A dual analysis study of classroom interactions in Japan and South Africa

Roehl Sybing (a)* Tshimangadzo Selina Mudau (b)

(a) Assistant Professor, Faculty of Global Communications, Doshisha University, 1-3 Tatara Miyakodani, Kyotanabe, Kyoto, Japan
(b) Senior Lecturer, School of Nursing and Public Health, Nursing Department, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, 238 Mazizi Kunene Rd, Glenwood, 4041, Durban, South Africa

ABSTRACT

The demands of raising education at a classroom level to international standards require a nuanced analytical lens involving multiple perspectives to contribute to the best practices. Most classroom research adopts a singular perspective, usually from researchers who are familiar with the nuances of the classroom context under study. In other words, published studies involving classroom observations are often analyzed by insiders who already have the insight to understand the situated dynamics of the classroom interactions they analyze. While this is an important analytical orientation, this stance may overlook important insights about teaching and learning that outsiders’ perspectives may be able to identify. The study employed a qualitative approach. Which was guided by the dialogic interactive theory. The methodological approach in Japan was face-to-face semi-structured interviews while in the South African context, virtual data generation methods were employed to interview teachers on the classroom interactions with students. The study population was English students, while in South Africa it was health course teachers who taught students from various health professions. A total of eight teachers were purposely recruited in South Africa with one student participant in Japan. Findings revealed similarities and differences in dialogic interactions and the interpretation of such interactions. Participants from both contexts had deliberate silence and reluctance to speak which was interpreted differently by the teachers, and lack of reciprocal and purposive engagements by students. Based on the dialogic interactive theory, it can be concluded that the aspirations to achieve an inclusive quality of education can best be achieved when teachers are transparent about the expected interactions for all the tenets of the dialogic theory to be achieved. It is therefore recommended that broader conversations about the analysis of situated dynamics of classroom interaction be encouraged to yield critical insights for education towards the attainment of inclusive quality education.

Article history:
Received 07 October 2023
Received in rev. form 22 Nov. 2023
Accepted 12 December 2023

Keywords:
Dialogic Interaction, Quality
Education, Sustainable Development
Goals, Reciprocal Learning,
Supportive Learning Environment

JEL Classification:
I23, Z13

Introduction

This paper takes the position that a multi-faceted analysis aimed at identifying effective instructional practices is a more feasible objective than the international standardization of quality education. Given the situated nature of cultures and their engagement with education, the differences in educational needs and methods across countries and contexts (e.g., Sybing & Mudau, 2022) are too significant to overcome. On the other hand, an analysis of educational practices involving multiple perspectives can greatly benefit applying universal teaching and learning theories to local, situated classroom contexts.

To that end, this article reports on a study reflecting on classroom interactions in South Africa and Japan to highlight the utility of a dual analysis to the discussion and development of instructional practices at a local level. The researchers used the lens of dialogic teaching to analyze perspectives from students in South Africa and Japan. While the two researchers in this study analyzed interview data through the framework of dialogic teaching provided by Alexander (2020), their different perspectives produced substantive
differences in analysis warranting contextualized discussion of effective teaching practices across cultures. Ultimately, the presentation of this dual analysis aims to critique the standardization of concepts intended to be applied globally.

