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# Promoting Authoring in Interreligious Classroom Communication: Empirical Research into Dialogical Communication in Religiously Pluriform Learning Situations in Catholic Primary Schools

San van Eersel<sup>a</sup>, Chris Hermans<sup>b</sup> and Peter Slegers<sup>c</sup>

a) Radboud University Nijmegen

s.vaneersel@iko.ru.nl

b) Radboud University Nijmegen

c.hermans@rs.ru.nl

c) University of Twente

p.j.c.slegers@gw.utwente.nl

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## Abstract

What opportunities are students offered to author themselves as religious persons in interreligious classroom communication? There are two conditions for authoring: (1) allowing for a variety of voices of religion, and (2) stimulating interaction between different voices of religion. Scope for diverse voices of religion depends on the view of religion adopted when promoting the expression of different voices: a canonical, a critical or a global view. Scope for interaction between different voices depends on the type of speech used in the interaction: authoritative speech or internally persuasive speech. In how far do teachers meet these conditions in interreligious classroom communication? To answer this question we investigated nine lessons in interreligious communication in Catholic primary schools in the Netherlands. The results show that the two conditions for authoring are only partially met in the interaction between teachers and students. This is indicated by the absence of the global register and by the relatively limited use of internally persuasive speech. As a result students do not have optimal opportunity for authoring in interreligious classroom communication.

## Keywords

interreligious learning, interreligious classroom communication, interreligious dialogue, voice, authoring, internally persuasive discourse

## 1. Introduction

In this article we report on a study of interreligious communication in Catholic primary schools in the Netherlands. Interreligious learning occurs through communication. The purpose is to foster dialogical communication

between different voices of religion so that students can learn to authorise and claim authority for their own religious voice (Berling, 2004; Hermans, 2001; Sterkens, 2001). Students acquire a religious voice of their own by selectively appropriating the voices (ideological viewpoints) of religion that ventriloquate (speak) through other students or teachers (Bakhtin, 1981). We refer to this process as authoring (Clark & Holquist, 1984). In the process the voices of religion that ventriloquate through the speech of others are transformed. However, not all voices of religion are readily translatable into an individual believer's context. In the mingling of different voices one voice tends to manipulate the others (Bakhtin, 1981). The process of authoring entails a fierce inner struggle for hegemony among various voices (*ibid.*).

There are two conditions for promoting authoring. One is substantive, the other concerns the process of communication. Substantively one can promote authoring by allowing scope for a variety of voices of religion, so that dialogue partners can (learn to) relate to diverse voices. Greater scope means greater variety and more opportunities for authoring. The measure of scope for a variety of voices of religion depends on one's view of religion. People who conceive of their own religion as final and absolute truth offer less scope for a variety of voices of religion than those who perceive all religions as part of the global phenomenon of human religiosity. Communicatively authoring is promoted by allowing scope for different voices of religion to interact. Greater scope means more interaction and more opportunities for authoring. The measure of scope for interaction depends on the type of discourse used. A discourse that does not permit diverse interpretations of its meaning offers less scope for interaction than one in which different voices join to construct (new) meaning.

What opportunities does religious education offer for promoting processes in which students become authors of their religious lives? Schweitzer et al. (2006) believe that currently religious education is often inadequately equipped to promote authoring. Religious education is presented predominantly from a Christian vantage point, while non-Christian religions are taught by providing factual information and knowledge (Streib, 2001). This approach leaves little scope for diverse voices of religion or for interaction between them. It could mean that current religious education offers little opportunity for authoring.

This article describes to what extent students are offered opportunities to learn to authorise and claim authority for their own voices (authoring) in interreligious classroom communication. It examines the extent to which they are presented with a variety of voices of religion and whether teachers use a form of communication that is conducive to interaction between differ-

ent voices of religion. Note that we are not investigating authoring as such. We merely examine the conditions that we believe to be conducive to the process. The article is structured as follows. Section 2 describes how different voices of religion that ventriloquate through the speech of others are acquired by the self in order to develop a religious identity (authoring). Sections 3 and 4 describe the conditions for promoting this acquisition, namely allowing scope for a variety of voices of religion and for interaction between them. Section 5 describes the research design and section 6 presents our research findings. The concluding section (7) summarises some points for discussion.

## **2. Authoring**

Authoring relates to the social, cultural, historical and institutional contexts in which a person lives. In these contexts humans perform actions and use cultural tools — both physical tools like computers and psychological tools, the most important of which is language. These cultural tools can empower or constrain authoring (Tappan, 2005). In this article we focus on religious tools, that is the different voices of religion that are available in a particular socio-cultural and historical context. These voices shape and mediate religious persons' identity in a critical way. On the one hand they provide individuals with a coherent religious worldview; on the other they limit individual believers in who they can become (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995).

Voices of religion are acquired through active participation in religious practices (Rogoff, 1995). If the acquisition is seen as a process of gaining facility in an activity, acquiring a religious voice is not a matter of internalisation in the sense of crossing a boundary from the external world to the inner self, but of appropriation. Tappan (2005) distinguishes between two aspects of appropriation: mastery, that is knowing how to use a religious tool like the voices of a religious tradition, and authorship,<sup>1</sup> which means taking someone else's religious tool and making it one's own. Authorship is very difficult and differs from mastery, although high levels of mastery are often associated with high degrees of ownership.

To understand how the process of developing authorship works we turn to Bakhtin (1895-1975). According to Bakhtin voices of religion become 'one's own' only when a believer invests them with his own intentions, his own

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<sup>1</sup> Tappan uses the term ownership, but we prefer authorship to stress that identity formation is a "constant exchange between what is already and what is not yet" (Clark & Holquist, 1984, p. 65). Also, "My self (...) performs itself as a denial of any category's power fully to comprehend it" (Clark & Holquist, 1984, p. 72).

accent, adapting them to his own religious context. Prior to this appropriation the voices exist in other religious people's contexts, serving other religious people's intentions. It is from there that a believer must take the voices of religion and appropriate them in order to make them his or her own. However, not all voices of religion translate equally easily into an individual believer's context. Some voices stubbornly resist, while others remain alien, "as if they put themselves in quotation marks against the will of the speaker" (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 293-294).

The translation of different voices of religion into the believer's context involves a complex social adjustment of the individual to the generic patterns in religious discourse: "One's own discourse and one's own voice, although born of another or dynamically stimulated by another, will sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authority of the other's discourse" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 348). This social adjustment only contributes to authorship when individual believers can reinterpret the voices of religion for their own purposes. Individual believers can either accede to others' voices of religion as given, or they may resist, reshape and reinterpret them in order to make them their own (Bakhtin, 1981). The most effective social interactions in this process are ones that are filled with tension and conflict. Coming to authorise and claim authority for one's own voice (gaining authorship) is a fierce struggle in us for the hegemony among various voices (*ibid.*).

The force that drives this process is dialogue. Authorship, taking a religious tool like a particular voice of a particular religious tradition belonging to others, and making it one's own, is necessarily a function of both a religious self and a religious other.<sup>2</sup> The voices of religion that mediate and constitute the individual's religious identity are always shared, communal, distributed and thus never the property of individuals. Although an individual believer's voice gradually emerges from the multitude of voices of religion that he encounters in the social world, a person's religious identity is never defined in terms of her individual characteristics, qualities or properties. Religious identity is always a function of conversation and dialogue, of positioning and repositioning oneself in relation to religious others whose voices — that is those that ventriloquate through their speech — one seeks to make one's own (Tappan, 2005).

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<sup>2</sup> The religious self is essentially dialogical and speaks in a polyphony of voices (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). In interreligious communication the polyphony of a religious identity not only refers to different voices of the same religion but also to different voices of different religions. In interreligious communication one not only positions oneself in relation to the voices of one particular religion but also in relation to the voices of other religions.

To sum up, authoring entails gradually learning to authorise and claim authority for one's own voice, while remaining in constant dialogue with the different voices of religion that ventriloquate through the speech of religious others (Tappan, 2005). Substantively this process can be furthered by allowing greater scope for a variety of voices of religion, and communicatively by allowing more scope for interaction. These two conditions for authoring are discussed in sections 3 and 4 respectively.

