Students Investigations into their Plurilingual Practices: The Development of a Participatory Research Project

Mariana De Luca, PhD Student

Why a Participatory Approach to the Study of Language Practices?

1. Two-way dual language programs are expected to separate language for instruction by teacher, time or subject (Howard et al, 2018).

2. Institutions’ expectations of language use influence students’ linguistic practices in ways that may limit learners’ engagement with a “fuller range of semiotic resources (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016).

3. A participatory approach may create the conditions for students to examine and reflect on their language practices, assign new understandings to their practices and create knowledge that transforms their world (Luke, 2012).
Participatory Research

- Mutually beneficial to both the stakeholders involved and the researcher (Tseng et al., 2017)
- Opportunities for the institution and the individuals to cultivate new intellectual, creative and leadership capacity (Campano et al., 2015)
- Research informed improvement efforts that lead to changes in programs, curricula, and professional development (Tseng et al., 2017)
- Involves students in real-world contexts for research and practice (Campano et al., 2015)
- Opportunities for students to influence school policies and practice (Ozer et al., 2010)
- Students develop a concern for social justice (Voight & Torny-Purta, 2013)

Pilot Study

School: Dual Language Immersion Spanish School in the United States
Participants: Eighth grade students

Context
Apprenticeship Design of a Pilot study

Apprenticeship Design

Training
- Video
- Discussion

Training session 1:
- Video
- Discussion

Training session 2:
- Video
- Discussion

Data Collection
- Recording
- Students' work

Analysis
- Transcription
- Written Activity

Apprenticeship Program

- Training session 1:
  - expectations of role & responsibilities
  - Overarching research focus
  - Ethical considerations
  - Data collection tools & coding
  - Practice recording

- Training session 2:
  - Practice session
  - Transcription analysis

(adapted from Carrington, Bland and Brady, 2010)
Training: Session 1

- Video
  - Purpose of the Project
  - Ethical research practices
  - Data Collection Tools
- Video Discussion
- Practice Recording

Problem

No recordings
Steps to Analysis

Considering the turn as the unit of analysis, the method consisted of the following steps:

- Identify all turns in English or turns containing English and highlight them.
- Discuss each turn and agree on its function, write each function next to the turn.
- Write each function in a Post-it note. Classify them in groups.
- Analyze the student work. Identify direct links between the transcription and the work. Do any of these links reveal learning?
- Make a T-chart with benefits and disadvantages of students using languages in that way.

(Adapted from Swain and Lapkin’s (2000))
Examples

What worked

- Hands-on activities
- Being part of decision making
What needed improvement

- Access to children and duration of access
- Data collection tasks
- Students' vs. Researcher's Data

Cover instructional standards
Survey children
Multimodal

Data collection tools
Student's data collection tools
Researcher's data collection tools

Project Organized in Four Cycles:
Cycle 1: Scaffolding and Initial Reflections

Student's Data and Analysis
- Data: Drawings
- Analysis of bilingual authors' use of language

Researcher's Data
- Interviews
- Still photos

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Cycle 2: Exploring Language Practices within the Family

- Students' data and analysis
- Retrospective report
- Examination of language choice
- Still photos

Cycle 3: Exploring Language Practices when having Fun with Friends

- Students' data and analysis
- Diary and Comic Strip
- Examination of language choice related to context
- Still photos
Cycle 4: Exploring Language Practices when having Fun with Friends

Students' data and analysis
- Recordings and artefacts
  - Recording of discussions and individual interviews
  - Transcription of excerpts and preliminary analysis
- Still photos

Researcher's data

References
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