accepted as a genuine one. Such ethical and political aspects of the Arnie case are discussed further in Evensen (2000).

When analysing Arnie's first text in his new class (Excerpt 5), it is immediately obvious that he also has put a lot of effort into writing it. Most obviously, the piece does not appeal to be written by a very low-performing dylectic. There are few spelling mistakes. Rather, it gives the impression of an angry young writer who is outspoken about his anger and his contempt on a very controversial issue. Furthermore, his initial claims are supported by a sequence set off by the frame marker "What happens." In elaborating this sequence, there is a rendered narrative from a friend working in a specific refugee centre. This narrative support is set out from the main argument by a second frame marker, a discourse motivated shift in verb form sequence from present to preterit, and back to present. Thus, the initially very weak Arnie here appears to be as competent as many writers in his new class.

For our purposes, however, the controversial nature of Arnie's position is the central aspect. It appears that he has been willing to risk a lot as a newcomer to a social group. His risk-taking seems to presuppose some level of initial trust that his controversial views would be treated with respect, and not be held against him. This is why he was infuriated by his teacher's consecutive follow-up in class, where the teacher breaches the contract of trust. Still, the formal letter he wrote to his teacher seems to hinge on Arnie being taken for what he actually is. He is not a Nazi, he specifies, even if he may be a racist.

Later in the project, it turned out that Arnie had learned from observing his new classmate that it would be possible in this group to stand up
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and defend controversial views. He had used this learning to test his own ability to present and defend a highly controversial view. An incident at the end of the school year seemed to reveal that he had a hidden motive for doing so. In this incident he stood up in class and declared himself to be a homosexual. He had thus, it appeared, used the writing situation to test his own ability to stand the heat of being in the middle of controversy. For this reason, his writing presupposed some level of negotiable trust, but this trust was combined with a personally important motive. It may thus seem that Arnie's is a blurred case in terms of trust. At the interpersonal educational level commented on above, he chose to trust his environment, but he simultaneously had a hidden agenda. In this interpretation, trust might not be present at all levels.

For Thi, the situation was quite different. As a shy and "good girl" in class, she started by following the rules of ordinary response conduct within POW, in acknowledging Arnie's text as a good one, but as an immigrant she was simultaneously deeply hurt and provoked. In her ensuing text (Excerpt 8), she developed a balanced and reconciliatory exposition of what it means to be an immigrant. Even so, she did little to hide her hatred (But deep inside I hate him so intensely that nobody can express themselves about it), thus expressing a feeling that is in no way sanctioned in her institutional context.

Also in Thi's case, her writing is thus risky, and her risk-taking seems to presuppose a level of institutional trust—trust that her position will not be held against her, at least not when underpinned by serious and balanced argument. Her trust was also supported by her classmates, who reacted strongly against Arnie's text and rallied around her in support of her situation as well as her writing. Even her teacher had shown her hand, in presenting Arnie's text as a racist's text, a controversial move for a teacher presenting a pupil's writing. This situation seems to illustrate Zittoun's point (2013) that trust has a generative power: When pupils observe it displayed, they may find it easier to take a trustful position themselves.

In reading trustful pupil writings, one may easily think that they express only a naive position on the part of the writers. As these excerpts make evident, however, this is not the case in my material. Rather, trust is displayed in all these cases as appearing when the writer is both seriously concerned with some controversial issue and has the knowledge required to back up an otherwise dangerous position. For the case writer O. K., his father was out of work and his mother a poorly paid social worker, and the family had discussed the issue of teacher wages on several occasions in a situation where there was a teacher strike going on. Arnie, on his hand, was planning to become a cook and had discussed the issue of immigrants and food with a friend who was working as a cook in a refugee center. Thi had first hand experience as both a refugee and an immigrant. Elzbieta in my earlier study
also seemed to have first hand experience with situations like the one she was writing about.

Across the case studies I suggest that direct address may be one indication of trust. I want to make it clear that this suggestion holds for written interaction only. The reason is that the deixis of address works differently in oral and written interaction. In most oral interaction, a 'you' is addressed to a co-present interlocutor, whereas in written prose, the default case is an abstracted or multiple addressee. Thus, a specific reader address in prose is a marked case.

More generally, however, the common denominator of risk and risk-taking in my data seems to be an indicator of trust, one that is not specific to written interaction. In an institutional context like school, certain topics (like personally experienced sexual abuse) or certain opinions (like racism or negative attitudes toward teachers) are avoided, and not normally presented in pupils' writing. When such topics are addressed or such opinions are voiced, this seems to presuppose trust, at some level.