### **3. Allowing Scope for a Variety of Voices of Religion**

Substantively authoring is promoted by allowing scope for a variety of voices of religion, which permits the dialogue partners to (learn to) relate to diverse voices. Greater scope means more variety and more opportunities for authoring. The degree of scope for a variety of voices of religion depends on one's view of religion. A person who conceives of his own religion as a revealed, final and absolute truth offers less scope for a variety of voices of religion than someone who perceives all religions as part of one global phenomenon of human religiosity. In this section we distinguish between three different views of religion: a canonical, a critical and a global view (cf. Ward 2004). We call these views of religion voice registers. In each register one finds the same types of voices of religion. Thus each register includes voices that explain the meanings of a religious practice, voices that present the use of religious symbols and rituals, or voices that express the ideological viewpoints of a religious tradition.<sup>3</sup> But, as in music, the same types of voices may sound different (can have different voices), depending on the register they are 'played' in. Section 3.1 describes the canonical, critical and global voice registers. Section 3.2 describes the implications of the use of these registers for authoring.

#### *3.1 Canonical, Critical and Global Registers of Voices of Religion*

A canonical register posits absolute truth in which human individuals may find true fulfilment. This truth cannot be revised and has to be accepted on external authority. Because it has absolute value, it is beyond criticism and

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<sup>3</sup> Hermans (2001) distinguishes between five systemic features of religion: (1) the use of constitutive rules, (2) collective recognition of these rules, (3) the authority of the religion that determines such recognition, (4) the use of religious tools, and (5) an ideological infrastructure of power to guarantee religious meanings. In communicative situations these systemic features may be formulated in their own distinctive voices. Hence we distinguish between five different types of voices of religion.

cannot be reformed. A canonical register represents a rational, systematic religious worldview and a consistent, codified set of moral principles based on unquestionable truth. Religious traditions that hold such a view strive for universal acceptance as revealed, final and absolute truth.

In contrast to a canonical register, a critical register situates authority in authentic experiences as reliable testimonies of great religious significance that are passed on in a religious community. A critical register considers religions to be developing, cumulative traditions, whose truth claims rest on an original disclosure but are extended by continuing individual experiences of spirituality. Religious truth is interpreted in the concepts of the tradition, and in ongoing reflection which seeks wider factual and moral insight as the tradition encounters new situations and contexts. In contrast to a canonical register, a critical register does not claim truth to be immune to revision. Religious truth is always interpreted by individuals and depends on the place and the time of interpretation. In contrast to a canonical register, what is considered absolute is not the transmitted religious tradition but the individual's interpretation of it.

A global register considers all religions to be part of one global phenomenon of human religiosity. Spiritual reality discloses itself to people of different cultures in different times. As their worldviews differ, the cumulative traditions that build upon these primal disclosures develop in distinctive ways. Their views seem to be equally justifiable to their adherents. We should not condemn others for holding the view they believe to be most justified, and we should not be too certain that our view comes closest to the truth. The global faith that is inherently connected with the use of a global register should not be seen as a world religion superseding others. It is rather an attitude that can be adopted by adherents of all religions, who seek to deepen their understanding of the way humans relate to transcendent reality by listening to other religions and reformulating their own principles in the light of such criticisms. To have a global understanding of religion is to deny that one's own religion represents final truth, to consider one's own religion as part of a global history of religions, and to tolerate, respect and, where appropriate, learn from others.

### *3.2 Implications for Authoring*

Individual believers who use a canonical register of voices of religion posit one truth for all people. This truth can only be found in their particular tradition. Voices that express a truth that differs from the one proclaimed by that tradition are considered wrong and unacceptable, whether they are

expressed within this tradition or outside it. Only the voices of one's own tradition are considered both plausible and legitimate. Consequently a canonical register offers little scope for a variety of voices of religion.

Individual believers who use a critical register of voices of religion advocate the superiority of one tradition to all others precisely because that tradition has become critical and experiential. Whilst this in effect gives rise to a diversity of voices within a given religion, the individual finds only one of these acceptable, namely the one that strikes him or her as most plausible. According to a critical register many different voices are plausible, both in one's own religion and in others, but an individual believer who uses a critical register will only accept one voice. Consequently a critical register permits a greater variety of voices of religion than a canonical register.

Individual believers who use a global register of voices of religion assume that ultimate reality appears in many different contexts and is interpreted in terms of many different beliefs. This means that users of a global register consider many different voices of religion plausible and legitimate, both in their own religion and in other religions. Thus it permits the greatest variety of voices of religion.

To sum up, a global register of voices of religion offers more scope for a variety of voices of religion than either a critical or a canonical register, and a critical register offers more scope for variety than a canonical register. Theoretically this means that a global register offers most opportunity for authoring, followed by a critical register. A canonical register offers least opportunity for authoring. Overall this means that, substantively, authoring benefits most by the use of a global voice register.

#### **4. Allowing Scope for Interaction**

Communicatively authoring is promoted by allowing scope for interaction between different voices of religion. Greater scope means more interaction and more opportunities for authoring. The amount of scope for interaction depends on the type of discourse used. A discourse which does not permit different interpretations of its meaning offers less scope for interaction than one in which different voices join in order to construct (new) meaning. In this section we distinguish between two different types of discourse that can be used to achieve authorship: authoritative and internally persuasive discourse (cf. Bakhtin 1981). Section 4.1 describes the two types of discourse. Section 4.2 describes the implications of the use of authoritative and internally persuasive discourse for authoring.

#### 4.1 *Authoritative and Internally Persuasive Discourse*

In authoritative discourse the source of power is an external agency, outside the individual. This external authority has already been acknowledged in a past that is considered to be hierarchically higher than the present (Bakhtin, 1981). The external authority determines the meaning of the discourse. Authoritative discourse demands that we acknowledge it and make it our own. The individual has no influence on it. As a result the meaning of an authoritative discourse is experienced as given, imposed from above. “We encounter it with its authority already fused to it” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 342). Authoritative discourse does not call for free appropriation of its meaning but demands unconditional allegiance. In authoritative discourse the voices of religion are presented independently of the context in which they are used “Authoritative discourse permits no play with the context framing it, no play with its borders, no gradual and flexible transitions, no spontaneously creative stylizing variants on it” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 343). The semantic structure of authoritative discourse is static and complete. It has but a single meaning.

By contrast the source of power in an internally persuasive discourse is not relegated to an external agency but resides within the individual. In internally persuasive discourse meaning is not imposed from above but is shaped by each individual personally. The voices of religion that ventriloquate through internally persuasive discourse are “half ours and half someone else’s” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345). They come together and meet in order to construct new meaning. Which new meaning is constructed in the encounter depends on the context of the interaction. Unlike authoritative discourse, internally persuasive discourse does permit play with the context framing it. It also permits gradual and flexible transitions as well as spontaneously creative stylising variants on it. Its semantic structure is always open, for it is never complete; it has a variety of meanings (Bakhtin, 1981).

Figure 1 schematises the characteristics of authoritative and internally persuasive discourse.

**Figure 1: Characteristics of authoritative and internally persuasive discourse**

Type of discourse	Source of authority	Mode of assigning meaning	Mode of presenting meaning	Semantic structure
Authoritative discourse	External	Deductive	Decontextualised	Closed
Internally persuasive discourse	Internal	Inductive	Contextualised	Open

#### 4.2 *Implications for Authoring*

Authoritative discourse does not merge with the discourse of others. Utterances in authoritative discourse remain sharply demarcated and distinct from utterances performed in other discourses. Authoritative discourse is by its very nature incapable of being polyphonous. Its utterances cannot interact dialogically with other utterances. Authoritative discourse, therefore, does not include the perspectives or voices of others. It remains in a secluded zone, impervious to the perspectives of others. Internally persuasive discourse, on the other hand, includes the perspectives of others and seeks contact with these. Utterances that are internally persuasive organise “masses of our words from within [...]; [they] enter [...] into interanimating relationships with new contexts. More than that, [they] enter [...] into an intense interaction, a struggle with other internally persuasive [utterances]”. As the process of authoring is precisely such an intense interaction with the voices of others, authoring is stimulated by internally persuasive discourse rather than by authoritative discourse.

