Investigating the Dialogic Interactions Between Multilingual Students and a Writing Instructor in Higher Education

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INTRODUCTION

- Dialogic interactions: The dynamic interactions between students and teachers that emphasize a reciprocal and collaborative learning relationship (Baik, 1986).
- Research Question: How do students influence instructors’ pedagogies and teaching practices in academic settings?

METHODS

- Drawing on a larger study conducted by Harris (2018), this qualitative case-study focuses on one writing instructor and his two undergraduate students.
- Context: English Second Language (ESL) 115 at UIUC, Fall 2017
- Data: 1) Pre- and post- lesson observation interview with the instructor. 2) Two reflective interviews between researcher and each student respectively.
- Analysis: Loose transcription (Pincus, 2010) and Scheme for Educational Dialogue Analysis (Hennessy et al., 2016)

RESULTS

- **Student’s Identity Construction**
  - **Result 1-Identity Perception**
    - Linguistic background and previous educational experiences shape student’s identities as writers and their attitudes about being placed in an ESL class.
    - **Student A:** “Initially, I didn’t really like this course because I’ve been in the US for a couple years. But after taking this course, I think that this is the first time I’ve experienced writing in a new language.”
  - **Result 2-Role of Student**
    - **Student A:** Believes he has the power in influencing the instructor’s teaching practices and is aware of the instructor’s teaching practices.
    - **Instructor:** “I think that most students are more familiar with the high-power system, about as much information as possible. Really, you need to be an active spender. Teacher is going to squeeze things out of you...and no one will fight back.”
  - **Result 3-Learning Experience**
    - **Student A:** Has very positive learning experiences and acknowledges the instructor’s teaching practices.
    - **Instructor:** “If you have a strong point against the instructor, it’s not really why you’re coming [the comment] to the class...because I think he’s a graduate student here of ESL.”

- **Dialogic Interactions**
  - **Result 1-Dialogic Learning**
    - **Instructor:** (addressing the whole class about their papers) “I learned about a whole bunch of different things I haven’t thought about in details. So, I get to learn from you guys’ work. That’s something I really appreciated.”
    - **Student A:** “I hope so. He said to share his summary.”
    - **Instructor:** “Yeah. That sounds great. I summarized the importance, specifically the quality you need...talking to the whole class.”
  - **Context:**
    - **Student’s Interaction with Instructor**
      - **Instructor:** “I think about...and for all of our major classes...and for all of our major classes...and for all of our major classes.”
      - **Student C:** “Yeah!”
      - **Instructor:** “I’ve been in the college before...you’ve been in the college before.”
  - **Result 2-Teaching Philosophy**
    - **Instructor:** “The instructor understands his obligation and responsibility as an ESL writing instructor and attempts to tailor his teaching practices to best accommodate the students’ needs.”
    - **Instructor:** “Because this is an ESL environment, you are the only source [for the students] to get some of those and practice.”

CONCLUSION

- The students perceive the instructor's teaching philosophies and practices as mediating their attitudes about the class and their learning experiences.
- The instructor attempts to create a positive classroom environment that encourages constructive and meaningful dialogue. However, he reinforces his authority as the teacher during conversations with a student.
- The instructor’s instructional goals go beyond just helping students acquire knowledge of academic writings. He perceives that including popular U.S. cultures to help students to acclimate to the university life.

Students play a crucial role in impacting the instructor’s teaching pedagogies and practices. However, the effects are only acknowledged to a limited extent because of the complexity of the roles of students and teacher.

REFERENCES


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