ERD 2022
Education, Reflection, Development

TURNING CLASSROOM DIALOGUE INTO A QUALITY DIALOGIC PEDAGOGY - A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Dialogue is defined as a process where people communicate in words what they are thinking or feeling in a question-and-answer manner in order to produce new ideas for all involved. Classroom dialogue includes all forms of verbal interactions that occur between a child and a teacher, all being a form of pedagogy. Teachers often "think" that are promoting dialogue in their classrooms by asking many questions and "listening" to the children's answers. Also, teachers often tend to lead children to pre-formed conclusions by looking for answers that they want to hear, leaving practically no room for open-ended questions and authentic classroom dialogue. Despite the importance of classroom dialogue, there is a lack of research on intervention programs that can facilitate the promotion of open dialogue by teachers in general and pre-service teachers, in particular. The objective of this study is to evaluate the current state of research-informed knowledge regarding dialogic approaches in preschools and classrooms. The methodological approach consists of a systematic review of the aims of the research done on dialogic approaches that can be found in the literature, the types of research, having as an objective the identification of the dimensions of dialogic pedagogy and the instruments that are most frequently used to assess the outcomes of dialogic pedagogy programs, by examining the current literature. The results of this systematic literature review could be valuable in designing pedagogical intervention programs for teachers working with all ages, especially for pre-service teachers during their training.

Keywords: Classroom dialogue approaches, pedagogy dimensions; pre-service teachers

1. Introduction

It is generally acknowledged in the field of sciences of education that one of the goals of classroom dialogue is to enable children to take an active part in their learning process. Over the past several decades, researches on classroom dialogue indicate that meaningful learning can be achieved when teachers as well as students take part in the learning process, exploring problems together and finding possible solutions not thought of already (Wegerif, 2007). In addition, when teachers make an attempt to include all of the children in the communication process and support every idea a child claims, dialogue and not just classroom talk does occur (Alexander, 2020). Several studies have targeted improved classroom instruction by the implementation of intervention programs that promote a more open space for children to voice their opinions (e.g. Peled-Elhanan & Blum-Kulka, 2006), or by observing classroom dialogue and later evaluating it with regard to the amount a teacher speaks as opposed to the child (e.g. Mercer, 2019).

2. Problem Statement

Due to the fact that great importance is given to teacher-child dialogue in classrooms, the effects of this dialogue on future academic skills and abilities, as well as on boosting children's self-confidence, there is a need to identify methods that will aid in achieving quality classroom dialogue. The purpose of the study is to review in a systematic manner the types of classroom dialogue that exists in the literature and identify the instruments used to assess dialogic pedagogy (DP).

3. Research Questions

In the search for the main key points concerning classroom dialogue, the following research questions were used as guiding elements: 1. What are the aims of the research studies on dialogic approaches in classrooms and preschools?; 2. What types of research have been done on dialogic approaches in classrooms and preschools?; 3. What are the dimensions of DP in classrooms and preschools?; 4. What instruments are most frequently used to assess the outcomes of the DP programs?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to present implications classroom dialogue can have on children in order to improve teaching strategies for teachers and pre-service teachers by using DP-oriented intervention programs.

5. Research Methods

In order to answer the research questions, the method used was a systematic literature review and analysis of the current research studies published between 2011-2021 in peer review journals. The procedural guideline of Uman (2011) was followed in order to design and report the stages. Cooper

(1998) explains that by way of this method, empirical studies on a particular topic are emphasized based on the most current scientific knowledge.

Literature search included the following databases: Elsevier, Eagle search, Science-Direct, Taylor and Francis, Early Childhood Folio, Routledge, Research Gate, JSTOR and Sage. The literature search was based on the following key words and combinations: dialogue, authentic dialogue, dialogue pedagogy, classroom talk and authentic classroom talk. Based on a search of each of the keywords separately, hundreds of articles were found, however the combination of all key words revealed dozens of articles, which were then filtered according to the following inclusion criteria: studies had to be published in English; studies had to be published between 2011-2021 in peer review journals; studies had to allow full text access and studies had to include relevant key words in the research questions.

As a result of the keywords search, 75 studies appeared in the original selection process. After using the inclusion criteria, 49 were selected for further analysis. A number of 6 studies were excluded since they dealt with specific teaching matter such as math, literacy and science. 5 studies were excluded because they dealt with perceptions and beliefs and not the key words in the search. 5 studies were excluded because they targeted specific irrelevant groups such as peer groups, special needs and multicultural classrooms. In the end, 39 articles were included in this review.