Interaction seems to be a highly relevant aspect of trust also in my data. In Arnie's case, he had watched what happened in the previous 'O. K.' case before writing his own piece, when a classmate both attracted a lot of teacher attention and developed considerably as a writer. In Thi's case, her attention was brought to Arnie's text, and she was provoked into writing in response to it. Later, this response was developed into a separate argumentative essay. It is also relevant to note the sequential relation between pupils' texts and their previous classroom elicitation. For some of the pupils, the prompts that were written on their blackboard at stage II were read (trustfully) as credible ones and used accordingly as the starting point for their writing. It is thus not exclusively the case that different social situations involve context-specific limitations (Markova, Linell, & Gillespie, 2008, p. 10). In some cases they also involve context-specific affordances.

Interaction may similarly reduce or threaten trust, as Britton and his associates pointed out. We have seen in the cases of O. K. and Arnie that teachers may act in ways that are not in accordance with an institutional contract that will sustain trust. Both O. K. and Arnie were confronted in ways that seem to be breaches of such a contract. For this reason, trust may be seen as a gradually blurred category in my data. In Zittoun's data (2013), the teacher's role seems different. In her study, the teacher tries to stimulate student interest in a way that invites serious intellectual discussion, but discussion that is not face-threatening in the way that it turned out for O. K. and Arnie. In my data, a clearly supportive teacher role was observed only in Thi's case. Her teacher was the same as Elzbieta's, and we have seen how Elzbieta chose to confide in this teacher.

There is a potential common denominator in my cases in that third parties seem to play a role in interactionally constructing a situation of relative,
initial trust. We noted in the case of O.K. that his background for writing included discussions over family meals. We also observed that his father took action and intervened directly in the critical discussions going on between O.K., his homeroom teacher and a second teacher. On the basis of these observations, it may seem that O.K.'s courage in challenging teacher attitudes was related to some sort of an underlying alliance between O.K. and his parents. Similarly we noted that Arnie had discussed with a friend working at a refugee center and that Thi had been encouraged by her classmates. It may be hypothesized that an element of Bakhtinian 'ventriloquiaction' is at work in these cases. If such a constructive role of third parties holds, it adds an interesting dimension to what it means that trust is an interactionally achieved phenomenon.

The sequential dynamics of trust relates not only to microsocial, dyadic in situ interaction, it also relates to dynamics at the meso- or macrosocial institutional level of teacher practices. Since the mid 1980s, a process orientation was taken by many teachers of first language writing in Norway. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, this approach was becoming institutionally recognised to the extent that it was assumed in the new national curriculum of 1997. Granted the focus in POW on individual expression rather than on discourse as an interactional phenomenon, it would not be assumed outside classrooms that an intersubjective understanding of writing had developed, but the QAL material gave fairly strong indication that around the turn of the millennium this might be exactly what had happened. The national classroom culture of writing instruction and assessment seemed to have qualitatively changed.

Such a change has implications for the analytical categories that were developed in the Britton et al. (1975) study. While their categorization implied that trust was largely present with only a small minority of teachers, recent data suggests that trust has become a more common commodity. While the focal data from our "Invisible teenagers?" study may be ascribed to either their 'teacher as trusted adult' or to 'other teenagers' categories, the same assumption does not hold for the Andersson and Hertzberg (2005) data. In their study, the focal readers/assessors were unknown to all writers, and institutionally bound to operate within a practice of 'teacher as examiner.' When trust seems evident in even this situation, it seems to be the case that the assumption of a rare commodity may no longer hold, even if the opposite situation of 'as if' may still be very important.

Up to this point, I have not addressed the theoretical point about which kinds of trust seem to be involved in my data. Linell and Markovà (2013a, b) make a distinction between basic/genuine/non-reflected trust, on the one hand, and reflected/calculated (or even faked) trust on the other. Among these categories, the only candidate for non-reflected trust in my material seems to be the previously published Elzbieta case (Evensen, 1997). As an
immigrant newcomer, Elzbieta seemed to have kept a basic trust, which in my current analysis is indicated by an institutionally and conventionally rare combination of “dangerous” topic and direct reader address. At the other end of the Linell and Marková (2013a, b) ‘scale’ (see below), faked trust may be one aspect of the majority of texts in my material that have not been in focus in this chapter (see below). O. K., Arnie and Thi, however, seem to display a reflected kind of trust.

