

Conflictual Perceptions of Intercultural Discourse: Cases of Power-related Discourse at Work and Student-centred Discourse at School

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Conflictual perceptions by participants from different cultural backgrounds can impact group dynamics in a range of contexts, including classrooms and the workplace. The results of two separate studies analyzing discourse within these different environments provide insights into the ways in which roles in discourse are shared between participants from differing cultural backgrounds, including perceptions of appropriate discourse in a specific context. These insights offer potential approaches to ways that we could increase awareness of intercultural competence, specifically by ensuring that participants share an understanding of the degree of balance in interactions that are appropriate for that specific context.

Study A (Worker Perceptions of Power-related Discourse)

This study seeks to investigate distribution of power in the workplace among multicultural workers in Japan and examine how diverse communicators view power relations. Power in interaction can come from a variety of sources, including expert knowledge, status, social role, and language ability (Liu, 2011). Because communicators from diverse backgrounds tend to have culture-specific assumptions, perceptions, expectations and practices, in addition to their limited language proficiency reflected in intercultural communication, an imbalance of power relations among them could occur in the workplace. Therefore, by investigating what could constitute power relations in the multicultural workplace, this study aims to explore the experiences of participants with respect to power perceptions and how they affect the quality of successful intercultural interactions. Further, by looking at some aspects of intercultural communication competence and communication strategies, this study also suggests how such affective factors as intercultural sensitivity and the use of communication strategies can help reduce the power asymmetry among multicultural communicators in the workplace.

Study B (Teacher Perceptions of Student-centred Discourse)

This study seeks to investigate the nature of student-centred classroom discourse patterns in classrooms within the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, including an examination of teacher perceptions of the nature of discourse in their classrooms. Student-centredness is at the core of IB pedagogical guidelines and shared teacher perceptions of student-centredness are important if curriculum intent and student experiences

are going to align. However, teachers are drawn from a variety of school contexts, each school having its own school culture. Therefore, by investigating the nature of classroom discourse in this context and teacher perceptions of that discourse, this study aims to explore conflictual perceptions that could affect the quality of classroom discourse experienced by students. Further, the study seeks to identify activities that could help teachers shape the nature of classroom discourse in a way that more closely aligns with IB pedagogical guidelines.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Power Relations in the Workplace Across Culture

There are various dimensions in the relationship between power and language. For example, there are two major aspects of power/language relationships, “power in discourse, and power behind discourse” (Fairclough, 2001). With power in cross-cultural discourse, participants belong to different ethnic groupings, and there may be unequal encounters where the non-powerful people have cultural and linguistic backgrounds different from those of the powerful people. For example, in an encounter such as a job interview, an interviewer who belongs to the societally dominant cultural grouping controls and determines whether an interviewee who belongs to a less dominant grouping gets a job. Because “discourse types and orders of discourse vary across cultures” (Fairclough, 2003), dominant speakers are likely to constrain the discourse types that can be drawn upon to those of the dominant cultural group. As the world becomes more globalized, tolerance and sensitivity towards cultural differences is gradually growing in general. However, with unequal encounters in cross-cultural settings, dominant interlocutors may assume that less dominant interactants are familiar with dominant ways of behaving and communicating. Consequently, in this type of context, less dominant speakers’ contributions may be interpreted on the assumption that they are capable of communicating in terms of these dominant values. For instance, if a less dominant speaker gives what is thought to be a poor or irrelevant response to a question in interaction, the dominant speaker may incorrectly think it is due to his/her lack of knowledge or experience. In this manner, there is a possibility of both miscommunication and unfair communication because of the differences in discourse and misconceptions based on cultural insensitivity and dominance.

Ideology and Power

Ideology is simply “a way of describing a set of beliefs and behaviors that are thought of as natural” (Mooney 2011, p. 18). Mooney argues that everybody has an ideology, which consists of values that we hold and ideas that seem perfectly natural to us. This type of ‘common sense’ thinking and acting is considered to be the dominant ideology. Kress and Hodge (1993) define ideology as “a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view” (p.6). Because we all have a particular point of view, we have ideologies. Understanding the concept of ideology is important in relation to power since power is often supported by ideologies. Ideology links to power because our ‘taken for granted’ beliefs and values become significant with respect to other people when we are in a position to have our point of view accepted by others as a norm. Mooney (2011) notes that language is crucial to the creation and maintenance of ‘common sense’ ideology, and that looking at language closely allows us to map these ideologies. Therefore, examining language closely allows us to see evidence of particular ideologies at work and how people exercise power.

Fairclough (2001) explains that ideological assumptions are embedded in features of discourse. The sociologist Garfinkel wrote that “the familiar common sense world of everyday life [is], a world which is built entirely upon assumptions and expectations which control both the actions of members of a society and their interpretations of the actions of others” (cited in Fairclough, 2001, p.64). According to Fairclough (2001), ideology is most effective when it is invisible. In other words, if one becomes aware that a particular aspect of common sense is sustaining power inequalities, it ceases to be ‘common sense’ and may cease to have the capacity to sustain such inequalities. And “invisibility is achieved when ideologies are brought to discourse not as explicit elements in the text, but as the background assumptions which lead the text producer to ‘textualize’ the world in a particular way” (p.71). Thus, in order to discover hidden ideological power in discourse, looking at language practices and orders of discourse becomes an important aspect.