Inclusive and equitable quality education by 2030 is the objective of the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4) defined by the United Nations (UN) (UN, 2023). Given the ambitiousness of SDG4, the lack of sufficient action by nations, and logistical and institutional challenges relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations estimates that only one in six countries will meet the requirements for universal access to quality education by the target year 2030. As a result, nations have much to do in innovating through the scholarship of teaching and learning to provide quality education within our generation, if not by the end of this decade. While providing universal access to education is crucial in developing nations, this paper addresses the “quality education” aspect of the challenge presented by SDG4. Inclusive and universal quality education is a concept that has yet to attain sufficient theoretical coherence to warrant the proposal of pedagogical implications at scale. That said, it is not practical to pursue a singular, prescriptive standard for education that is equally applicable to all educational contexts. Instead, a more situated approach to understanding teaching and learning at a local level will benefit educators and students more when acknowledging the local resources particular to each classroom. For example, most low- and middle-income countries are still battling to provide access to ICT resources for teachers and learners at both primary and tertiary levels (Amari, Mouakhar & Jarboui, 2022). The attainment of inclusive and equal education in itself is a desirable milestone which is marred by contextual limitations which include physical and information and communication technology (ICT) availability and suitability. However, this approach does not preclude a multifaceted analysis of teaching and learning. To ensure universal access to education, a triangulated approach toward understanding effective pedagogical practices is essential to allow educators to anticipate the evolving needs of an inclusive classroom. To that end, this paper presents a dual analysis of classroom contexts in South Africa and Japan. The study in this article adopts a comparative analysis to analyze two otherwise unrelated contexts to understand issues raised in separate teaching and learning situations to develop a broader discussion of effective educational practices.

**Literature Review**

**Theoretical and Conceptual Background**

**Definition of quality education**

The plain text definition of quality education as laid out in SDG4 can be found on the UN website's description of SDGs and described as follows: "[e]nsure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UN, 2023, Unterhalter, 2019). As lofty a goal as this may seem, it is a goal that has perceived benefits in that quality education has long been viewed as both a human right (McCowan, 2013) and a pathway to success and prosperity. In line with the UN definition, we define quality education as inclusive education that promotes lifelong, mutual learning with a sharing of responsibilities toward the lifelong development of both the teachers and the students.

**Challenges to developing quality education**

This explanation is more inclusive than the previous equivalent found in the preceding Millennium Development Goals, which narrowly focused on access to primary education (Unterhalter, 2019). However, conceptual clarity of SDG4 as a precursor to any discussion of pedagogical implications is much more challenging. The situated differences between geographic contexts addressing SDG4 are exemplified in discussions of separate studies identifying different needs for quality education (e.g., Diemer et al., 2020; Ndubuka & Rey-Marmomier, 2019). There is a broad consensus regarding the lack of sufficient progress necessary to address the objectives of SDG4. Recent scholarly discussions highlight the quick pace of perceived innovations that, in turn, emphasize shortcomings in the educational status quo. The newest debates surrounding the implementation of artificial intelligence, for example, have already been applied to explore potential uses in the education space (Flores-Vivar & Garcia-Peñalvo, 2023), supplementing existing scholarship on instructor recruitment (Nassr et al., 2023), policy guidance (Ferguson & Roote, 2020), and overall economic investment (Archer & Muntasim, 2020). Most significantly, the development of education toward universal access and quality has been hindered by the COVID-19 global pandemic. The shift away from traditional, in-person education evokes terms such as “online teaching” and “learning loss” to represent the drastic shift in educational needs and challenges between 2020 and 2022. Concerning the discussion in this paper, the pandemic stunted any progress toward attaining SDG4 by most measurable indicators (Donnelly & Patinos, 2021; Tarefder & Shahid, 2023).

Overall, the UN reports that the global community is falling short of meeting its 2030 targets for SDG4. In their most recent report on SDGs (2023), they note significant shortfalls in investments in education infrastructure in low- and lower-middle-income countries, with only nominal increases in the rate of children who have completed primary and secondary education worldwide. This lack of progress can only mean that a significant portion of global youths will remain deprived of access to quality education necessary for social mobility and economic stability by 2030.