When using the distinction between authoritative and internally persuasive discourse in analyses we have to bear in mind that the two types of discourse are interrelated like two poles of a continuum. In theory a conversation can fully assume the form of either an authoritative or an internally persuasive discourse. In practice, however, the two types of discourse are used in a particular relationship to each other. We can explain that with reference to Lotman's assumption of communication's functional dualism in a cultural system. According to Lotman (1988, p. 34) people communicate for two reasons: “to convey meanings adequately and to generate new meanings.” The first function of communication is fulfilled best when the communication is maximally univocal (as in authoritative discourse). The second function of communication is fulfilled best when the communication is maximally dialogical (as in internally persuasive discourse). Both functions of communication can be found in any socio-cultural setting, but one or the other dominates in certain areas of activity or during certain periods. This means that when we analyse a conversation between a teacher and his students we will always find a proportion of authoritative discourse and a proportion of internally persuasive discourse. However, as classroom communication is strongly influenced by the power and responsibility vested in the teacher (Mercer, 1995), the scope for interaction depends on the teacher's speech, that is the proportion of internally persuasive utterances.

To sum up, in authoritative and internally persuasive discourse power is used differently to manipulate other discourses. The power of an authoritative

discourse is used to exclude other voices, whereas the power of an internally persuasive discourse is used to include them. In classroom communication the distinction between the two types of discourse is reflected in the use of utterances that are more or less internally persuasive. The more internally persuasive utterances are used, the greater the scope for interaction, which means more opportunities for authoring. Overall this means that, from a communication perspective, the process of authoring is promoted most by the use of internally persuasive utterances.

## **5. Description of the Research**

This section describes the research questions (5.1), the research design and sample (5.2), the measurements (5.3) and the design of data analyses (5.4).

### *5.1 Research Questions*

The main question in this article reads: to what extent are students offered opportunities to come to authorise and claim authority for their own voices in interreligious classroom communication? More concisely, to what extent does classroom communication offer optimal conditions for authoring? To promote authoring one has to satisfy two conditions: (1) there must be scope for different voices of religion (substantive condition), and (2) there must be scope for interaction between different voices of religion (communicative condition). The extent of the scope for a variety of voices of religion in interreligious classroom communication depends on which voice registers are used by both teachers and students. Scope for interaction between different voices of religion depends on the extent to which students find teachers' speech internally persuasive. Our research questions read:

1. To what extent are the canonical, critical and global voice registers used in interreligious classroom communication?
2. To what extent do teachers use internally persuasive speech in interreligious classroom communication?

### *5.2 Research Design and Sample*

The study that we conducted in order to answer these questions is best described as an exploratory descriptive case study. We examined nine cases in all. Each consists of a religious education lesson entailing verbal interaction

between a teacher and students from different religions. The lessons were conducted at seven Catholic primary schools in the Netherlands. One third of all Dutch primary schools are Catholic. All of them are fully state funded. In the schools that participated in the research religious education is part of the curriculum. Until the 1960s religious education was aimed mainly at handing on the faith. Thereafter individual interpretation of religious meaning became focal. Central to religious education are students' personal experiences regarding the meaning of life. Teachers were selected on the basis of their experience in interreligious communication. Those with plenty of experience were preferred, since the chances that students will have ample opportunity to develop a religious voice of their own in interreligious communication are better if the teachers are old hands at dealing with religiously diverse students than if they are doing so for the first time. The teachers participating in the study had between 3 and 35 years' experience. In addition teachers must have the intention to promote students' interreligious learning through communication. While they were free to determine the lesson structure and subject, the latter had to pertain to at least one religion other than the teacher's own. All the teachers had a Catholic background. The ages of students participating in the lessons varied between 10 and 12 years. According to school records they were from the following religious backgrounds: Catholic (57%), Muslim (33%), Hindu (2%). The remaining students (8%) were nonreligious. These percentages are the mean of all schools that took part in the study.

All nine lessons were recorded. The material from the recordings (teacher-student interaction) was transcribed and divided into students' utterances and teachers' utterances. All utterances were coded separately by three different encoders, and were categorised accordingly (interrater reliability: 95%). All utterances were then analysed with the aid of the SPSS program.

### 5.3 *Measurements*

In order to investigate to what extent the canonical, critical and global voice registers are used in interreligious classroom communication we conducted a content analysis of those parts of the lessons that we studied in which teachers conversed with students on religious topics. To identify the registers in interreligious classroom communication we developed what we call 'indicators for the recognition of different voice registers in religious communication'. The indicators are presented in Figure 2.

To investigate to what extent teachers' speech is internally persuasive in interreligious classroom communication we used our own adapted version of

**Figure 2: Indicators of the use of the canonical, critical and global register of voices of religion in religious communication**

Canonical register	This undoubtedly is the meaning of...; God/religious tradition says...; This aspect of divine revelation is reflected in this way by this tool... <sup>4</sup>
Critical register	I think this is the meaning of...; In this context, I believe that tradition should be interpreted as...; My religious experience is reflected in this way by this tool...
Global register	This is one of many possible meanings...; Different and equally incomplete traditions may say...; Different religious experiences are reflected in their own way by different tools specific to that religion...

the Taxonomy of Verbal Response Modes.<sup>5</sup> This is a system which categorises utterances by way of granting codes. The instrument was developed by W. Stiles (1992) to describe relations between people as conveyed in language. It measures utterances, not words or sentences. Each utterance is conceived of as an attempted point of contact between speaker and other (Stiles, 1992, p. 58). Stiles distinguishes between eight verbal response modes (VRMs) by combining three different psychological principles: source of otherness, presumption about otherness, and frame of reference. Every principle can assume the value of either 'speaker' or 'other'. Every utterance can concern either the speaker's or the other's otherness. Further, in making an utterance the speaker may or may not make presumptions about the other's otherness. An utterance may or may not require that the speaker presumes to know what the other person thinks, feels, perceives or intends. Finally, in making an utterance, the speaker may represent otherness either from his own viewpoint (speaker's frame of reference), or from a viewpoint shared or held in common with the other (other's frame of reference).

Combining these three principles yields eight (2x2x2) VRMs: disclosures, edifications, advisements, confirmations, questions, acknowledgments, interpretations and reflections. A disclosure is made to express the speaker's personal thoughts, feeling, desires and intentions, for example: "I feel that if you

<sup>4</sup> Religious activities (e.g. prayer) and religious tools (e.g. a rosary) have certain meanings in the context of a particular religious practice. Thus when asking God to heal a gravely ill relative one can use a rosary while praying, Activity (prayer) and means (rosary), the person may believe, promote or effect the sick person's recovery.

<sup>5</sup> See: Van Eersel, Hermans & Slegers, Describing classroom communication with the help of the Taxonomy of Verbal Response Modes (forthcoming).

believe in God, you must follow the road of faith all the way.” An edification expresses the speaker’s idea in the form of a factual statement, for example: “In my home we don’t celebrate Christmas.” When offering advice a person indicates what he or she believes the other should think or do, for example: “Try to help Carli by telling us what you think is important about Easter.” When uttering a confirmation the speaker seeks to compare his own otherness with someone else’s, for example: “We believe the same things, don’t we?” Someone asks a question because he or she doesn’t have the information he or she would like to have, for example: “Would you like to take part in Ramadan?” Uttering an acknowledgment indicates the speaker’s receptiveness to the expression of the other’s otherness, including ‘meaningless’ sounds like hmm, er, et cetera. By giving an interpretation the person conveys his or her judgment to the other, for instance: “So you do believe in God after all!” Communicating a reflection is an attempt to render the other’s otherness as perceived by that person. It may simply be an (almost) literal repetition of the other’s words, or a reformulation of the otherness, for example: “During Ramadan you consider it important to think of people who don’t have enough to eat.”