Classroom Discourse and the International Baccalaureate

Classroom discourse is clearly linked with teacher pedagogical practices (Barnes, 2008; Edwards, 2012; Edwards & Westgate, 1994; Edwards-Groves & Hoare, 2012; Gillies, 2006, 2008; Gillies & Boyle, 2008; Gillies & Khan, 2008; Mercer, 1995, 2010; Ritchhart, Palmer, Church & Tishman, 2006; Wells, 1999; Westgate & Hughes, 1997) that are based on the background assumptions of teachers as they textualize the world, and specifically their classes, in a particular way. The classroom may not always be textualized by a teacher in a way that fits the curriculum model of their school. In the IB’s inquiry-based approach to teaching, learning is self-directed “because it is driven by students’ own decisions about appropriate ways in which an issue or scenario might be approached. They bring to bear on the topic any existing knowledge or experience relevant to the issues ... The process is student-centred, with the onus always on the student to take initiatives, propose routes of enquiry and follow them thoughtfully” (Hutchings, 2007, p.13). A focus on the students and their role in the IB classroom experience necessitates a close examination of classroom discourse and the background assumptions of teachers regarding that discourse if that experience is to be understood.

Understanding the background assumptions of teachers regarding classroom discourse is particularly important due to the central role of the teacher in shaping the students’ classroom experience. Since the 1980s, a large number of studies have placed the teacher firmly in the centre of the debate on student achievement and effective schools. Many researchers (Brophy & Good, 1986; Darling-Hammond, 1999; 2004; Erickson, 2001 ; 2002; Hattie, 2003; Marzano, 2003; 2007; Marzano, Norford, Paynter, Pickering & Gaddy , 2001; Marzano, Pollock & Pickering, 2001; Murdoch, 1998; Murdoch & Wilson, 2004; Newman & Associates, 1996; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) have presented a vast array of research findings suggesting that the individual teacher and his or her classroom pedagogy is an extremely important factor in determining the educational outcomes of the students. For this reason, the development of an understanding of the relationship between pedagogical practices and student discourse in the classroom is vitally important in contemporary educational contexts if planned changes in pedagogical practices are to be successful in schools.

As stated by Lingard, Hayes, Mills and Tie (2003), the core imperative of educational leadership is student learning and the most significant educational factor in the achievement of student learning is teacher practice. By providing insight into the association of specific pedagogical practices with specific types of

student discourse experiences, pedagogical practices can be either targeted for increased emphasis, or conversely, targeted for decreased emphasis, based on the nature of the intended curriculum. By pursuing these lines of inquiry, pedagogical leadership can be responsibly exercised through an informed process of change aimed at the alignment of classroom practice with the written curriculum.

Scheerens (2013) states that effective schooling is, to a large extent, providing support at school level for optimizing teaching at classroom and individual student levels, and cites an overview of the most relevant variables in teaching effectiveness by Brophy (2001): opportunity to learn, curricular alignment, supportive classroom climate, achievement expectations, cooperative learning, goal-oriented assessment, coherent content, clear explanations, thoughtful discourse, establishing learning orientations, sufficient opportunities for practice and application, scaffolding student's task engagement, modelling learning, and self-regulation strategies. In the IB context, many of these factors are stipulated in specific program documents, and for this reason an alignment of the written curriculum and the taught curriculum would suggest an effective school according to Brophy's (2001) above-mentioned guidelines. The written curriculum of the IB programs firmly stresses student-centredness, stating that the learner should be at the centre of the classroom experience and also take an active role in that experience (International Baccalaureate, 2015; 2014; 2009). Watermeyer (2011) states that in the IB programs, learners ought to be not only inhabitants but authors of the learning experience.

Wilkinson and Silliman (2000), when investigating classroom discourse and literacy learning, remarked that "to a great extent within classrooms the language used by teachers and students determines what is learnt and how learning takes place" (p.337). In this sense, to understand the teacher role that students are exposed to in the learning process within an IB program is important. Identifying competing discourses within IB classrooms may reveal specific pedagogical strategies that shape learning experiences. Some of these may align with the written curriculum of the IB programs, while others may not.

School Culture and the Students' Classroom Experience

Bauersfeld (1992) suggested that the videotaping and micro-analysis of classrooms supports the crucial importance of the covert functioning of teachers' fundamental attitudes and convictions in a student's classroom experience. These attitudes and convictions of individual teachers influence the implementation of 'standard' practices in schools. Finnan, Schnepel and Anderson (2003) argue that there can be more variation in implementation of standard practices within schools than between schools. Crick et al. (2007) use an ecological model to describe school culture as a form of consciousness characterized by particular values, attitudes and dispositions, with a lateral and a temporal connectivity. School culture is adaptive and fluid. The authors further state that it is powerfully influenced by the learning relationships within which individuals find themselves, particularly with the key people in their school community such as the teachers. In this sense, it is no surprise that teachers moving from different school contexts with very different school cultures will experience varying degrees of misalignment. These may be in terms of perceptions of specific ideas with the prevailing attitudes and conviction of their new school's dominant school culture. Also within their new school culture, a variety of differing perceptions of those ideas will coexist as background assumptions.