**Theoretical background**

The researchers analyzed data through the lens of dialogic teaching. Dialogic teaching is a research area under constant development in contemporary scholarship owing to the perceived understanding that traditional, monologic teaching is insufficient to facilitate the development of higher and more dynamic literacies among learners. Rather than have students passively absorb knowledge from a
lecturer without any bidirectional engagement within the classroom, dialogic teaching relies on interaction with and critical reflection by students to facilitate the understanding of essential knowledge. To ensure a theoretical foundation understood by both authors of this paper, this study uses Alexander's (2020) framework of dialogic teaching, which relies on six fundamental dispositions for effective dialogue:

i. Collective. The classroom is a site of joint learning and inquiry, and, whether in groups or as a class, students and teachers are willing and able to address learning tasks together.

ii. Supportive. Students feel able to express ideas freely, without risk of embarrassment over contributions that are hesitant or tentative, or that might be judged ‘wrong’, and they help each other to reach common understandings.

iii. Reciprocal. Participants listen to each other, share ideas, ask questions and consider alternative viewpoints; and teachers ensure that they have ample opportunities to do so.

iv. Deliberative. Participants discuss and seek to resolve different points of view, they present and evaluate arguments and they work towards reasoned positions and outcomes.

v. Cumulative. Participants build on their own and each other's contributions and chain them into coherent lines of thinking and understanding.

vi. Purposeful. Classroom talk, though sometimes open-ended, is nevertheless structured with specific learning goals in view.

These criteria ensure that learners are involved in the co-construction of meaning, assuming that the teacher's expertise is one component of effective teaching and learning and should be complemented by various voices (that of students in particular) for a more holistic understanding of knowledge. At a minimum, a dialogic approach to instructional practices ensures that teachers can better understand the extent to which students have compelling learning experiences and that teachers have engaged in successful classroom instruction (Goldenberg, 1992; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Implementing dialogic teaching as a pathway to achieving SDG4 is a question of professional teacher education. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) devoted significant focus to the role of teacher education in facilitating the innovation and use of instructional practices at a classroom level. More recent scholarship (e.g., Segal & Lefstein, 2016; Snell & Lefstein, 2018; Yıldırım & Uzun, 2021) emphasizes the many pitfalls that exist in pseudoforms of dialogic teaching and look like engagement with students but do not possess the engaged participation from students that brings about critical reflection and development of knowledge. In other words, dialogue as a means for co-constructing knowledge with learners is not intuitive; instead, it requires an intentional approach to teaching and learning that includes students in dialogue (Engin, 2017).

That said, interest in applications of dialogic teaching to instructional practices has mainly remained regional and siloed without sufficient synthesis. As a result, a new study is required to examine how dialogic education can be viewed at scale more closely. In doing so, researchers can grasp how educational goals can be achieved across contexts regardless of situated differences.

Methodology

The concept of theoretical triangulation is essential to a qualitative inquiry into teaching and learning. Flick (2019) discusses the overall concept of triangulation as relying on multiple resources not necessarily to arrive at the same answer but to provide a rich, contextualized analysis that a singular perspective cannot provide. Research disciplines that primarily rely on qualitative and non-experimental methodologies carry assumptions that knowledge that cannot be replicated and generalized as in the natural and physical sciences can be contextualized and triangulated to establish the necessary research rigor. Various forms of triangulation exist, but this paper focuses on data source triangulation. Relying on multiple sources of information to address the same research inquiry allows for greater credibility in the qualitative assertions presented through the research (Kern, 2016).

The study

This article presents a dual analytical approach to qualitative data. As Flick (2019) describes, triangulation carries the fundamental assumption that a more intricate research inquiry can be "used to extend the range of insights and knowledge produced in a qualitative study" (p. 2). The study consists of data taken from separate studies and analyzed by the principal investigators of both studies. The study in the Japan context was conducted among students while the study in the South African context reports findings about students’ interactions from the reflections and perceptions of the teachers. This approach ensures data source triangulation and a more contextualized analysis using multiple interpretations of a theoretical framework.

South African research context

The first data set is a series of in-depth telephonic interviews with ten health course teachers at South African universities. Interview respondents were asked to reflect on their emergency online teaching experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. They were asked about the benefits and drawbacks of online teaching compared to traditional, in-person teaching. They were also asked about interactions with their students during online classes. The teachers’ composition were from the nursing, occupational, dental, occupational, and physiotherapy departments. They gave reflections of students varying from first year to post-graduate level. The variety of students’ professions and levels was not the inclusion factor because it was the educators who were the main participants
giving their experiences and perceptions of interactions with students during the emergency shift to online teaching due to COVID-19 lockdowns.