Figure 3 is a schematic overview of the principles underlying the VRM Taxonomy. We refined some of the original VRMs in view of the specific interaction between teachers and students.<sup>6</sup> We labelled them VRMs for classroom communication.

Internally persuasive speech is characterised by the use of disclosures (D), confirmations (C1), disclosures in the form of an affirmation/negation (C2), real questions (Q1), probing questions (Q2), acknowledgments (K), rephrasing (R1) and explorations (R2). *Disclosures* (D) express the speaker’s personal beliefs, desires and intentions (disclosure intent). Their meaning is the result of interaction between different voices. They are not forced upon the individual by some external authority, but result from internal persuasion. They depend on the context in which they are uttered and are open to the responses of others. By uttering a *confirmation* (C1) or a *disclosure in the form of an affirmation/negation* (C2), a speaker compares his beliefs, desires and intentions with those of others. This comparison is based on the internal authorities of both speaker and other. The accuracy of the comparison is not fixed but is co-determined by the interaction between speaker and other and is influenced by the context in which the comparison is made. *Real questions* (Q1) and *probing questions* (Q2) are asked to fill a gap in the speaker’s frame of reference. Because they are expressed as requests and not as demands, real

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<sup>6</sup> See: Van Eersel, Hermans & Slegers, Describing classroom communication with the help of the Taxonomy of Verbal Response Modes (forthcoming).

**Figure 3: Schematic overview of the adapted Taxonomy of Verbal Response Modes**

Source of otherness	Presumption about otherness	Frame of reference	VRMs	VRMs for classroom communication	Code
Speaker	Speaker	Speaker	Disclosure (reveals speaker's otherness)	Disclosure	D
Speaker	Speaker	Other <sup>7</sup>	Edification (states collective otherness as fact)	Edification	E
Speaker	Other	Speaker	Advisement (guides other's otherness)	Advisement Test question Turn giving acknowledgment Repetition	A1 A2 A3 A4
Speaker	Other	Other	Confirmation (compares speaker's and other's otherness)	Confirmation Disclosure in the form of affirmation/negation Edification in the form of affirmation/negation	C1 C2 C3
Other	Speaker	Speaker	Question (requests information about other's otherness)	Real question Probing question	Q1 Q2
Other	Speaker	Other	Acknowledgment (conveys receptiveness to other's otherness)	Acknowledgment	K
Other	Other	Speaker	Interpretation (explains or labels other's otherness)	Interpretation	I
Other	Other	Other	Reflection (rephrases other's otherness)	Rephrasing Exploration	R1 R2

questions and probing express internal rather than external authority. Using his or her newly acquired information, the speaker constructs new meaning, depending on the context in which the request is made and the information is provided. *Acknowledgments* (K) are uttered by a speaker to indicate reception of or receptiveness to the beliefs, desires or intentions of the other (acknowledgment intent). Since they focus on the other and not on the

<sup>7</sup> Unlike Stiles, who uses the term 'other', we prefer to speak of 'collective other' or 'public other' to stress that the frame of reference of an edification is a public one used by a large group of people and is publicly accessible.

speaker, the source of authority for an acknowledgment lies within the individual. Acknowledgments facilitate the construction of new meanings, depending on the context in which they are made. Finally, *rephrasing* (R1) and *exploration* (R2) are meant to express the other's experiences as they are seen by the other (i.e. from the other's point of view). Rephrasing and exploration present the other's experience in a fresh light. Since the accuracy of the speaker's phrasing of that experience is determined by the other and not by the speaker, its authority is internal.

Authoritative speech is characterised by the use of edifications (E), advisements (A1), test questions (A2), turn giving acknowledgments (A3), repetitions (A4), edifications in the form of affirmation/negation (C3) and interpretations (I). *Edifications* (E) are statements of fact (edification intent). Their meaning has already been acknowledged by an external authority, like a collective that is felt to be hierarchically higher. They are not negotiable and have just one meaning. Because they represent reality objectively, edifications are insensitive to context. *Advisements* (A1), *test questions* (A2), *turn giving acknowledgments* (A3) and *repetitions* (A4) determine what the other should do or think (advisement intent). They have vested external authority. Their meaning is given and leaves no room for personal interpretation. Their demand that their intention be realised makes them insensitive to the context in which they are uttered. *Edifications in the form of affirmation/negation* (C3) are uttered to affirm or negate prior statements of fact (confirmation intent). They express agreement or disagreement with the factual statement's external authority, the givenness of its meanings, the de-contextualised way in which these meanings are presented and its closed perspective. Finally, when offering an *interpretation* (I) a speaker imposes his judgment on the other (interpretation intent). Because the speaker determines the accuracy of his statement, not the other, the authority is experienced as external. This authority disallows free interpretation of its meaning and is insensitive to contextually determined counter arguments. The speaker's statement presents a complete picture of the other that leaves him or her no room to view himself or herself in a different light.

#### 5.4 Design of Data Analyses

This section describes our investigation of the extent to which the canonical, critical and global voice registers are used in interreligious classroom communication and to what extent teachers' speech is internally persuasive. To answer these questions we selected two fragments from the nine lessons that we observed and analysed them. The first fragment is one which, theoretically, allows most scope for interaction between different voices of religion.

The second fragment, theoretically, offers least scope. We make this distinction because we expect scope for interaction to correlate with scope for a variety of voices of religion: more scope for interaction will consistently allow more scope for variety, and less scope for interaction will entail less scope for variety. First we describe the selection process, then we explain our investigation of our research questions.

The selection process comprises three steps. First we give the criteria for selecting fragments. Second, from the nine lessons we observed we select the fragments that meet these criteria. Third, from these fragments we choose two for analysis.

What criteria do our selected fragments have to meet? The first criterion is quantitative. To determine to what extent the canonical, critical and global registers of voices of religion are used in interreligious classroom communication and what role teachers' discourse plays, a fragment should have certain proportions. There are two ways of determining the proportions of a fragment: (1) by counting the number of utterances of which it is composed, and (2) by counting the number of role exchanges (speaker-other) in the course of the fragment. To qualify for selection we stipulated a minimum of 50 utterances and a minimum of 25 role exchanges per fragment. The second criterion is relational. Since the purpose of our research is to investigate the use of dialogical communication in interreligious classroom communication and because religious identity formation, being the purpose of interreligious learning, occurs through dialogue rather than through the transmission of factual information about religions, we only select fragments representing two-way communication between teacher and students. Fragments comprising only instructions with a view to class management are excluded from the analyses. The third criterion is substantive. The fragments we select must deal with a religious topic such as the meaning of Christmas in Christianity, of circumcision in Judaism or of Ramadan in Islam.

Using these criteria, we selected a number of fragments from the nine lessons that were researched. Figure 4 gives a schematic overview of the selected fragments, the lessons they are taken from, the topics they address, the number of utterances they consist of and the number of role exchanges.

From these 21 fragments we selected two fragments for analyses. The first is a fragment that, theoretically, offers most scope for interaction between different voices of religion, the second offers least scope. In concrete terms this means that the first selected fragment makes maximum use of internally persuasive discourse and minimal use of authoritative discourse, and the second selected fragment is the reverse: maximum use of authoritative discourse and minimum use of internally persuasive discourse.

**Figure 4: Schematic overview of selected fragments**

Lesson	Fragment	Topic	Number of utterances	Number of role exchanges
1	1	Sugar Feast	109	46
	2	Christmas	117	34
2	3	Religious feasts	79	36
	4	Ramadan	120	50
	5	Christmas	119	48
3	6	Baptism	245	123
	7	Prayer whispered in the ear	70	37
	8	Circumcision	109	46
5	9	Qur'an	473	236
	10	Bible	407	203
	11	Qur'an and Bible	100	56
6	12	Statue of Buddha	105	31
	13	Qur'an	64	35
	14	Ka'aba	72	39
	15	Statue of Mary	65	29
	16	Statue of Buddha	89	55
	17	Qur'an	63	37
	18	Prayer rugs	98	42
7	19	Head scarves	256	71
8	20	Rules for living	402	132
9	21	Eightfold Way	201	83

To determine to what extent authoritative and internally persuasive discourse feature in the fragments we compiled two formulas.<sup>8</sup> Use of authoritative discourse is calculated by summing the VRMs typical of authoritative speech (E, A1, A2, A3, A4, C3 and I — see previous section) and dividing it by the total number of VRMs used (T) minus the number of uncodable utterances (U).<sup>9</sup> These were uncodable not because they did not fit into the system, but because they could not be heard or understood. Use of internally persuasive discourse can be measured by summing the VRMs typical of internally persuasive speech (D, C1, C2, Q1, Q2, K, R1, R2 — see previous section) and dividing it by the total number of VRMs used (T) minus the number of uncodable utterances (U).<sup>10</sup> Figure 5 presents the formulas schematically.