The problematic nature of conflictual perceptions in a school arises, at least partly, from the unseen, unvoiced, virtually unconscious elements that underlie and give rise to the organisational culture of schools (Owens & Steinhoff, 1989). These often unconscious values and beliefs are central to any process of

nurturing a quality culture that improves education (Bendermacher et al., 2017). In order to address conflictual perceptions within a school culture, these values and beliefs need to be examined closely by the key people in the school community. A process in which these key people come to understand the often unconscious values and beliefs that drive the perceptions of others is an important step. This can be seen as a type of intercultural competence: understanding another’s perspective within the organizational culture of a school. Intercultural competence is “the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to execute appropriately effective communication behaviors that recognize the interactants’ multiple identities in a specific environment, but also how to fulfill their own communication goals by respecting and affirming the multilevel cultural identities of those with whom they interact” (Asante, Miike, & Jing Yin, 2008, p.219). ‘Sensitivity’ is one of the most important aspects of intercultural competence. Non-judgmental stance and the development of adaptive skills play an important role in the development of intercultural sensitivity. The term ‘sensitivity’ here refers to “the ability to consciously analyze and evaluate situations from various cultural perspectives before proceeding to make their own evaluations as they make decisions and choices” (Houghton, 2012, p.35) This type of school-based intercultural competence within the school community is an important element in the development of a school culture that supports consistent application of the school’s intended pedagogical approach.

METHOD

Study A (Worker Perceptions of Power-related Discourse)

The study took place at a scientific research institute in Japan. Two interviews six months apart, were conducted individually with six communicators: two senior American scientists; one junior Taiwanese-American scientist; one senior Japanese scientist; and two junior Japanese scientists. In order to investigate the conflicting perceptions of power and interactional dominance, re-occurring themes reported during the interviews were identified. Coding was categorized based on themes that emerged from what was reported by participants during the interviews.

Five re-occurring themes reported during the interviews were identified: cultural style, knowledge, language, adaptation and hierarchy (see Table 1 for examples). Cultural style refers to any comments relating to factors based on the culture while knowledge refers to any comments relating to knowledge of the field of their work. Any comments relating to language issues such as proficiency were referred to as ‘language’. Adaptation refers to any comments relating participants’ willingness to adjust their cultural styles to a new environment, and hierarchy refers to any comments made by participants regarding power relations based on jobs positions and ranks at work.

TABLE 1. The Themes Referred to by Each Speaker

<p>Cultural (knowledge or style): <i>“Japanese people tend to hold back in the meetings”</i></p> <p>Knowledge: <i>“Knowledge sharing is important in our field. If I want to learn and know more, I ask questions”</i></p> <p>Language: <i>“Language is such a big problem for me at work”</i></p> <p>Adaptation: <i>“I would like to learn English more so I can communicate more effectively with American colleagues”</i></p> <p>Hierarchy: <i>“Only key people speak in our meetings”</i></p>

Every time a theme relating to the category was mentioned by an interviewee, it was counted as a referred theme. This study only focused on themes that participants perceived to be related to power. Some of the themes were difficult to categorize; for instance, when the different communication styles were mentioned, the comment was categorized under communication style rather than culture. Only when participants used words relating to nationality or country, it was categorized under culture. Any comments made by participants regarding their job ranks or positions were categorized under hierarchy.

Study B (Teacher Perceptions of Student-centered Discourse)

The interactions that students experienced as part of classroom discourse during 100 classes were analyzed using a series of videoed classroom episodes. The data set included Middle Years Program (Grades 6-10) classes and Diploma Program (Grades 11-12) classes at an international school in Tokyo. The classes of thirty-three teachers were included in the data set. These classroom episode videos formed important artifacts that could be used to describe instruction (Stecher et al., 2007) and were analyzed in terms of both function and form of discourse.

Function of Discourse

First, each of the 100 classes were analyzed to identify discourse categorized into three roles related to meaning making:

- Role 1 Teacher as knower (teacher-centred discourse);
- Role 2 Teacher and student as possible knowers (shared discourse);
- Role 3 Student as possible knower (student-centred discourse).

The term ‘knower’ (Aukerman, 2006) enabled a focus on the construction of meaning within knowledge claims emerging from the discourse. In Role 1 discourse (teacher-centred discourse), for example, a student who is asked to read from a selected text and then answer a teacher question regarding the content is constructing meaning and articulating this meaning as a knowledge claim. In this case the student ‘knows’ something; however, the teacher remains the ‘primary knower’ because the teacher’s validation of the knowledge claim is necessary. This represents one possible role in classroom discourse – the teacher as primary knower (Aukerman, 2006). In Role 1 discourse, students are passively constructing meaning evidenced through the origin of activity-related knowledge claims based on teacher-generated ideas in teacher scaffolded discourse. Examples of discourse where the teacher is the primary knower include:

- Students speak to be validated by the teacher;
- Students read to learn what the text means to the teacher;
- Students write to be validated by the teacher;
- Students listen to access teacher ideas;
- Students act to perform tasks directed by the teacher.

In Role 2 discourse (shared discourse) the teacher actively constructs meaning together with the

students, evidenced through the origin of activity-related knowledge claims in both student- and teacher-generated ideas. Students and teacher scaffold the discourse. When adopting this role in discourse:

- Students speak to validate together;
- Students read to understand what a text means together;
- Students write to validate together;
- Students listen to access ideas together;
- Students act to perform tasks with the teacher.

