

Critical Assessment of A Research Article“Teacher’s Literal and Inferential Questions and Children’s Responses A Study of Teacher-Child Linguistic Interactions During Whole-Group Instruction in Hong K

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Module 7022

Assignment 1

Critical Assessment of A Research Article:

“Teacher’s Literal and Inferential Questions and Children’s Responses: A Study of Teacher-Child Linguistic Interactions During Whole-Group Instruction in Hong Kong Kindergarten Classrooms”

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Literal and Inferential Questions and Children’s Responses: A Study of Teacher-Child Linguistic Interactions During Whole-Group Instruction in Hong Kong Kindergarten Classrooms. It comes from the Journal of Early Childhood Education in 2017 and published online is 19 July 2016. The reasons why I choose this article are as follows: Firstly, It studies the linguistic interactions between the teachers and children within whole-group instruction, which can help teachers better support language learning in young children. Secondly, it chooses Hong Kong Kindergarten as a study subject which has a profound significance to Chinese young children. Thirdly, This is an empirical study, which adopts four kindergarten classrooms and a total of 20 sessions. It has better practical significance and data persuasion. Fourthly, I am interested in teaching language to young children which promotes me to further study in this field.

1. Introduction

This part mainly introduces the article’s background, theoretical rationale, research progress, research theories, the hypotheses from the theory, etc. It helps to understand the outline of the whole article and know what’s the conclusion about the relative experimentation.

1.1 Background

Chinese parents pay huge attention to children’s second language education, even early education in English. The majority of children between ages 3-6 should attend kindergarten(kindergarten can be considered as equivalent to the reception, year 1, and year 2 in the UK), to ensure they have a high starting line to win. Through the experimental research on teacher-child linguistic interactions, it tries to find out the approach to develop language learning in young children.

1.2 Theoretical rationale

All of the theories are supported by the children's acquisition of language skills by the interaction between teachers and children. The theoretical framework includes developmental theory, socioecological perspective theory, social interactionist perspective theory, social constructivist perspective theory, language serves as a cultural tool for the development of cognition theory.

Such as social interactionist(Chpman 2000)  al constructivist(Halliday 2004; Vygotsky 1978), children learn and develop in social interaction with others in multiple contexts(Bronfenbrenner 1979; Bronfenbrenner and Morris 1998) and so forth.

1.3 Research progress

Step 1: the participants are 4 female teachers and 360 children age 3-6 from 4 classes. These children from different socioeconomic backgrounds, of which 70% attend a half-day program and 30% attend a full-day program.

Step 2: The children are grouped into four abstraction levels as matching perception, selective analysis/integration of perception, reordering or inferring about perception, and reasoning about perception(Blank et al.1978; van Kleeck et al.1997).

Step 3: The children have 20 instructional sessions, each session lasting 20 minutes on average and five days is a period. In total, 433 minutes of videotaped observations were captured.

Step 4: Within the approach of observation, the researchers collect the data of class interactions between teachers and children.

Step 5: The research team has two researchers, they watch, transcribe, and compare the collective data, and assess the effect of teacher-child linguistic interactions during whole-group instruction.

1.4 Research theory of the article aim to text

The research theory of the article is teacher-child linguistic interactions during whole-group instruction. This study mainly investigates the teacher-child linguistic interactions in the kindergarten classroom, which as opportunities for language engagement in a range of cognitive complexities in the whole-group teaching situation.

Whole-group instruction is found to be the predominant, pedagogical mode in kindergarten classrooms in this cultural setting(Li et al. 2012), as most learning activities were conducted in a whole-class nature involving all children(Chen et al. 2017; Pearson and Rao 2003).

1.5 The hypotheses from the theory

The researchers mainly address what is the quantity and quality of teacher utterances and child utterances. Specifically speaking, the quantity refers to number and proportion, the quality refers to literal and inferential nature.

The problems which researchers want to solve are about the quantitative difference of teacher utterances and child utterances, the differences of literal and inferential quality between teachers and child, the quantity of child responses between their literal and inferential quality, the quality as low or high production of children's utterances, etc.



2. Scientific method or theoretical considerations

The procedure of study mainly includes three research approaches, they are observation, coding scheme and inter-rater reliability. In this part, they are introduced the mechanics and the pros and cons separately.

2.1 Observation

2.1.1 Mechanics

Observation is a scientific approach, which can actively acquire the first-hand information. In the process of data collection, it not only uses biological senses, but also perceives and record data through sophisticated scientific instruments. In addition, the term can also be used to refer to any data collected during scientific activities.

2.1.2 The pros and cons of this approach

Pros: (1)The data can be obtained by observing directly without other intermediaries, therefore, the observed data are true and reliable. (2)Observation in the natural state can obtain vivid data. (3)Observation has the advantage of timeliness, it can catch what is happening.



Cons: (1) Due to the limitation of time, there is a certain time limit for the occurrence of certain events. After this period of time, it will not happen again. (2) Limited by the observation object. That is to say, some secret gangs will not be observed by others. (3) Limited by the observer. On the one hand, it is difficult for people to observe directly beyond the limits of physiology. On the other hand, the observation results are also influenced by subjective consciousness.

2.2 Coding Scheme

2.2.1 Mechanics

Coding scheme is an approach to classify behaviors, which can encode the observed content according to the frequency of a behavior. If the research object is a natural behavior, then it has high ecological efficiency.