Data were collected after ethical clearance for the period of three weeks in 2021. A non-probability sampling technique was employed to purposively recruit 8 teachers from the university. The researcher sent a group email to all the university educators after obtaining permission from the Registrar and the Heads of Departments. Those willing to participate responded, and meeting times were arranged. Both face-to-face and telephonic interviews were conducted, lasting an average of 12 minutes. Demographically, the majority of participants were females, with only one male participant, with teaching experience ranging between five to more than 20 years.

Japan research context

The data taken from the Japan context is an interview between an L1 English-speaking researcher and an L1 non-English-speaking university student. The original study was intended to establish a student's narrative regarding their English study at the university level. The interview was conducted in English to gather reflections about the student's required English class at her university. Topics of discussion included experiences in junior and senior high school English classes compared to the course she took at the interview. In particular, the researcher and interview respondent discussed her teacher's instructional practices, classroom activities, and interactions with other classmates. The student was recruited while the researcher conducted observations of the required English course. The researcher observed interactions between the teacher and his students to determine which students would provide the greatest insights into English study. After informed consent was established between the researcher and the student, the interview took place on the university campus. An audio recorder was used during the interview, and the resulting audio was transcribed to facilitate data analysis.

Data analysis

Both data sets were transcribed and shared by each researcher. Both researchers conducted a deductive analysis of both interview transcripts based on Alexander's (2020) list of criteria for effective dialogic teaching. Beyond being provided with descriptors of each criterion, both researchers coded interview transcripts with the labels for each criterion but according to their interpretations of the criteria. This ensures that, while both researchers operate from the same foundational theory, there are situated differences between researchers owing to the contexts with which they are familiar, thus ensuring that the data is viewed through a dual analysis that yields a discussion of significant findings for dialogic teaching at a more universal level. A discussion between the researchers of the differences in their coding yields a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012), not necessarily of the data sets themselves but of the multi-faceted understanding shared by both researchers. As a result, they produced a series of themes that were useful to both a universal and situated understanding of dialogic teaching, which is presented below.

Positionality

A full accounting of the analytical lenses applied to the study in this paper depends on a comprehensive accounting of the relevant aspects of the researcher’s positionality (Sybing, 2022). Researcher A is an educator in Japan originally from the United States. He has conducted research in higher education contexts in multiple countries since 2011. His main research interests include dialogic education and language policy in classroom contexts. Researcher B is a university educator based in South Africa. The researcher has several years of experience in conducting qualitative studies in higher education and health contexts in South Africa.

Findings

The coding of the data and the subsequent discussion yields the following themes, the aggregate of which will be discussed in the following section. For now, each theme was deemed by the researchers as significant to a broader discussion of improving education across contexts.

Collective and supportive space created.

Data analysis revealed that teachers created collective space for dialogic interactions in both contexts. In the Japanese context, students were encouraged to express their views as much as people. Similarly, in the South African online context, teachers recognized that both the teachers and students were caught off guard by the emergency shift from traditional classroom-based to online learning. Teachers supported learners by taking time to orientate learners on the use of ICT gadgets.

Sense of purpose

For classroom dialogue to be successful and productive, there needs to be a shared purpose or, at minimum, an acknowledgment of classroom interactants' purposes for participating in the teaching and learning process. In both contexts, respondents discussed the utility of the classes being taught. In the South African context, where practical classes were limited by the nature of the shift to online teaching, one of the respondents used the online space to create opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills.

Respondent: From last year, March until now, I have been teaching both theory and practical. Some procedures were taught online through videos to show students how a procedure is done. For example, immunization of the child could be seen in a video or photo. For me, the facilitation of skills was easier. I can say that but I do not know. The IMCI skills was better demonstrated through videos.
I used to give student-prepared videos and we did some exercises which I think it was easier. Towards the examination, we had some physical demonstrations where the student would come to the skills and we demonstrated skills that were not demonstratable through the videos. So, both online and [face-to-face] were used for skills whereas online only is used for theory lessons.