In Role 3 discourse (student-centred discourse) students actively construct meaning independently, evidenced through the origin of activity-related knowledge claims in student-generated ideas. Students scaffold the discourse. When adopting this role in discourse:

- Students speak to convince others;
- Students read to discover (dis)confirming evidence for their own hypotheses and those of other students;
- Students write to convince others;
- Students listen to discern the credibility of alternate positions, strengthen their own case, and modify their hypotheses as necessary;
- Students act to accomplish any of the above.

Form of Discourse

These three types of discourse function were identified and tracked across subjects, grade levels, IB programs and individual teachers to determine the relative degrees of occurrence across the school. The form of discourse was also tracked to examine the occurrence of reading, writing, speaking, listening and acting based discourse events (see Appendix). Although multiple forms of discourse were evident in each event, such as student discussions which often involved combinations of speaking, listening, reading, writing and an action of some kind, each event was categorized according to the dominant purpose of the interaction. In this way, with three functions of discourse and five forms of discourse, fifteen potential categories emerged such as Role 1 (listening), Role 2 (writing) and Role 3 (speaking).

Teacher Interviews

Teachers working at the school during the data collection period of the study were asked to participate in an interview. Sixteen teachers participated in interviews, all of whom were represented in the sample of lesson videos. The interviews were conducted to clarify the following:

- Typical lesson structures;
- Commonly used teaching strategies;
- Patterns in own pedagogical practices;
- Reasoning for these pedagogical practices;

- Perceptions of the need for different teaching approaches in different year levels and subjects.

The interviews consisted of a number of semi-structured questions contingent on the responses given, and probing questions were used to elicit further explanation or elaboration as required. The teacher and the interviewer watched segments of the teacher's videoed lesson during the interview. An example of one of the semi-structured questions from the interviews : *Can we take a specific activity from one of your (videoed) classes and talk through your reasons for structuring this activity in this way?* (If a teacher did not include the role of the students in discourse, then a prompt would be given at the end of the teacher's response.)

The sixteen teachers were all in different stages of their teaching careers and had all taught in at least two different schools before joining the school in this study. Furthermore, there was a relatively high turnover of teachers at over twenty percent each year. In this sense, each teacher had experienced different school cultures and brought differing values and beliefs from these different organizational contexts with them. The teacher interviews allowed an exploration of some of these differing perceptions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Study A (Worker Perceptions of Power-related Discourse)

Results of this study indicate that both senior and junior American scientists perceived power as coming from knowledge and experience, and attributed interactional dominance in the meetings mainly to differences in communication style, not status or language proficiency. In contrast, both senior and junior Japanese scientists perceived that use of their L2 limited their ability to participate fully in the meetings. At the same time, the perceptions of power relations of the Japanese scientists differed according to generation, experience, and L2 proficiency. As for employment of intercultural communicative competence in order to negotiate their power relations, some scientists demonstrated more intercultural competence through awareness of a need for accommodation and empathy while others showed more ethnocentric attitudes reflecting their ideologies. The results of the interview data analysis showed that in the multicultural workplace, power relations based on culture and language are well reflected since communicators are exposed to culture-specific perceptions, assumptions, expectations and practices, which may all contribute to the quality of their intercultural interactions. Finally, findings of the comparative analysis of the two different types of data (meeting and interview data) revealed that individuals' perceptions reported in the interview do not always reflect what actually happens in the interactions. It can be a valuable analysis as it provides deeper insights about the complexities of power relations in the multicultural workplace.

Themes Identified in Interview Data

As can be seen in Table 2, Gary, an American section chief, refers to knowledge and cultural styles more often than other categories in his interview. In fact, according to him, language (English or Japanese) does not seem to be a problem in interactions in the workplace. Of all the categories, Gary regards knowledge as being of the foremost importance in the staff meetings. According to him, knowledge seems to be the most important factor as exemplified by his saying "peer review is a big thing in America". Don, an American senior scientist, who was a former section chief, refers to language to a great extent in his interview. He has taken a role as a section chief before, so in his interview he shares what his experience was like in relation to

the language issue. In this interview, Don talks about his experience with his former section chief before Gary. He perceives that language was a problem in the past due to his former section chief never speaking Japanese in the meetings. However, Don does not believe that language is currently the issue of unequal interaction saying “the environment is now very different, a big shift from that. For example, our current chief tries to speak Japanese”.