**Figure 5a: Formula for calculating the use of authoritative discourse**

$$\text{Authoritative discourse} = \frac{E+A1+A2+A3+A4+C3+I}{T-U}$$

**Figure 5b: Formula for calculating the use of internally persuasive discourse**

$$\text{Internally persuasive discourse} = \frac{D+C1+C2+Q1+Q2+K+R1+R2}{T-U}$$

The outcome of a calculation by means of these formulas is a size ratio (see section 4.2). The extent to which internally persuasive discourse is used also indicates the extent to which authoritative discourse is used. For instance, if we indicate the use of internally persuasive discourse as .65, it means that use of authoritative discourse is .35. The results of the application of these formulas to the 21 fragments in Figure 5 are presented in Table 1.

On the strength of these results we selected two fragments for analysis: fragments 1 and 10. Fragment 1 contains most internally persuasive discourse, hence offers greatest scope for interaction. Fragment 10 offers least scope.

So far we have merely described the selection of the fragments that we want to analyse. We still need to see how we can investigate the extent to

<sup>8</sup> The formulas derive from Stiles's calculation of role dimensions.

<sup>9</sup> We initially omitted this mode (Table 1) because it does not constitute a significant category.

<sup>10</sup> We initially omitted this mode (Table 1) because it does not constitute a significant category.

**Table 1: Use of authoritative and internally persuasive discourse per lesson and per fragment**

Lesson	Fragment	Authoritative discourse	Internally pers. discourse	N1	N2
1	1	.23	.77	109	46
	2	.30	.70	117	34
2	3	.30	.70	79	36
	4	.44	.56	120	50
	5	.35	.65	119	48
3	6	.60	.40	245	123
	7	.58	.42	70	37
	8	.61	.39	109	46
5	9	.61	.39	473	236
	10	.63	.37	407	203
	11	.27	.73	100	56
6	12	.47	.53	105	31
	13	.60	.40	64	35
	14	.57	.43	72	39
	15	.46	.54	65	30
	16	.44	.56	89	55
	17	.58	.42	63	37
	18	.47	.53	98	42
7	19	.53	.47	256	71
8	20	.36	.64	402	132
9	21	.31	.69	201	83

## Legend:

- N1= total number of utterances performed by teachers and students in a particular discourse
- N2= total number of role exchanges between speaker and other
- The values of authoritative and internally persuasive discourse vary between 0 and 1. 0 means that the fragment contains no instances of internally persuasive discourse; 1 means that it makes full use of internally persuasive discourse.

which the canonical, critical and global voice registers are used in interreligious classroom communication and to what extent teachers' speech is internally persuasive. To answer the first question we make a substantive analysis using the indicators identified in section 5.3. Regarding the second question, we calculate the extent to which teachers use utterances typical of internally persuasive discourse (see section 5.3).

## 6. Results

To answer our research questions we analysed two discourses from Table 1. The first discourse (fragment 1) theoretically offers maximum scope for interaction between different voices of religion. The second (fragment 10) offers minimum scope. The results of these analyses are discussed below with reference to excerpts from each of the selected discourses. We do not reproduce them in full because of their length: they respectively comprise 109 and 245 utterances.

First we analyse the excerpt that offers maximum scope for interaction. The excerpt appears in box 1. It deals with the meaning of the Sugar Feast in Islam.

### Box 1

- |     |      |  |     |
|-----|------|--|-----|
| 1.  | T:   | I want (er) to start (er) by asking L., what do you think about the Sugar Feast? | DQ1 |
| 2.  | S 1: | To me it's just a feast  | DD  |
| 3.  | T:   | What do you do at home?  | QQ1 |
| 4.  | S 1: | We eat a lot and   | EE2 |
| 5.  |      | there are visitors   | EE2 |
| 6.  | T:   | Do you enjoy the feast?  | QQ1 |
| 7.  | S 1: | Yes.   | KD  |
| 8.  | T:   | Why?   | QQ2 |
| 9.  | S 1: | Because you can wear your new shoes.   | ED  |
| 10. | T:   | B.,  | KA1 |
| 11. |      | do you know why (er) according to the Muslim faith, the feast is celebrated?     | Q3  |
| 12. | S 2: | Yes,   | KD  |
| 13. |      | the feast is Ramadan   | EE2 |
| 14. |      | and then one doesn't eat an all that   | EE2 |
| 15. |      | you pray a lot and all that  | EE2 |
| 16. |      | and afterwards you feast   | EE2 |
| 17. |      | and you can eat lots and so on.  | EE2 |
| 18. | T:   | Do you think it's important to celebrate it?                                     | QQ1 |
| 19. | S 2: | Yes  | KD  |
| 20. | T:   | Why ?  | QQ2 |
| 21. | S 2: | First you pray and all that  | ED  |
| 22. |      | and then you just have a feast   | ED  |
| 23. | T:   | Do you take part in Ramadan yourself?  | QQ1 |
| 24. | S 2: | Sometimes.   | EE2 |

25. T: And (er) do you think the feast is more important when you take part in Ramadan than when you don't take part? QQ1
26. S 2: Yes, KD
27. I do think it important DD
28. T: And why do you find it more important then? QQ2
29. S 2: Yes, KK
30. for you have taken part in Ramadan ED
31. T: Because you've taken part you think it more important to celebrate the Feast. RR1
32. S 3: But if you haven't taken part, why do you still celebrate the feast? QQ1
33. T: N., KA1
34. you want to say something? RQ1
35. S 3: I don't think the feast is all that important, DD
36. because it's only about eating lots ED
37. T: According to you, N., KA1
38. it's just a matter of eating? RR1
39. S 4: One could say Ramadan is just like primary school, ED
40. you go to school for eight years ED
41. and the last four months you have the musical ED
42. and that is the Sugar Feast, the musical ED
43. T: And you think it's important to have it? QQ1
44. S 4: Yes, KD
45. I think the musical is important DD
46. so I also think the Sugar Feast is important DD
47. T: Why? QQ2
48. S 4: Because I went hungry [...]. DD
49. T: But that is Ramadan ER1
50. hey, KC
51. but then what do you think about the Sugar Feast? QQ2
52. S 4: Yes, KK
53. it's simply part of Ramadan ED
54. T: S.? KA1
55. Oh KK
56. you want to reply to that? RQ1
57. S 5: Ramadan is important to them, EE2
58. to them it's very important EE2
59. because then you know what it's like for other people, EE2
60. only then I think DD

61.	the Sugar Feast is really, then it isn't so very important	ED
62.	not as important as Ramadan itself	ED
63.	and you know you're getting a reward for doing it properly and all that,	ED
64.	but people feeling what other people feel and all that	ED
65.	and afterwards you go and feast,	ED
66.	I think that's rather weird.	DD
67.	T: What do you think about what Simone has just said?	QQ1
68.	S 4: She doesn't think it's part of Ramadan	ED
69.	T: You think they still belong together..	RR1
70.	B.,	KA1
71.	what do you think?	QQ1
72.	S 2: I don't think he's right	DD
73.	for he's saying one really goes hungry,	ED
74.	but then he decides whether he takes part or not	ED
75.	T: Yes,	KC
76.	so you say it's really his decision to take part,	RR1
77.	does that also apply to (er) people still living in Iraq, still living in Turkey?	QQ1
78.	Do they also decide for themselves whether to take part in Ramadan or not?	QQ1
79.	S 2: If they are old I think not,	ED
80.	but if they are children they can decide.	EE2
81.	T: Children can decide, but older people can't.	ER3