The interview data from the Japanese context illustrates the connection between enjoyment and purpose.

Interviewer: Are you enjoying this class?

Respondent: Yeah, I'm enjoying this class because I'm kind of in a new environment right now. It's not like in the past when everyone could speak English. And we were all comfortable, but now we're in a classroom with people from totally different backgrounds. And there's still like trying to do something, you know, accomplish and improve like English so yeah, I think I'm enjoying this class so far.

[...]

Interviewer: So, towards the end, when some students go on to the front of the classroom, he makes small talk with the students. What do you think about that?

Respondent: Yeah, I think that was helpful for, you know, people who aren't used to these kinds of speed because they were nervous and like they wanted to avoid being picked on. So yeah, yeah.

To be sure, these data excerpts address purposeful teaching and learning in different ways. The former context connects learning activities with the facilitation of expertise in skills, while the latter context associates purpose with the sense of comfort and enjoyment created by the teacher.

Reciprocal communication

In both contexts, there were issues of ensuring communication occurs reciprocally, meaning that participants not only listen to each other but are fundamentally able to listen to each other. In the South African context, issues arise from the difficulties in communicating online through spoken interaction, as expected by some of the teachers interviewed. In this case, there was no mutual responsibility and democracy to exchange knowledge.

Respondent: Regularly, I usually ask if there are any questions to students and it is just unfortunate, that students just kept quiet. I even resolved to go to the participant list and randomly just select one student, and sometimes, the student will just keep quiet or write in the chat that their mics are not working. Keeping quiet may indicate to me that the student is unavailable and has just logged in and left.

In the Japanese context, the English-only nature of teacher-student interaction raises difficulties in communication not merely between the teacher and their students but also between students. The student interviewed in the Japan study questions whether the teacher's communication is understood by her classmates and whether she should only use English or resort to helping them by using their first language.

Respondent: I think I'm not the best that they only get, but for this class, I sometimes got confused about where I should use English like (teacher) says or I sit like used [my first language] so they could understand what I'm saying. I tend to like to speak a bit fast. So there are sometimes people who can't listen to what I just say like, catch me, you know, stuff.

Both contexts address theories of interaction affordances (Aronin & Singleton, 2012) in different ways. Whereas the online medium in the South African context creates spaces for students to remain quiet or to communicate in ways the teacher does not desire (e.g., the use of the chat function), the data in the Japanese context emphasizes longstanding discussions of language policy in language classroom situations.

Silence and deference

Silence within dialogue is interpreted differently between the two observed contexts. As a point of scholarly discussion, silence on its own should not be treated as a negative circumstance in teaching and learning (Harumi, 2011). That said, the respondents in both data sets interpret silence as a result of discomfort or an obstacle to be mitigated.

Respondent: Students do not respond when called and most of the time they do not like to be called that way. It is like a witch-hunt. But what can one do when you need to be heard? You try all these tricks to engage students. You have to think that I am putting someone under the bus or at the spot by calling their names. I reassure them that as we talk each one of us will be learning. They prefer to type than talk, to say I understand, or we understand. In the South African context, the respondent in the excerpt above considers silence to be something that needs to be proactively dealt with (e.g., "like witch-hunt") through "tricks to engage students." Below, the respondent in the Japan study lists various reasons for the silence from her classmates.

Interviewer: So yeah, [teacher] picks them randomly. Yeah. What is it that makes students nervous about this?
Respondent: I don't know. We first, like, speak up in front of the class in a situation where everyone's listening to us. Also, like maybe they aren't that confident in their English skills or they're not confident in like in the content of the speech like what they are. It's just saying like that. What evidence should they bring up for the speech? And yeah, they and the girl in my group. She was like, "I just completely forgot what I was going to say because I was so nervous in front of everyone."