In her interview, Lin cites cultural styles and knowledge as the most important factors relating to power relations in the workplace, and her perception is that language plays no part in interactional dominance in her department. Like Gary, she does not seem to perceive language as being a factor related to interactional patterns in the meetings. On the other hand, she refers to a cultural difference, saying “in general, the young Japanese researchers tend to hold back and don’t speak up”. Lin seems to believe that Japanese scientists are given a chance to speak up, but in her view, they do not often do it due to their personality or cultural styles. Based on her interview, Lin seems to perceive that it is knowledge, personality and cultural styles that contribute to interactional patterns, rather than the language issue. In contrast to the two senior American scientists and Lin from Taiwan, Yamamoto, who is a senior Japanese scientist, seems to perceive language as being the biggest factor contributing to interactional patterns in the meetings. He even said in the interview that “before we talk about intercultural problems, the language barrier is a huge problem”. Throughout the interview, Yamamoto describes how language is a big problem for him in the workplace. Yamamoto explicitly describes language as having a major impact on his workplace and his professional identity. In a similar way to Yamamoto, Koji refers to language as the most important factor in interactional power relations. In his narrative, Koji states “leaders (American scientists) should be more sensitive to our needs. They should be aware that it’s challenging for us to catch up with what they are saying, but they keep American styles”. Koji, like Yamamoto, seems to claim that the field of science has its own language. According to him, it is the scientific language that makes it extremely challenging for him to understand what American scientists say in the meetings. Further, he adds that it is also the reason he feels why he cannot contribute much at all in the meetings. In terms of English level, Koji’s English seems to be much higher than those of two other Japanese scientists. Although he has spent more than five years in the U.S. and has the highest English proficiency level compared to Yamamoto and Yusuke, Koji expresses strong frustration about not being able to convey his knowledge in his L2 (English). In his interview, a major theme is that the English used for his profession is scientific English, and this is very different from the English he uses on a daily basis.

TABLE 2. Frequency of Reference to Themes by Speaker

	Cultural Style	Knowledge	Language	Adaptation	Hierarchy
Gary	2	3	0	1	0
Don	1	1	3	4	1
Lin	3	2	0	3	1
Yamamoto	4	1	8	6	2
Koji	1	0	3	2	0
Yusuke	5	0	2	1	1

In Yusuke's interview, the theme of cultural style was discussed the most. He reports that there is definitely a language problem in the meetings, but unlike Yamamoto and Koji, he believes that he needs to improve his English instead of the American scientists improving their dominant "American" styles. Unlike Koji, Yusuke does not report any frustrations about American scientists. While he admits that there is a big language issue in the meetings, Yusuke claims that it is he who should improve his English skill and adjust to the dominant (American) styles because his leaders are American. Although Yamamoto is a senior scientist like Gary and Don, and has been with the institute longer than anyone in the department, Yusuke does not seem to perceive himself as one of his leaders here. Furthermore, in his interview, he refers more than twice about the differences between Japanese and American communication styles. He seems to have learned that it is all right to speak up in the meetings, and he admits that his participation is minimal due to his poor English proficiency.

Conflicting Perceptions of Power Relations in the Meetings

The results reported above indicated that both senior American scientists and a junior Taiwanese scientist perceived power relations as coming from knowledge and experience, not language proficiency. In their interview, they emphasized that knowledge is the most important part of their field and give it as the reason for interactional dominance in the meetings. While they all seem to believe that there are some cultural factors that play a role, none seem to perceive language proficiency as a factor relating to power relations in the meetings. For example, Gary, a section chief emphasized the importance of knowledge sharing and perceived that any lack of participation by the Japanese scientists was due to cultural styles. Don, who is a former American section chief, seems to understand that there is a big language issue at his work. However, in his narrative, all the problems were in the past due to insensitive styles demonstrated by the section chief at that time. Don seems to believe that things are good now by saying "now, the environment is very different, a big shift from that". Lin, a Taiwanese junior scientist, completely denies that language can be a factor in power relations. She is an L2 speaker of English herself, like the three Japanese scientists. However, she spent over twenty years in the U.S. and seems to have integrated successfully to styles in American institutions due to her background. Lin explicitly expressed in her interview that she does not perceive language being related to interactional dominance in the meetings at all. In her view, all the Japanese scientists are given enough opportunities to speak up by the American section chief. She simply believes that Japanese junior scientists don't speak up because they hold back and hesitate to express their viewpoints due to their cultural style as well as the rank they are in hierarchy. In contrast, both senior and junior Japanese scientists perceived that use of their L2 in the meetings greatly limited their ability to participate fully in the meetings. While there are obvious differences in perceptions of power sources between American and Japanese scientists, it is interesting to note that there were differences of perceptions among Japanese scientists themselves. Yamamoto felt that because the two other Japanese junior scientists are young and flexible, and have lived in the U.S., he is the only Japanese who was so frustrated with the language problem. However, as seen in the interview with Koji, Yamamoto actually had the same frustration in not being able to follow what American scientists were saying in the meetings. In Koji's case, unlike Yamamoto, it was the scientific language in the L2 that made it difficult for him to understand and follow in the meetings. Further, Yusuke thought Koji did not have significant language issues like himself and felt

much more comfortable in the meetings due to his higher English proficiency. Ironically, the interview result indicated that Koji felt much more frustrated than Yusuke about the language issue.

Intercultural Competence

Of all the scientists who work in the department observed in the study, Don and Yusuke seemed to demonstrate more intercultural competence in some ways than the others. Based on the interview data, Don appeared to have adopted more adaptable and flexible attitudes than Gary. For example, Don said “an ideal section chief is someone who is bilingual who can translate back and forth for everyone.” Further he mentioned that he tries to speak to Japanese scientists in person after the staff meetings since he realizes that Japanese in general prefer to speak in person rather than speaking up in the meetings in front of everyone. In this context, he seemed to show deep understanding of this Japanese custom and demonstrated a flexible attitude.