To what extent are the canonical, critical and global voice registers used in this excerpt? In utterance 1 the teacher asks student 1 for his personal opinion about the Sugar Feast. This indicates a critical register. Student 1 likewise uses a critical register when explaining the meaning of the Sugar Feast from his own socio-cultural context, saying that it is a feast like any other. In utterance 3 the teacher changes the focus of the conversation to mediated action, but it remains fixed on the student's personal circumstances: "What do you do at home?" Student 1 responds by mentioning the religious practices of eating and visiting in his home, without any reference to divine revelation. This also indicates the use of a critical register. In utterances 6-9 we again observe a critical register. In utterance 6 the teacher inquires about student 1's personal experience of the Sugar Feast. In his ensuing responses (utterances 7, 9) student 1 says that he enjoys the Sugar Feast because he is allowed to wear his new shoes. In utterances 10-17 the critical register changes to a canonical register. In utterance 11 the teacher asks students about the meaning of the Sugar Feast according to Islamic tradition. Student 2 responds by

explaining the formal meaning of the Sugar Feast in terms of fasting and prayer during Ramadan. Then, in utterance 18, the teacher starts an ideological discussion of the relevance of the Sugar Feast, which continues until utterance 76. The teacher prods the discussion by weighing the importance of joining in the Sugar Feast against participation in Ramadan (utterances 25, 28, 49-51). In this conversation the canonical and critical registers are used. First student 2 links the relevance of the Sugar Feast to participation in Ramadan (utterances 21-22, 27, 30). The formality of this relation indicates a canonical register. In utterance 32 student 3 responds by critically questioning this relation. Student 3 considers the Sugar Feast not all that important because it's simply a matter of eating a lot (utterances 35-36). His critical attitude indicates a critical register. Student 4 responds to this (utterances 39-53) by stressing the formal relation between Ramadan and the Sugar Feast: "It is simply part of Ramadan" (utterance 53). This indicates a canonical register. In utterances 57-66 student 5 observes that he finds it odd ("rather weird", utterance 66) first to identify with people less fortunate than yourself, which is the purpose of participating in Ramadan, and then indulge in gorging yourself on large amounts of food, which is the formal praxis when celebrating the Sugar Feast. This critical attitude indicates a critical register. In his turn student 4 uses the canonical register to stress the manifest connection between the Sugar Feast and Ramadan (utterance 68). In student 2's ethical appraisal of Muslims' personal decision on participation in Ramadan (utterances 72-74) one again discerns a critical register. Throughout the teacher facilitates the ideological conversation by asking students what they think (utterances 18, 25, 31, 43, 51, 67, 69, 71) and inquiring about their personal experience when they give closed answers (utterances 20, 28, 47). This indicates a critical register. It culminates in utterance 77, when the teacher asks if people in Muslim countries are also allowed to decide whether or not to take part in Ramadan. This reference to official Islam indicates a canonical register. The canonical register is again used by student 2 (utterances 79-80) when he explains that participation in Ramadan is governed by rules that stipulate at what age Muslims are expected to take part in Ramadan.

In the excerpt in box 1 two different registers are used to ventriloquate different voices of religion: the canonical and the critical register. The global register is not used.

To what extent is teachers' speech internally persuasive? Because the form of the utterance is not pertinent to our questions, we confine our calculation of these frequencies to a categorisation of communicative intentions. The results appear Table 2.

**Table 2: Frequencies of teacher's VRMs in the excerpt in box 1**

VRMs	N	%
Disclosure (D)	0	0.0
Edification (E)	0	0.0
Advisement (A1)	0	0.0
Test question (A2)	1	3.0
Turn-giving acknowledgment (A3)	5	15.2
Repetition (A4)	1	3.0
Confirmation (C1)	2	6.0
Disclosure in the form of affirm./negation (C2)	0	0.0
Edification in the form of affirm./negation (C3)	0	0.0
Real question (Q1)	13	39.4
Probing question (Q2)	5	15.2
Acknowledgment (K)	1	3.0
Interpretation (I)	0	0.0
Rephrasing (R1)	5	15.2
Exploration (R2)	0	0.0
Total	33	100

Table 2 shows that 78.8% of teacher's VRM use is internally persuasive (D, C1, C2, Q1, Q2, K, R1, R2) and 21.2% is authoritative (E, A1, A2, A3, A4, C3, I). The majority of internally persuasive VRMs are real questions (Q1) and probing questions (Q2). The teacher's strategy to stimulate students to explain themselves in different voices is to ask questions to which he doesn't know the answers, apart from rephrasing what the student has just said. In settling for this strategy the teacher himself does not use many voices of religion. This is underscored by the fact that he does not make any disclosures at all. Unlike real questions and probing questions, the category of disclosures is eminently suitable for ventriloquating different voices of religion. It implies that the teacher could have used disclosures to make his speech even more internally persuasive to his students. Finally it appears that most of the VRMs that are not internally persuasive (because they are authoritative) are directed to turn giving (A3). This indicates that the authoritative power of discourse in this excerpt is used for managerial reasons, that is to facilitate role exchange between speakers, rather than for substantive reasons, such as transmitting meanings that teachers consider relevant to the students (cf. excerpt in box 2).

Next we analyse the excerpt which, theoretically, offers least scope for interaction between different voices of religion. This excerpt appears in box 2. It deals with the meaning of the Bible in Christianity.

**Box 2**

- |     |      |   |     |
|-----|------|---|-----|
| 1.  | T:   | Who still has a Bible at home?  | QQ1 |
| 2.  |      | You, H.?  | QQ1 |
| 3.  | S 1: | Yes,  | KE1 |
| 4.  |      | four or five.   | EE2 |
| 5.  | T:   | Four or five?   | R D |
| 6.  |      | How come?   | QQ1 |
| 7.  | S 1: | One for my father, one for my mother, two for me<br>and one for my little brother   | EE2 |
| 8.  | T:   | When are the Bibles used?   | QQ1 |
| 9.  | S 1: | When there is a feast or something.   | EE2 |
| 10. | T:   | When there is a feast or something?   | RR3 |
| 11. | S: 2 | No,   | KC  |
| 12. |      | if like now you want to look up something or when<br>you've done something wrong  | EE2 |
| 13. | T:   | Yes   | KK  |
| 14. | S 2: | For instance when you've dropped something and<br>you want to look up if you can be punished for it<br>or something like that | EE2 |
| 15. | T:   | And you think that is written in the Bible?   | II  |
| 16. | S 2: | Yes,  | KD  |
| 17. |      | I think so, but I'm not sure  | DD  |
| 18. | T:   | G.  | KA1 |
| 19. | S 3: | I think, for example when someone dies, that you<br>will then [...]   | DD  |
| 20. | T:   | Because?  | QA2 |
| 21. | S 3: | Yes,  | KK  |
| 22. |      | with us that is also when you will read the Qur'an, say   | EE2 |
| 23. |      | when someone dies   | EE2 |
| 24. | T:   | When someone dies you will read the Qur'an,   | RR1 |
| 25. |      | does it say something that will comfort you and ease<br>your sorrow?  | QR2 |
| 26. | S 3: | Maybe you then wish that the deceased lives happily<br>and [...]  | EE2 |
| 27. | T:   | Okay.   | KK  |
| 28. |      | M.  | KA1 |
| 29. |      | the Bible, where is it kept in your home?   | QQ1 |
| 30. | S 4: | I don't know,   | DD  |
| 31. |      | my mother finds it  | EE2 |
| 32. | T:   | Your mother finds it.   | RR3 |