In suggesting this analysis, let me first note that the three wrote within an institutional context where they had been invited by their homeroom teacher to address a topic of personal concern. Whichever type of trust/distrust they might otherwise display, this particular situation was explicitly signaled as (both a project specific one and otherwise) one beyond ordinary proceedings. Even if a majority of the pupils involved chose the refrain from following this implicit invitation to displaying extraordinary trust, these three did not refrain.

I have suggested that O. K had additional reasons for doing so in his family background as well as in his knowledge of the debated issue. Arnie, on his part, shared the aspect of knowledge with O. K., but I suggest that his reasons were still partly different. Arnie did not share O. K.’s family background, and his specific background for daring to plunge into turmoil, seems to rather include his direct observation of the O. K. case as a third party. Granted his previous school experience, it seems less than likely that he should have dared provoke both his curriculum and his new classmates if the O. K. case had not been available to his observation. And this combined background makes the category of reflected trust more likely than its pre-reflective alternative.

Thi’s case shares the educational project background with O. K.’s and Arnie’s, which implicitly invited reflected trust. Her case is still different from both of the above ones. She was, as we have seen, immensely provoked by Arnie’s text, and this level of provocation, in addition to the general institutional context, invited responses on her part that were qualitatively different from anything that she had previously written. Granted that her teacher was simultaneously the same individual as the one directly addressed by Elzbieta, these aspects in sum suggest that her type of trust might be partly pre-reflective.

If my analysis of Thi’s case as a hybrid one is correct, this analysis invites rethinking of the categorical distinctions made by Linell and Marková (2013a, b; see also Allwood, 2013). The types of relevant trust involved in dialogical communication, may in my data be seen as scalar phenomena as much as categorical ones. In particular, the category distinction between pre-reflective and reflected trust may as well be an ordinal phenomenon as a dichotomous one. Further study should address this issue.
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Still, my main theoretical concern in this chapter is not with typology of trust, but with what role the basic phenomenon of trust should play in a dialogical model of communication. Let me here return to my observation that trust seems to be faked in a majority of my total material. Rather than choose topics of genuine personal concern, many pupils chose general topics of seemingly little concern and wrote quite stereotypical, "schoolish" essays with little sign of personal engagement and little elaboration of argument. My focal cases, however, went beyond stereotypical and wrote more challenging as well as less stereotypical texts, including, as written dialogue developed, argumentative letters and other forms of response. Their arguments were also more elaborated. When trust is absent, very limited or faked, it thus seems, communication partners will resort to the safe ground of established practices only, and they may not dare challenge these.

In discussing the fusion between an interactionist axis and a constructionist axis in my 'diatope' model, I have claimed that the interactionist axis should be read as foreground in a grounding relation where the constructionist axis is background. This claim was based on a study of verbal innovation (Evensen, 2001). In all my documented cases in that early study, it turned out that discourse participants could always override established discourse or grammatical practice if they saw a jointly accepted reason for doing so (the starred sentences of theoretical linguists being one case in point).

The case data presented in this chapter, are in accordance with my previous theoretical claim about foregrounding of the immediate interaction axis in the diatope model. Still, the above discussion suggests one important restriction in this respect: the claimed relation may hold only when communication is "normal" or "genuine" in the sense that it is characterized by trust. If not, the grounding relation will change and the construction axis will be foregrounded. If such a hypothesis proves tenable, it implies that trust is a basic, default category to take into account in a valid model or theory of verbal communication (cf. Linell & Marková, 2013a; Allwood, 2013). It seems to be this level of trust that Arnie tests out in his writing, while Thi (along with Elzbieta) seems to take it more for granted in the specific context leading up to their writing. I take this specified grounding hypothesis to be the main theoretical contribution of my chapter.

In my data, controversy and even antagonism have been common denominators. My point about grounding thus seems to have a theoretical corollary at still another level. If my hypothesis is tenable, it supports the argument of Linell and Marková (2013a) that trust is a theoretically relevant category across empirical fields, even when these are as different as police interrogations and verbal practices intended to stimulate innovation.
NOTES

1. All the writing processes involving my focal writers are archived (in original) in separate case portfolios that may be made available to research colleagues at request.

2. I am grateful to the editors and this book’s co-contributors for in-depth constructive discussions of previous versions of this chapter. Any remaining weaknesses are my own responsibility only.

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