In contrast to Don, as mentioned above, Gary reported that Japanese tend not to speak up since they do not want to be criticized. He perceives it as a negative attitude because in America, peer review is important and avoiding criticism could negatively impact work quality. Gary seems to demonstrate a certain degree of “ethnocentrism” – a concept that refers to “the tendency to identify with our group (e.g. ethnic or racial group) and to evaluate out-groups and their members according to those standards” (Gudykunst and Kim, 2003, p.137). Further, according to Barna (1998), it applies to a situation when our lack of knowledge about other groups leaves us with no option other than to draw upon the information already stored in our minds to interpret what is happening, which can lead us to interpret strangers’ behavior from our cultural frame of reference, perhaps ‘misunderstandings’ in the process” (p.173).

The findings reveal that some participants demonstrated a higher degree of intercultural competence than others, particularly in relation to an empathic attitude and willingness to take others’ perspectives into account. Another important aspect, as seen in Yamamoto’s case, is that unsuccessful integration can lead to great frustration, even to the point of a serious professional and identity crisis.

Study B (Teacher Perceptions of Student-centred Discourse)

Results of the analysis of classroom discourse revealed that teacher-centred discourse was clearly dominant with 56 percent of all discourse events being identified as ‘teacher-centred discourse’. Results also revealed that listening and speaking clearly dominated classroom discourse, together accounting for 80 percent of discourse events.

Table 3: Summary of Forms of Discourse in all Observations

Form of discourse	Total events	Role 1 Discourse (teacher-centred)	Role 2 Discourse (shared)	Role 3 Discourse (student-centred)
Listening	890 (45%)	473 (46%)	219 (45%)	198 (41%)
Speaking	784 (39%)	391 (38%)	204 (42%)	189 (39%)
Acting	118 (6%)	36 (4%)	31 (6%)	51 (11%)
Writing	12 (6%)	61 (6%)	19 (4%)	32 (7%)
Reading	88 (4%)	65 (6%)	14 (3%)	9 (2%)
	1,992	1,026	487	479

Conflictual Perceptions of Teachers on Student Centredness

Teacher interviews uncovered conflicting perceptions related to the nature of student-centred discourse. Many teachers defined student-centredness in terms of the form of discourse (speaking and listening) rather than the function of discourse (meaning making). This partly explains the nature of classroom discourse observed in the study; although teacher-centered discourse dominated in terms of the purpose of classroom interactions, speaking and listening dominated in terms of the form of classroom interactions. Due to the dominance of speaking and listening, teachers perceived that their classroom discourse aligned to that of their IB curriculum model. It is clear that the conflictual perceptions relate to differing understandings of the intended discourse in terms of the importance of the discourse function (meaning making) instead of discourse form (speaking and listening).

All 16 teachers discussed their teaching strategies with respect to ‘speaking’. References to speaking roles rather than the other forms of discourse dominated the teacher responses (20 references by 16 teachers). However, no references were made to the purpose of these spoken exchanges. This suggests that teacher perceptions focused on the form of discourse (e.g. spoken discourse) rather than the function of discourse (e.g., construction of meaning). In addition, the dominance of both speaking and listening events in the observed lessons created an interesting contrast to the dominance of spoken discourse alone when teachers discussed their lessons. There were few direct references to listening, even though this form of discourse was as prevalent as speaking. This contrast further suggests that teacher perceptions are not just focused on form rather than function; they are focused on only one particular form of discourse. Of the rich array of discourse events identified in teacher practice during this study, the perceptions of teachers appear to be focused on a very narrow range of this discourse.

These findings may provide insights into the possible development of teacher capacity. By working with each other, teachers may develop shared perspectives regarding the nature of the discourse that they are trying to promote in the IB classroom. The development of this shared understanding will be a cultural shift within the school.

Collaboration, Actively Engaged Learners, and Scaffolding/Support

Three major themes emerged from the teacher interviews through a content analysis of interview transcripts: collaboration, actively engaged learners, and scaffolding and support. The notable incidence of these themes in the content of teacher interviews suggests that these were ideas that formed an important part of teachers’ perceptions of classroom practice. There were considerable references to group work and collaboration (14 references from five of the 16 teachers interviewed) in teacher interview data. This was also reflected in the lesson observations: collaborative activities featured across all forms and functions of discourse, suggesting that collaboration was an important idea that drove teacher perceptions of their classroom practice as well as the classroom practice as experienced by students. However, the 209 teacher comments on collaborative activities focused clearly on the form of discourse rather than the function. For example, responses contained phrases such as ‘small group discussions’, ‘students sharing ideas’ and ‘reading texts to each other out loud’. Discourse events based on collaborative activities tended to occur more heavily in Role 3 discourse events, and individual work occurred more heavily in Role 1 discourse. This result indicates that, although student collaboration tended to be an important part of teacher perceptions

of classroom practice, collaboration was not as important in their practice. It is also clear that teachers' perceptions of collaboration were focused on the form of the discourse (speaking) rather than the function of the students' role in discourse (meaning making).