2.2.2 The pros and cons of this approach

Pros: (1) It has a good hierarchy and can reflect the logical relationship between categories. (2) Strong applicability. It can form any category according to the need, and it is convenient for the computer to process information. (3) Easy to use, it can suit the traditional habit of manual information processing, and also convenient for the computer.

Cons: (1) The elasticity of the structure is poor. Once the classification structure is determined, it is not easy to change. (2) When there are many levels of classification, the efficiency and speed of data processing are affected. (3) The requirements for the researchers are high.

2.3 Inter-rater Reliability/Agreement

2.3.1 Mechanics

In statistics, inter-rater reliability, which is also called inter-rater agreement, inter-rater concordance, inter-observer reliability, etc., refers to the degree of agreement between raters.



This is a score given by different judges, which is to describe how much homogeneity or consensus exists in the ratings.

2.3.2 The pros and cons of this approach

Pros: (1)It can avoid the error caused by subjective factors of raters. (2)In the research of creative thinking test and projection test, the more objective data can get.

Cons: (1)If examine a personal case with variables, the misjudgment may on it. (2)Evaluation by two or more people will cost more time and manpower.

2.4 Alternative methodology: IRF or IRE

The alternative methodology in the experimental process can choose IRF or IRE. IRF refers to initiation, response, feedback, which is a feature of the classroom interaction pattern. And IRE is another feature, just initiation, Citation Needed response, evaluation. The IRF is widely used in teacher-child interactive teaching activities, and 'has been praised as well as criticized(Wells, 1999)'. The IRE offers opportunities for co-construction of knowledge 'on the basis of ideas and experiences contributed by the students as well as the teacher'(Wells, 1999).



3. Results and relevance to theory

3.1 The results of the data collection

In order to get the results, the researchers mainly adopt three approaches to collect data, and the ultimate result shows satisfaction.

3.1.1 Observation

In the experimental process, it is widely used for observation and recording, so as to obtain the scientific record data of four kindergartens in Hong Kong, so as to better support scientific research.

3.1.2 Coding scheme

researchers develop three exhaustive sets of codes: (1)Teacher Questions, such as "Did we eat fruit and vegetables today?", which is the interrogative form with yes/no and open-ended wh-questions. (2)Managerial Questions, such as "I am going to post the stickers on the board so that you can view them later, is that okay?". (3)Other, especially comments, such as "That's right. There are also tomato and banana." Secondly, according to the four levels, the researchers coded each TQ for the extent of cognitive complexity. Thirdly, at first, child utterances are coded as either Child Responses. And then, the length of the children's utterances are coded into three

categories: non-meaningful, low-production, high-production. Finally, in order to get the abstraction quality of child responses, the researchers used the same coding scheme to the teacher.

3.1.3 Inter-rater reliability/agreement

In the experimental process, the inter-rater reliability was calculated separately, just the coding of teacher questions and child corresponding responses. There are two transcripts, which were randomly selected and independently coded, represents whole-group instructional sessions within 10% of the 20 videotapes. The first transcript is on the topic of "Zoo and Animals", and the TQ in a Cohen's kappa value of $k=0.93$, which the child responses is $k=0.82$. The second transcript is on the topic of "Vegetables", and the TQ is $k=0.95$, the child responses is $k=0.92$. The results are very satisfactory since the values 0.81-1.00 are considered "almost perfect agreement" (Landis and Koch 1977; McHugh 2012).

3.2 Relation between the theory and results

Generally speaking, there is an inevitable correlation between the theories and experimental results. At the same time, the theory supports the results, scientific data analysis is carried out on the associations between teacher questions and child responses, and length of child utterances (low-production vs. high-production). Finally, the results are brought into the theories for comparison, and the experimental data obtained are also positively correlated with the theoretical data. It shows that the research method is correct, the experimental results are successful, and the results are very satisfactory to the researchers. That is to say, Teacher-Child linguistic interactions during whole-group instruction are very effective.

3.3 Limitation of the results

Although this experiment and the data results are satisfactory to the researchers, there are still several limitations in the concept and method based on the existing research. Firstly, since this experiment has not been carried out in Hong Kong kindergartens before, all the data are compared with those of American kindergartens, and the subjects come from different cultural backgrounds and different mother tongue environments; secondly, the researchers try to analyze

the teacher questions and child responses in Hong Kong kindergartens for the first time. This part needs more similar theoretical research, which will have more realistic significance.

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4. Conclusion of this critical assessment

Through such a comprehensive and systematic analysis and study, I understand what theories and actions need to be knowledge want to conduct such experimental research. Meanwhile, it also let me know what kind of methods should be adopted in the specific language teaching of children, to make children learn a language more effectively. All in all, this is a scientific and systematic research article, which has benefited me a lot.

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GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

60/100

GENERAL COMMENTS

Instructor

Scientific method / theoretical considerations

This is a very good assignment which explores teacher-pupil interaction in detail.

You demonstrate your ability to understand key research approaches by considering the background literature effectively.

Methodology

You have succeeded in identifying key research methods. The context of the article is described clearly and reference is made to appropriate reading in the module but key methods can be analysed further.

Results and relevance to theory

A range of evidence is discussed with reference to good practice. Your review is supported by insights into further research but this could be analysed more systematically.

The style is fairly coherent and reflective adopting a suitably tentative approach. A good range of additional sources are synthesized to form a clear discussion. References are complete and the conventions are applied consistently.

You might like to consider:

1. Including further evidence of background reading.
2. Further application of theory and detailed knowledge could be included.

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PAGE 2



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