The selection process of the studies is illustrated in the flowchart presented below (Figure 1).
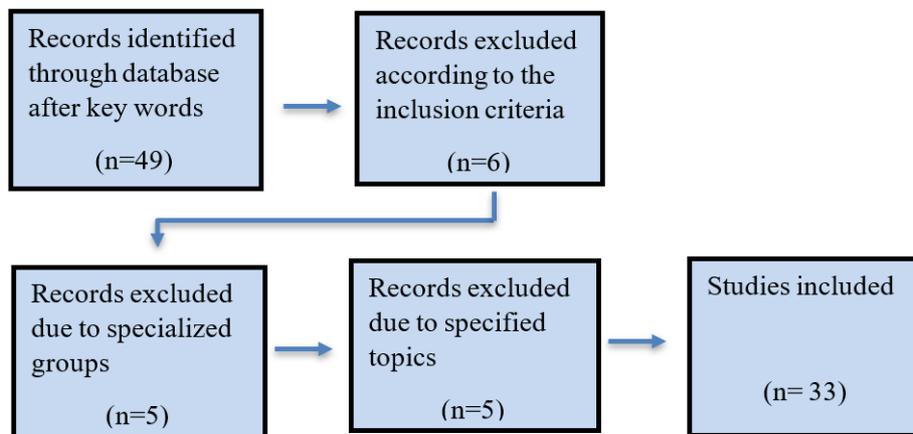
Figure 1. Flowchart for the selection process of the studies

6. Findings

All of the studies reviewed addressed the classroom dialogue topic, however diversity existed in the research population, as well as in the age categories of the participants. In terms of the distribution of studies addressing specific categories of learners and teachers (Table 1), a number of 3 studies dealt with preschools, i.e., daycare and kindergarten children i.e., 4–6-year-olds (Dobber, 2012; Gasparatou & Kampeza, 2012; Miller, 2015), 5 studies dealt with preschool children and their teachers (Efrat, 2015; Piasta et al., 2012; Rasku-Puttonen et al., 2012; White et al., 2018; Yin et al., 2020).

A number of 6 studies dealt with primary school children i.e., 3rd-6th grade students (Alexander, 2018; Boyd & Markarian, 2015; Howe et al., 2019; Reznitskaya et al., 2012; Segal & Lefstein, 2016;

Segal et al., 2017), 3 studies dealt with primary school teachers (Abd-Kadir & Hardman, 2007; Chafi et al., 2014; Vrikki et al., 2019). 2 studies dealt with primary school children and their teachers (Hardman, 2019; Muhonen et al., 2017). One study dealt with preschool and primary school children (Muhonen et al., 2016). A number of 6 studies dealt with secondary school teachers (Davies et al., 2017; Hofmann & Ruthven, 2018; Lehesvuori, 2013; Van De Pol et al., 2017; Sedova, 2021; Šeďová et al., 2014). Three studies dealt with secondary school children and their teachers (Gillies, 2016; Lee, 2016; Pehmer et al., 2015). One study dealt with primary and secondary school children (Fisher & Larkin, 2008), one with university students studying education (Hajhosseiny, 2012), one with pre-service teachers (Abd Elkader, 2016), and one with university students, teachers and mentors (Edwards-Groves, & Hoare, 2012).

Table 1. Quantification of the research's variables in terms of research population

Research population	Number of studies
Preschoolers: Daycare kindergarten	3
Preschool children and their teachers	5
Primary school children	6
Primary school teachers	3
Primary school children and their teachers	2
Preschool and primary school children	1
Secondary school teachers	6
Secondary school teachers and children	3
Primary and secondary school children	1
University students studying education	1
University students, mentors and teachers	1
Pre-service teachers	1

7. Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the aims of the research done on dialogic approaches in classrooms and preschools?

Generally, all of the studies focused on dialogic approaches (Table 2), some of them having their attention on the investigation of specific aspects teaching process involving the communication teacher-student.