In both contexts, the authors noted the teachers’ deliberative actions of encouraging students to participate by randomly picking them. The reluctance to participate in class contradicts the tenets of dialogic interactions because a conducive environment is not cultivated to enhance freedom of expression without judgment.

**Discussion**

The analysis of the data in both contexts affirms two suppositions. First, this study demonstrates that a singular analytical lens based on a broader analytical lens can be applied to various teaching and learning situations regardless of differences. That said, that analytical lens will ultimately bring up different concerns that both match the descriptors outlined in the theoretical framework applied. Although data presented in both contexts were not collected to achieve the same objectives, the findings present discomfort from both teachers when students seem not to give the same level of interaction. In both contexts, the teachers seem frustrated by unilateral communication, where the teacher asks a question and there is no response from learners. Given the dialogic theory, such classroom behaviour illustrates less interactional structures with limited reciprocity (Asterhan et al., 2020). The teachers in this study demonstrated a willingness to achieve quality education by seeking constructive feedback and involving students to create a conducive learning space for all students. This eliminated educational exclusions and inequalities (Flecha & Soler, 2013).

In the case of learners in South Africa, educators in this study expressed disillusionment about the lack of mutual interest and interaction with students. Further to dialogic learning and social cognitive learning, educators from both contexts were expecting feedback, follow-up, or clarity-seeking from learners, which, according to Asterhan et al. (2020), is significant for critical thinking and the exchange of ideas with mutual social growth. In the case of health students, such absence of reciprocity and knowledge exchange is worrisome because healthcare professionals are expected to demonstrate abilities to encourage critical dialogue. Sometimes, patients presenting with different perceptions related to diseases suffered where alternative options should be shared. Indeed, providing options would not be meant to prove anything wrong but to allow further socio-cognitive engagements (Asterhan et al., 2020).

Flecha and Soler (2013) reported similar concerns when learning is marked by the absence of back-and-forth interactions between the teacher and learners. Sometimes, such a lack of reciprocity is due to a lack of trust and confidence. In the case of the South African context, lecturers reported students’ lack of ICT skills as one of the reasons affecting meaningful dialogic interactions. This lack of ICT skills points to the general unpreparedness of the education system to prepare learners for global educational advancements in a manner that promotes lifelong learning using the UN definition of inclusive education provided earlier in this article. Although data presented in both contexts were not collected to achieve the same objectives, the findings present discomfort from both educators when students seem not to give the same level of interaction. In both contexts, the teachers seem frustrated by unilateral communication, where the teacher asks a question and there is no response from learners. Given the dialogic theory, such classroom behaviour illustrates less interactional structures with limited reciprocity (Asterhan et al., 2020). At the same time, students and teachers in both contexts are taking deliberative actions to improve the learning interactions, demonstrating commitment and responsibility to attain quality education by seeking means to improve and develop both the classroom tone and student participation.

In the context of online learning in the South African context of this paper, the absence of interactions between students and educators diminished the core aspect of sharing responsibilities and authority of knowledge, which the next person may use in other settings or engagements (Yildirim & Uzun, 2021). Assuredly, teachers tried to break engagement barriers by picking names to respond to questions. As indicated in the context above, the various levels of students and professions indicated that educators were experiencing the same interactive challenges irrespective of the number of years as a student. This implies that the quality of interaction does not depend on the experience as a student, but on how the teacher and student communicated the expedited behaviour, responses, and shared responsibilities during teaching and learning. This concurs with Flecha and Soler (2013) where students in Roma were withdrawn and shy students were encouraged to speak directly to the teachers. Notably, questioning by Japanese students marks a high level of engagement and critical thinking. As Asterhan et al. (2020) alluded, this demonstrates a high level of critical thinking, open-mindedness, and shared power.