References to scaffolding and supporting learning (12 references by three of the 16 teachers interviewed) were high in teacher interview responses. This is an important finding, because one of the major factors that appeared to differentiate the three discourse roles in the classroom observations lessons was the degree of scaffolding and support offered by teachers. Role 3 discourse events generally required a high degree of structured scaffolding and support, especially in the lead-up to the event. However, in many instances, Role 1 discourse events were necessary parts of the scaffolding for subsequent Role 2 and Role 3 discourse events. In this sense, interdependent relationships between different discourse roles were evident: many Role 2 and Role 3 discourse events may not have been possible without the preceding Role 1 discourse events. During teacher interviews, teachers focused discussion on student-centered activities, and although this could potentially point to a disparity between teacher perceptions and actual practice (over 50% of Role 1 discourse identified in the data), the focus on scaffolding and support may have been the teacher's way to include this obviously important part of teacher-centred classroom practice in the discussion. There were ten references in the interview data by five of the 16 participants to the student as an active, engaged learner. This suggests that the teachers perceived active participation and engagement as holding high levels of importance in their classrooms. Role 1 discourse, which tended to have lower levels of active participation and engagement than Role 2 and Role 3, represented over 50 percent of observed discourse events across the whole sample, suggesting a possible mismatch between teacher perceptions and their classroom practice in this area. Despite this, the prevalence of the statements on active, engaged learners suggests that teacher perceptions of their teaching practice aligned with IB vision and philosophy in which the need for active participation of the learner is clearly articulated.

Collaboration was mentioned frequently with respect to student-centred activities, although results of observed discourse imply that many collaborative activities were actually teacher-centred. Again, the implication here is that, although actual classroom practice did not completely align with IB vision and philosophy, teachers at least demonstrated an awareness of the importance of student-centred discourse. Interestingly, the many references by teachers to 'scaffolding and support' suggested an interdependence of discourse roles, supporting many classroom episode observations that showed Role 1 discourse events scaffolding and supporting subsequent Role 2 and Role 3 events. The lack of specific references to teacher-centred discourse in the interviews, despite the predominance of Role 1 observed discourse events in the study, is a clear area in which perceptions and practice of teachers did not align. However, the references to 'scaffolding and support' evident in the interviews could potentially be a teacher's way of discussing Role 1 type discourse events, through the implicit understanding that these teacher-centred roles existed, yet were not spoken of. If this is the case, the absence of any mention of teacher-centred discourse is important in terms of the possibility of Role 1 discourse being overlooked as a form of discourse. The dominance of teacher-centred discourse could be the classroom discourse equivalent of the idiomatic 'elephant in the room'—the obvious problem that fades into the background since no one is prepared to speak of it because it is taboo or embarrassing—scaffolding and support becoming a euphemism for teacher-centred discourse.

These interviews suggested that teacher perceptions were more closely aligned with IB vision and

philosophy than their actual classroom practice. In order for classroom discourse to more closely align with IB philosophy regarding the nature of learning in the classroom, more student-centred discourse needs to be promoted. However, various forms of discourse (reading, writing, speaking, listening and acting) were also identified and this provides an insight into where teachers can look to influence discourse most effectively. Finally, teacher interviews suggested that teacher perceptions of their classroom discourse partly aligned with observed patterns in these results. Teacher perceptions aligned with discourse patterns in terms of their awareness of competing discourses and the need to move towards a more student-centred discourse.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY A AND STUDY B

In Study A, perceptions of power relations among workers from different backgrounds were analyzed. Findings indicated that perceptions reported in the interview data were conflicting among participants based on their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They also revealed that even Japanese participants' perceptions differed according to their generation, English proficiency level, and experience. In relation to acculturation and intercultural competence, it became clear that some participants demonstrated more successful integration than other members in the department partly due to their high level of intercultural competence. In Study B, conflicting perceptions regarding the nature of student-centred discourse were identified amongst teachers working in the same school suggesting that teachers, although recognizing the importance of certain aspects of the school's pedagogical approach, may implement the approach differently due to differing perceptions based in school-culture specific values and beliefs that may not be shared amongst teachers. When the two studies are viewed together, three major implications are evident.

First, one of the central conclusions of the comparison of the two studies is that conflictual perceptions were clearly evident in both contexts and emerged from unconscious values and beliefs from participants' various cultural backgrounds. An important implication of this finding is that in order to address conflictual perceptions, the hidden ideological perceptions or values based on culture need to be revealed, and the interactants' awareness needs to be promoted by developing higher levels of intercultural/cross-cultural competence/sensitivity. Increasing levels of intercultural competence is an approach that can be used.

Second, it was clearly evident that culturally-based values and beliefs are influenced by culture at not only the broader national-identity level, but also at the more localized school-identity level. The intersections of these two different levels of culture provide insights into the potential complexity of the interactions within a community either at school or in the workplace. An important implication of this finding is that the work of shifting the nature of discourse necessitates an examination of the values and beliefs of participants and a consideration of their intercultural competence with regards to an examination of underlying values and beliefs.

Third, both studies found that conflictual perceptions of interactional discourse impact the nature of group dynamics suggesting that dominant discourses can be managed by promoting more balanced interactions within groups working together through the development of shared understandings of cultural perspectives. The conflictual perceptions identified in both these studies highlight the need to move to a more balanced form of interaction based on an increased level of understanding of the cultural background of others in their group such as the cultural-linguistic background in the workplace of Study A and the organizational school-culture background of teachers in Study B.

The key issue is whether communicators from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds are willing to communicate in a way that facilitates relations of equality or interdependence. It is our hope that findings of these studies can promote the relationship between intercultural communicative competence and power relations that will aid in our understanding of the complex relationship between multicultural communicators in a global world.