Table 2. Identified aims of the researches on DP in classrooms and preschools presented in the reviewed studies (2011-2021)

Aims of the studies included in the analysis
• To identify the role dialogue and polylogue (outside knowledge sources) play in forms of classroom inquiry and how it can be promoted by a teacher
• To determine the effects a dialogic teaching intervention program has on classroom talk and students' ability to engage and learn.
• To show how an intervention program can promote classroom talk and be made more dialogic in order to enhance students' talk opportunities and to build up literacy skills
• To focus on the role dialogue has on preservice teachers learning as well as their interaction practices

- To test teacher-child dialogic interactions in whole class situations and not only in small groups.
- A group of secondary school teachers' ability to learn and implement dialogic practices
- The perceptions teachers' and students' have on classroom talk
- To understand how and to what extent a constructivist pedagogy was implemented in Singapore kindergartens.
- To examine the extent to which types of classroom dialogue are incorporated in primary schools
- To determine the effects of active participation in an intervention program on classroom dialogue was able to lead to change in teacher student communication in the classroom
- To evaluate the effects of a teacher professional development program on classroom dialogue has on a student's perception of elaboration strategies
- The ability of teachers to enhance students learning by providing open questions and follow up questions to motivate them to expand their thinking processes and connect to their personal experiences.

Research Question 2: What types of research have been done on dialogic approaches in classrooms and preschools?

There were several types of research approaches in classrooms and preschools identified in the studies (qualitative, quantitative and mixed ones; Table 3). The research variables targeted by these studies are presented in Table 4.

Table 3. Research methods used on dialogic approaches in classrooms

Number of studies	Type of research
9	Mixed
8	Quantitative
16	Qualitative

Table 4. Research variables targeted by the studies

Author and year	Title of article	Variables
Fisher and Larkin (2008)	Pedagogy or ideological struggle? An examination of pupils' and teachers' expectations for talk in the classroom.	Teachers and children's ability to determine what is "good classroom talk" and how it is achieved
Van De Pol et al. (2017)	Two secondary teachers' understanding and classroom practice of dialogic teaching: A case study.	Understanding of dialogic teaching Consistency between understanding and practicing dialogic teaching
Yin et al. (2020)	Blending constructivism and instructivism: A study of classroom dialogue in Singapore kindergartens	Identification of patterns, content and features of focused activity in kindergartens
Vrikki et al. (2019)	Dialogic practices in primary school classrooms	Productivity of dialogic teaching in students learning
Pehmer et al. (2015)	How teacher professional development regarding classroom dialogue affects students' higher-order learning.	Effectiveness of teacher professional development on classroom dialogue
Abd-Kadir and Hardman (2007)	The discourse of whole class teaching: A comparative study of Kenyan and Nigerian primary English lessons.	Effects of open-ended questions and follow up questions in classroom dialogic to enhance critical thinking
Šeďová et al. (2014)	On the way to dialogic teaching: Action research as a means to change classroom discourse.	Teacher professional programs and ability to change communication methods in dialogic pedagogy

Research Question 3: What dimensions of dialogic pedagogy are found in classrooms and preschools?

The following dimensions of DP were identified in the studies (Table 5).

Table 5. Dimensions of dialogic pedagogy identified in the systematic review.

Dimensional categories found in the research studies included in the analysis
Inclusion dimension: How teachers can empower marginalized students' voices into classroom dialogue.
Communication dimension: Can Philosophy 4 children curriculum be applied in kindergartens in order to promote children's thinking and discussion capabilities; What types of dialogic teaching patterns exist in primary schools and its effects on teacher's ability to provide more classroom participation
Diversity dimension: What is the potential for dialogic pedagogy in educating preservice teachers in multiculturalism?
Knowledge-building dimension: To examine knowledge-building patterns through dialogue; The identification of key dimensions that impact teacher child patterns in classroom talk
Ideational dimension: The ways in which teachers consider students ideas, ideational dimension, seriously and attempt to include them into the lessons.

Research question 4: What instruments are most frequently used to assess the outcomes of the dialogic pedagogy programs?

The instruments frequently used were found in the articles presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Dialogic pedagogy assessment instruments.

Number of studies	Studies	Tools used	Aim
2	Alexander (2018); Fisher and Larkin (2008)	Questionnaires and interviews	To learn how to implement dialogic practices The effects an intervention program has on classroom talk and student engagement
2	Dobber (2012); Segal and Lefstein (2016)	Classroom observation and interviews	The abilities teachers display in incorporating marginalized students' voices into classroom dialogue How teachers promote dialogue for student's classroom inquiry
1	Van De Pol et al. (2017)	Questionnaires and observations	Teachers and students' perceptions of classroom talk
3	Gillies (2016); Rasku-Puttonen et al. (2012); Vrikki et al. (2019)	Video recordings analysis	To illustrate how teachers engage in dialogic teaching in mediating behavior to promote thinking and problem solving To identify dialogic educational interactions in preschool To examine different types of classroom dialogue in preschools
1	Muhonen et al. (2017)	Video recordings Open interviews	To examine knowledge building patterns in educational dialogues
1	Miller (2015)	Video camera glasses and analysis	To analyze the impact of questions in teacher child dialogue and language acquisition.