More so, findings in the South African context revealed the teachers’ awareness of cumulative learning by using blended learning to consolidate learning. Such actions are noted by Cui and Teo (2021) as critical, accountable actions necessary for the dialogic class. According to Cui and Teo (2021), it is equally important to create a dialogic environment to attain a transformative teaching climate. Speaking of creating a dialogic environment, considering the South African contexts where there could be sociocultural issues that may hinder complete and authentic critical dialogue from learners, learners must be appropriately introduced and encouraged to question and deconstruct issues critically during dialogue.
The dual analysis presented in this paper yields functional theoretical and practical implications for both contexts and a more universal understanding of dialogic teaching. In so doing, it also provides a valuable pathway for scholars and practitioners to discuss innovations for quality education as envisioned through SDG4 without prescriptively seeking out a universal standard for education. Social science research has long adopted fundamental assumptions of the infeasibility of developing universal axioms owing to situated differences in culture (Boas, 1940; Geertz, 1973). However, despite the acknowledgment of a subjective world (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005), the development of standards and axioms in professional practice in and out of education contexts (e.g., Bacchi & Eveline, 2011; Ravitch, 2010) remains a challenge to the contextualization of the social world. This discussion presents a systematic approach to account for multiple analytical perspectives owing to cultural differences to tailor specific practical implications to situated contexts.

**Conclusions**

As the analysis in this paper highlights, theoretical universals cannot be applied prescriptively to local contexts, mainly socially situated contexts. Instead, broader frameworks should be interpreted to understand those contexts to determine solutions that can serve individuals in their context while addressing the broader goals informing those frameworks. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that dialogic learning is vital to attain quality education in each teaching session. However, teachers must be transparent during the application of the theory so that they are aware of its principles. Such awareness will enhance deliberative engagement and communicate responsibilities from both parties. SDG4 is an essential guiding principle with a critical goal of providing quality education worldwide, but its guidance is best applied through adaptation to local contexts. That said, researchers and practitioners in education can learn from analyzing multiple contexts to gain a broader sense of how frameworks and guiding principles can be interpreted to make assertions most applicable to their circumstances.

**Limitations and future directions**

It is important to emphasize that this paper presents a secondary study of data from research that initially pursued separate and unrelated research inquiries. Interview respondents across research contexts were asked different questions, and neither set of interview questions directly addressed the topic of dialogic classroom interaction. As a result, questions of validity and reliability are welcomed by other researchers if the goal is to achieve quality and research rigor (Tracy, 2010).

That said, a central goal of qualitative research is to establish sufficient detail about a particular phenomenon (Gibbs, 2018). While the nature of the study as constituted is a significant departure from the original research inquiries informing the data collection, this paper highlights the potential for a secondary analysis that can present assertions that future research can explore. In particular, the small sample size of one interview respondent in the Japan study should raise concerns about research validity if the goal is to establish theoretical universals about teaching and learning at an international scale. However, the overall goal of the analysis in this paper is to establish that further inquiry is required before making any sweeping generalizations regarding education across contexts, particularly concerning how classroom dialogue manifests across the vast cultural and social differences exemplified across these two studies. Indeed, the field of teaching and learning at an international scale will benefit from a more focused data collection across contexts. Outside of systematic reviews, research on dialogic classroom interaction to date has focused mainly on discrete contexts (e.g., Lefstein & Snell, 2014) without discussion of applications of dialogic education at scale. For now, this article seeks to affirm how theories to be considered universally are and should be interpreted locally.

**Acknowledgement**

The authors acknowledge the University for the ethical clearance of the study and all the participants for sharing their experiences.

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, R.S. methodology, R.S. and T.S.M., validation, R.S. and T.S.M., formal analysis, and R.S. and T.S.M., data collection, R.S. and T.S.M.; writing—original draft preparation, R.S. and T.S.M.; writing—review and editing, R.S. and T.S.M.

**Funding:** This research was privately funded by both authors.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in the study.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to restrictions.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

**References**


Taraferd, T., & Shahid, S. (2023). Is the UN’s quality education goal for tertiary level (SDG-4.3) at stake due to the Covid-19 Pandemic? In P. Sultan (Ed.), Innovation, leadership, and governing in higher education (pp. 45-59). Springer.


**Publisher’s Note:** SSBFNET stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.