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APPENDIX. Classroom Discourse Events

The discourse event below was classified as a Role 1 event, in which the teacher is the primary knower due to the need for teacher validation of the knowledge claims and the relatively passive manner in which students were required to fill in the blanks within a teacher-constructed framework. This event was classified as both a listening event and a speaking event as both forms of discourse were identified as being of primary importance to the classroom activity. A ‘discourse event’ is generally defined as an item of discourse with a specific purpose and form.

Example of a Role 1 Discourse Event (Takita and Rentoule, 2017)

Context

In a Grade 8 humanities class, all students were sitting in a large group at the front of the classroom with the teacher standing next to the whiteboard. The students were just about to begin an activity, designing and constructing a bridge out of uncooked spaghetti. On the whiteboard, the word ‘bridge’ was written in large letters in the centre. Lines led from this word to eight pictures of different bridges spaced evenly around the outside of the whiteboard.

Teacher: What else do we know about bridges? What other knowledge do we have?

Student 1: (Hand raised, teacher indicates that it is the student’s turn with a nod of the head.) There are different bridges made of different things.

Teacher: (Takes a picture of a bridge off the whiteboard to reveal the word ‘construction’, and hands the student who answered the laminated picture of a bridge. The student receives the picture because the response corresponded to one of the concepts written on the whiteboard in the form of a concept map in which each concept was covered by a picture of a different bridge.) I’m giving you the bridge between Shikoku to Honshu. Now let’s talk about the different bridges, and they are different because they are constructed out of different materials. What do we know about this?

Student 2: (Hand raised, teacher indicates that it is the student’s turn with a nod of the head.) Most of the bridge construction is in triangles.

Teacher: (Responds by turning to the board and writing the word ‘triangle’ below the concept ‘construction’.) What was fascinating about the activity when you built those bridges on the roof (The teacher points to the ceiling, where a number of bridges made of plastic straws are displayed.) Yes, look up. It’s safe. Look at the different designs? What shape can you see?

Students: (Looking up at examples on the ceiling and without raising hands, a number of students respond in unison) Triangles.

Teacher: (Repeats in confirmation) Triangles... Why did you know this? Was it because every time you go over a bridge you imprint the shape in your memory? Is it things you’ve learned in science and technology? Are you recalling memory or information that you have from primary school? Where did you get this knowledge? (Pauses for approximately four seconds waiting for responses.)

Teacher: What else do we construct bridges from? Triangles; what else?

Student 3: (Hand raised, teacher indicates that it is the student’s turn with a nod of the head.) Steel.

Teacher: (Writes the word ‘steel’ on the board below the word ‘triangle’, under the concept of ‘construction’.) Now, you can only answer two questions so [student name]’s turn is up. What else do we construct bridges from?

ABSTRACT

Conflictual Perceptions of Intercultural Discourse: Cases of Power-related Discourse at Work and Student-centred Discourse at School

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Conflictual perceptions of interactional discourse impact the nature of group dynamics. Two recent studies examined the nature of discourses in two different workplace settings; a PreK-12 educational context and a research institute. Findings of both studies suggest that dominant discourses can be managed by promoting more balanced interactions within groups working together through the development of shared understandings of cultural perspectives. The first study (Study A) analyzed conflictual perceptions of power relations in the workplace based on in-depth interviews with participants from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Based on audio-recorded and transcribed interview data, perceptions of power relations among workers were examined and identified. An analysis of the interview data revealed that participants from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds perceived what constitutes power in interactions quite differently. The second study (Study B) analyzed conflictual perceptions of student-centred discourse in the classroom based on in-depth interviews with teachers from different organizational contexts. An analysis of the interview data revealed that teachers with experiences in schools with varying organizational cultures perceived student-centred discourse quite differently. Findings of both studies suggest that improved interactional competence could impact the nature of the discourse.

要 約

異文化談話の相反する認識：学生中心の談話に関する教師の認識と 力関係に関する労働者の認識の事例

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相互作用談話の相反する認識は、集団力学に影響を及ぼす。本稿で取り上げた最近の二つの研究は、異なる職場環境における談話の性質を検討した。二つの対象調査は、PreK-12の教育現場と研究機関である。両研究の調査結果は、文化的視点の相互理解を通して、共同作業するグループ内の力関係をよりバランスの取れた相互作業となるよう促進することにより、支配的談話を管理できる可能性を示唆している。1つ目の研究調査（研究A）では、異なる文化的言語的背景を持つ参加者との詳細なインタビューに基づいて、職場における力関係の相反する認識を分析した。音声録音され、文字起こしされたデータに基づき、労働者間の力関係の認識が検証され、特定された。インタビューデータを分析した結果、異なる言語的文化的背景を持つ参加者は、相互作用における力関係の性質について異なる認識をしていることが明らかになった。第2の研究（研究B）は、異なる組織環境を背景に持つ教師との詳細なインタビューに基づいて、教室内での学生中心の談話に関する認識を分析した。インタビューデータを分析したところ、さまざまな組織文化を持つ学校での経験を持つ教師達は、学生中心の談話を全く異なるように認識をしていた事が明らかになった。両研究の結果は、相互作用能力の向上が談話の性質に影響を与える可能性があることを示唆している。