33.	S 4:	It has no special place where it's kept	EE2
34.	T:	It can simply stand, or actually lie, anywhere.	ER1
35.		And do you use it at home?	QQ1
36.	S 4:	Not very often.	EE2
37.	T:	Not very often.	RR3
38.	S 4:	Only when we want to know more about religion.	DE2
39.	T:	Then you look in the Bible?	RR1
40.	S 4:	Yes	KD
41.	T:	Okay.	KK
42.		That's good.	E I
43.		A.?	KA1
44.	S 5:	People also often read the Bible at Christmas (hm) and often on Sundays	EE2
45.	T:	So the Bible is about ...	EA2
46.	S 5:	About God and Jesus and so on	EE2
47.	T:	About God and Jesus,	RR3
48.		certainly	I I
49.	S 5:	Some people who go to church often and are very religious often read the Bible	EE2
50.	T:	Yes,	KE1
51.		that's so,	E I
52.		for naturally it contains stories about Jesus	ER1
53.		C.?	KA1
54.	S 6:	I have a question:	DD
55.		<i>must</i> one read it?	QQ1
56.	S 4:	No,	KE1
57.		that you can decide for yourself	EE2
58.	T:	No	KC
59.	S 4:	You can simply put it down	EE2
60.	T:	Yes,	KC
61.		you can also page through it	EE2
62.		but you can simply put it down if you like	RR3
63.		That is a clear answer	ED
64.		hey?	KC
65.		F.?	KA1
66.	S 7:	Is it a holy book or ...?	QQ1
67.	S 4:	Yes,	KE1
68.		it is a holy book for Christianity	EE2
69.	T:	What do you understand by a holy book?	QQ1
70.	S 4:	Yes	KK

71.	if it's a rare book	ED
72.	T: If you must handle it carefully?	ER1
73.	S 4: No,	KD
74.	that's no longer necessary	EE2
75.	S 2: Well, just a bit [noise]	EI
76.	T: Ho, ho,	AA2
77.	now it's getting interesting,	ED
78.	You...	KA1
79.	S 2: You should handle it carefully because it's a religious book	ED
80.	and if you tear it that is bad	ED
81.	S 4: Yes,	KC
82.	okay,	KC
83.	but if you accidentally drop it it's not so bad	ED
84.	T: No,	KC
85.	that's true	E I
86.	S 2: If you do it on purpose, for example if you burn it, you'll be punished	ED
87.	T: Do you think so or do you know so, L.?	QQ1
88.	S 2: I know it,	DD
89.	because my uncle once tore a page from it and the next day he had terrible pains in his bones	EE2

To what extent are the canonical, critical and global voice registers used in this excerpt? In utterances 1 to 7 a critical register is used. The teacher's question (utterance 1) implies the possibility that not all Christian students have a Bible at home, that is that people are free to have a Bible or not. A critical register is also suggested by the surprise in the teacher's utterances when it turns out that student 1 has four or five Bibles (utterances 5-6), as well as in student 1's response about the number of Bibles in his home and to whom they belong. In utterance 8 the teacher shifts the focus to occasions when Bibles are used [by Christians]. This draws three responses from three different students (students 1, 2 and 3). All three use a canonical register, although their explanations of the meaning of the Bible differ. Student 1 relates the meaning of the Bible to religious feasts (utterances 9-10). Student 2 relates it to moral judgment of people's behaviour in terms of the Christian tradition (utterances 11-17). Student 3 relates the meaning of the Bible to comfort in the event of bereavement, as is common practice in Islam (utterances 19-26). In contrast to students 1 and 2, who use the Christian canonical register, student 3 uses the Muslim canonical register. In utterance 28 the teacher changes

the focus again by asking student 4 where the Bible is kept in his home. The possibility of several places implied in this utterance suggests a critical register. A critical register is also indicated in student 4's response, when he says that one has to look for the Bible; there is no particular place where it is kept and it is not often used. Only when he or one of his family wants to know more about the Christian faith, student 4 continues, the Bible is consulted (utterances 38-42). These last utterances reflect a canonical register, indicating the authority of the Bible when it comes to the Christian faith. In utterance 44 student 5 uses a canonical register when he relates Bible reading to ecclesiastic feast days. In response the teacher links the Bible directly to God and Jesus (utterances 45-48), which again indicates a canonical register. A canonical register is also used in utterances 49-52. In utterance 49 Bible reading is related to church attendance; utterance 52 relates it to religiosity. In utterance 55 student 6 starts an ideological conversation, which continues until utterance 65. In this conversation student 6's use of the canonical register ("*must* one read [the Bible]?"), is confronted by student 4, who uses a critical register saying: "You can decide that for yourself" and "you can simply put it down". Student 6's statement is also confronted when the teacher, also using a critical register, says: "You can simply page through it" and "you can simply put it down if you like". In utterance 66 the topic changes again to the status of the Bible: "Is [the Bible] a holy book?". In utterance 68 a canonical register is used by student 4 to affirm that it is a holy book for Christians. When the teacher asks student 4 what he understands by a holy book (utterance 69) he uses a critical register, which continues in utterances 70-72 (rare, handle with care). In response to the teacher's interpretation of student 4's notion of 'rare' as 'handle with care', student 4 says that it is no longer necessary to handle the Bible with care (utterance 74). In this utterance student 4 uses a critical register. Student 2 responds in a canonical register (utterance 75), stating that handling the Bible requires proper care. At the teacher's request this ideological conversation continues in utterances 79-89. It focuses on the difference between deliberate negligent handling (utterances 79-80, 86), in which a canonical register is used, or accidental negligence (utterance 83), where a critical register is used. The teacher, who also participates in this conversation, takes a critical stance (using a critical register) when he affirms that it is not too bad if you drop the Bible by accident (utterances 84-85). In utterance 87 he again uses a critical register. This is indicated when he makes student 2 consider the difference between knowing something for sure and assuming it to be so. The last two utterances (88-89) are difficult to analyse, since they could indicate the use of both a canonical register ('that is the official doctrine') and a critical register ('that is my personal truth').

**Table 3: Frequencies of teacher's VRMs in the excerpt in box 2**

VRMs	N	%
Disclosure (D)	3	6.7
Edification (E)	1	2.2
Advisement (A1)	3	6.7
Test question (A2)	0	0.0
Turn-giving acknowledgment (A3)	7	15.6
Repetition (A4)	4	8.9
Confirmation (C1)	4	8.9
Disclosure in the form of affirm./negation (C2)	0	0.0
Edification in the form of affirm./negation (C3)	1	2.2
Real question (Q1)	8	17.7
Probing question (Q2)	0	0.0
Acknowledgment (K)	3	6.7
Interpretation (I)	5	11.1
Rephrasing (R1)	5	11.1
Exploration (R2)	1	2.2
Total	45	100.0

The excerpt in box 2 uses two different registers to ventriloquate different voices of religion: the canonical and the critical register. The global register is not used.

To what extent is teachers' speech internally persuasive? Because the form of the utterance does not feature in our questions, our calculation of these frequencies is confined to an inventory of communicative intentions. The results appear in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that 53.3% of teachers' VRM use is internally persuasive (D, C1, C2, Q1, Q2, K, R1, R2) and 46.7% is authoritative (E, A1, A2, A3, A4, C3, I). To be internally persuasive to students this teacher, like the one in the first example, uses mainly real questions (Q1 = 17.7%) and rephrasing (R1 = 11.1%). When analysing the first example we already observed that this meant that the teacher does not contribute any voices of religion of his own. Remarkably, this second fragment, unlike the one in box 1, does contain disclosures. But on closer scrutiny the teacher's disclosures in box 2 do not convey voices of religion but consist in expressions of surprise (utterance 6) and of what the teacher finds self-evident (utterance 63) and interesting (utterance 77). So while the disclosures convey the teacher's experience,

they do not introduce a fresh religious voice into the discussion. What these results indicate, furthermore, is that this teacher directs the students' learning process far more than the teacher in the first example did. That is apparent, for example, in the relatively large proportion (42.3%) of advisements (A1, A2, A3, A4) and interpretations (I).