1	White et al. (2018)	Observations through multiple cameras in the classroom	To understand the nature of 2-year-old dialogue in a mixed age setting in early childhood education centers
4	Efrat (2015); Howe et al. (2019); Piasta et al. (2012); Yin et al. (2020)	Questionnaires, closed interview, video recording	To determine the effects that professional development (PD) has on preschool teachers' conversational responsivity in the classroom
			To examine teacher child dialogue in classroom instruction
			To show how the philosophy of a multi-dialogical kindergarten is put into practice
1	Gasparatou and Kampeza (2012)	Video recording, observations	Promoting children's discussion capabilities through Philosophy 4 curriculum
1	Abd Elkader (2016)	Field notes, interview	Multicultural dialogic pedagogy in preservice education
1	Hajhosseiny (2012)	Interviews	To identify the effects dialogic teaching methods has on university students' critical thinking and social interaction
1	Lee (2016)	Interviews, observation, intervention	Intervention programs on classroom dialogue to promote children's talk opportunities
2	Boyd and Markarian (2015); Šeďová et al. (2014)	Diaries, video transcripts, interviews	To explain dialogic teaching by discourse function
			Classroom intervention program and its effects on teacher student interactions
1	Muhonen et al. (2016)	Discourse analysis	Dialogic teaching patterns and teachers' abilities to understand children's participation
1	Chafi et al. (2014)	Observations	Dimensions of dialogic pedagogy that impact classroom talk
1	Edwards-Groves and Hoare (2012)	Observations, interviews, questionnaire	The role dialogue plays in children's learning
2	Pehmer et al. (2015) Reznitskaya et al. (2012)	Questionnaire Interviews, essay writing, dialogue analysis, tests	To evaluate a teacher professional development program on classroom dialogue
			To evaluate students' engagement in inquiry dialogue
3	Hardman (2019); Sedova (2021); Segal et al. (2017)	Interviews, video recordings	Can a change in classroom discourse implemented through a training program exist over time?
			To examine knowledge-building patterns in Grade 6 educational dialogues
			To evaluate an intervention program based on a dialogic pedagogy theory
1	Hofmann and Ruthven (2018)	Observations, transcript analysis	Teachers' ability to adapt new dialogical pedagogy
1	Davies et al. (2017)	Video recording, observation	To show how the philosophy of the multi-dialogical kindergarten is put into practice.
1	Lehesvuori (2013)	Video recording, interview, observation	What is the impact of a dialogic teaching intervention on pedagogical practices?
1	Abd-Kadir and Hardman (2007)	Video recording, observation, dialogue analysis	Effectiveness of follow up questions to enhance children's motivation in classrooms

8. Conclusion

The current paper presents a systematic review of studies addressing the dialogic approaches in preschools and classrooms. The variables that have guided the review refer to the goals for researching the topic, the types of research done, the dimensions of dialogic pedagogy and the instruments used to assess dialogic pedagogy. The findings of this systematic review reveal that there is a need for more pedagogical intervention programs in preschools and classrooms in order for teachers of all ages to understand how to create a more open equal dialogic spaces, where children's interests and needs are at the center of the classroom dialogue. Furthermore, the results could be valued in designing intervention programs in kindergartens, schools and even higher education.

The current study also presents some potential methodological and conceptual problems. Even though there was only one study on pre-service teachers included in the analysis, the review showed that there is a need for intervention programs at pre-service teaching level, so that teachers entering the classroom can be more aware of the effects that classroom dialogue. An additional problem found was that some of the studies refer to only one dimension such as marginalized children, without taking into account other dimensions, such as teacher child pattern effects on classroom dialogue.

An important conclusion of this study refers to the significance of addressing all of the DP dimensions when training teachers. Not all teachers seem to understand the importance of including marginalized students' opinions into classroom dialogue in order to promote their self-confidence and self-worth. A teacher that is trained in communication techniques such as helping learners think, speak, listen, learn effectively, has the ability to empower them in the direction of classroom participation. Due to globalization, cultural diversity is a part of every classroom worldwide; therefore, teachers' awareness of this diversity as being an asset in terms of teaching will facilitate an inclusive climate, in which all students can engage and learn to respect others. Training in DP can allow teachers to broaden their knowledge on patterns they set for open spaces for children to voice their thoughts. Last but certainly not least is the fact that training teachers to reach the conclusion that classroom talk is much more than just words, i.e., it represents a significant way of the implementation of student's ideas into the lessons taught and learned.

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