The teacher in the excerpt in box 2 uses standard 'teacher talk'. It means that interaction between teacher and students follows a standard pattern known in the literature as IRE (Mercer, 1995; Maloch, 2002): it starts with an initiation by the teacher, a response by the student, followed by an evaluation by the teacher. The evaluation voices appreciation of the student's response, usually in the evaluative sentence. See utterance 10 (initiation by teacher) — utterances 11-14 (response by student) — utterance 15 (evaluation by teacher), or utterances 28-29 (I) — utterances 30-40 (R) — utterances 41-42 (E). Use of this pattern clearly indicates direction by the teacher, which assumes diverse forms. In utterances 8, 29, 45, 69 and 78 the teacher directs by asking a question or giving an instruction: "You" (utterance 78). Elsewhere he directs by imparting information (utterances 52, 61-62), emphasising certain comments by students (utterances 47-48, 63-64) or adopting an ideological stance (utterances 58: "no, you mustn't read it" or utterances 84-85: "no. that's true"). This inhibits interaction, since the authority of the teacher's speech determines how students should formulate the voices of religion that ventriloquate through their speech.

## **7. Summary and Discussion**

In section 5.1 we raised two questions: (1) to what extent are the canonical, critical and global registers of voices of religion used in interreligious classroom communication?, and (2) to what extent is teachers' speech in interreligious classroom communication internally persuasive? The first question pertains to the substantive condition for authoring, the second to the communicative condition. What can we say in answer to these questions? Put differently, to what extent do teachers create opportunities for authoring in their communication with students from different religions?

Regarding the first question, we note that in the two lesson fragments that we examined the canonical and critical registers of voices of religion are used, but not the global register. Since the use of a critical register suggests that the user considers many different voices of religion plausible although only one voice is considered legitimate (see section 3.2), both teachers allow scope for a variety of voices of religion. They would have offered even greater scope if

they had used the global register (as well). After all, that would imply that they consider religious diversity not merely plausible but also legitimate.

Regarding the second question, we see the speech of the teacher in the first excerpt as more internally persuasive than that of the teacher in the second excerpt. The teacher in the first excerpt not only uses more internally persuasive utterances, but he also asks questions to stimulate students to express their personal views. By contrast the teacher in the second example uses far fewer internally persuasive utterances and inquires into the 'factual' rather than the personal meaning of religious practices. As a result the teacher in the first example offers greater scope for interaction than the teacher in the second example. One similarity between the two teachers is that neither of them makes any disclosures of their own in order to articulate their own voices of religion. Hence they fail to demonstrate the best way to make one's speech internally persuasive. By making disclosures in addition to their other internally persuasive utterances they would have offered even greater scope for interaction.

What do these findings signify for the extent to which the conditions for authoring were met in the two excerpts? The first condition — offering scope for a variety of voices of religion — was met in both excerpts, although not maximally. The use of a canonical, and more especially a critical register, allowed scope for a variety of voices of religion in both excerpts. However, the scope would have been greater if teachers and students had also used the global register. The second condition — offering room for interaction between different voices of religion — was met differently by the two teachers. By using more internally persuasive utterances the first teacher met this condition more adequately than the second teacher. In so doing the first teacher provided more opportunities for authoring than the second teacher. The first example offers maximum scope for interaction, the second offers minimal scope. That means that the difference in scope for interaction offered by a discourse influences the extent to which teachers use utterances that are internally persuasive, but not the extent to which they use the global register of voices of religion. We did not expect that. We expected that teachers whose speech is maximally internally persuasive would make greater use of the global voice register than of the critical and canonical registers. Conversely we expected teachers whose speech is minimally internally persuasive to make greater use of the canonical voice register than of the critical and global registers.

How do we explain these findings? In the first place one could argue that as a result of secularisation people are less knowledgeable about both their own and other people's religions (Dressler, 2005). Hence it is increasingly

difficult to present different religions and their meanings and engage them in dialogue with each other.

A second explanation could be that there is a dearth of examples in the public sphere of people who use a global voice register. The history of the past few centuries shows that it is extremely difficult to respect and tolerate cultural, ethnic and religious differences, especially when the economy and governments keep creating new forms of inequality. As a result the status of otherness in the sense of foreignness is less clearly discernible in our day and age. The process of globalisation has blurred the boundaries that used to define our identity and they have (at any rate partially) lost their identificatory significance (Witvliet, 1999). Consequently some people revert to the time-honoured, trusted certainties of established tradition, while many others stagnate in a kind of diffuse religiosity whose nature and attributes nobody is too sure of. In the first case the voices of religion of other religions are regarded with renewed mistrust; in the second case there is a relativistic attitude towards other religions, characterised by acquiescence (passive) rather than curiosity (active).

A third possible explanation relates to the manner in which constructivist ideas that influenced recent innovations in Dutch primary education are implemented. Primary school education is no longer expected to focus solely on transfer of knowledge, but also on the development of meta-cognitive skills and knowledge, that is self-regulation and knowledge of students' own cognition (De Jager, Jansen & Reezigt, 2005). From the perspective of authoring this is a positive development. However, many primary school teachers have difficulty creating environments that are conducive to meta-cognition (De Jager, Jansen & Reezigt, 2005). Their main concern when creating a learning environment that complies with the demands of constructivism and meta-cognition is the amount of structuring they should provide for their students. For authoring this means that they focus on facilitating the process, using general didactic knowledge and skills, rather than on the process itself. But adequate facilitation of teaching-learning processes, as we saw in this study, is not sufficient when it comes to such complex processes as authoring. Promoting authoring also requires substantive support of the process.

A fourth explanation could be that many primary schools adopt a teacher-centred approach to learning and development. According to this approach both the goals and the form of the learning process are determined by the teacher, whose focal role impairs interaction with students. That inhibits the authoring process.

A fifth and final explanation concerns developments in the subject of religious education. In recent years the heteronomy that characterised religious

education in the first half of the 20th century has made way for greater autonomy (Brants et al., 1997). Instead of deciding for students what they must believe students' autonomy now occupies centre stage. This means greater emphasis on their subjectivity, on the search for the religious meaning of their own lives and on identity formation. A drawback of this approach is the tendency to relate one's own subjectivity with freedom, and that of the other(s) with unfreedom. By regarding my subjectivity as something that entails freedom and the other's otherness as an impediment to my freedom, otherness becomes a threat rather than a challenge. This development in religious education relates to such social phenomena as individualisation and secularisation. People increasingly tend to take their lives in their own hands and to prioritise this-worldly values over values that transcend our world. The first development is conducive to individual freedom of choice, but at the expense of group or common interests. The second development warns us against subordinating the world to religion. Religion should be seen as an orientation to the world and ordinary life. At the same time this development threatens to override attention to people's religious development. A result of these developments could be that religious education teachers use a canonical and/or critical register of voices of religion, rather than a global one.

This article explored the extent to which the substantive and communicative conditions, which we assume to be conducive to authoring, were met in nine religious education lessons. Further research is needed to investigate these conditions' effect on authoring. For the same purpose one could also examine to what extent having a voice of one's own influences the use of a global register and the use of internally persuasive utterances. We also expected teachers whose speech is maximally internally persuasive will make greater use of the global register of voices of religion than of the critical or canonical registers. Our research did not confirm this expectation. Further research is needed to investigate the relation between different voice registers and type of speech.

This study indicates that creating the right conditions for authoring in interreligious classroom communication is no easy task. The causes lie not only in didactic processes, but also in social processes that schools tend to mirror. We should not set our goals too high when it comes to schools' contribution to the acquisition of a religious voice of one's own in interreligious communication. What could schools do to create more favourable conditions for authoring? We mention three possibilities: (1) they could structure the learning process so that it centres more on the student and less on the teacher and the subject matter than happens at present (Rickers, 1998; Berling, 2004), (2) schools could train teachers, far more than they currently do, to engage in dialogue with students from different religious backgrounds. Such

training should concern not just the communicative aspect of dialogue but also its substance; and (3) schools could organise more regular encounters between adherents of different religions, with the accent not on exchange of information but on understanding each other's personal views and assumptions. Education is a good place to start learning to use a global register and to articulate one's own voices of religion, the voices that one has already appropriated. In terms of the school's responsibility for children's personal moulding, as well as its social responsibility (contributing to a better, more peaceful society) it is essential that schools, and by extension teacher training, should embark on this task (inasmuch as they have not already done so). But we should have no illusions: schools cannot compensate for society. Yet that does not detract from the importance of their role.

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