

Instructional and regulative discourse in language tutorials: An analysis of educators' response to potentially offensive views

A B S T R A C T Contemporary perspectives on language learning emphasises the importance of encouraging students to play an active role in the learning process. Accordingly, teacher-student interaction must reflect these views, by facilitating student participation. This presents educators with unique challenges. For example, students may express views which are potentially offensive to their peers. This article conducts an analysis of two case studies, in which educators were faced with this challenge. The research is situated in the context of literature tutorials. To achieve this goal Bernstein's (1990; 1996) pedagogic discourse is employed, as it was used by Buzzelli and Johnston (2001).

Keywords: language learning, learning process, teacher-student interaction, participation, potentially offensive views, pedagogic discourse

1. Introduction and research aims

Contemporary pedagogic research highlights the importance of developing autonomous learners, by encouraging them to play an active role in the learning process (Camiciottoli, 2008; Savignon, 2007; Brokensha, 2007; Belchamber, 2007; Kaufman, 2004; Bárcena & Read, 2004; Conrad & Donaldson, 2004; Killen, 2000).

This trend implies that educators must use their authority in a manner that is compatible with the pedagogic principles which underlie it. The present article's study is situated in a context which was designed to reflect these views on teaching and learning. This context is the New Academic Tutorial Programme (NATP), which was launched in 2007 at the University of the Free State.

This article concentrates on spoken discourse in NATP lectures, and aims to make its contribution by replicating Buzzelli and Johnston's (2001) study in a South African context.

More specifically, the article aims to use Buzzelli and Johnston's (2001) study as a framework with which to analyse the use of authority in the NATP, to address challenges that arise from educators' attempts to facilitate student participation. After reviewing the data collected for this study, it was decided to focus on incidents in which students express potentially offensive views during class discussions. This decision was based on the notion that these are particularly challenging situations, which require educators to respond creatively and tactfully.

The study is justified by the need to ensure that lectures are conducted in accordance with the pedagogic perspectives which underlie contemporary views on education (cf. Goduka, 1998a; b; Singh & Sinclair, 2001). Furthermore, the manner in which educators dealt with their challenges in this study may serve as a guideline for educators in similar contexts. Finally, the article also aims to suggest areas for future research.

To achieve the article's goals, conversation analysis (CA) was used to analyse the data qualitatively, within the framework of Buzzelli and Johnston's (2001) study. More specifically, Bernstein's (1990; 1996) conceptualisation of instructional and regulative discourse was used to uncover the manner in which educators aimed to address their challenges.

2. Theoretical context

2.1 Buzzelli and Johnston's (2001) study

2.1.1 Theoretical foundation

Buzzelli and Johnston's (2001) research rests on three fundamental assumptions. The first is that teachers' authority remains a persistent feature of every educational system, whether liberal or autocratic. Secondly, teacher authority is based on asymmetrical power relations, regardless of the manner in which educators aim to employ these relations. Thirdly, education is "fundamentally moral in nature" (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001:873). This implies that educators bring personal and social morals – as informed by their position as teachers – to the classroom. The result is a dynamic and continuous challenge to reconcile personal morality with the needs of the context and individual learners (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001; cf. McCrown, Driscoll & Roop, 1996:321-322).

Based on these assumptions, as well as studies by Peters (1966) and Oyler (1996), Buzzelli and Johnston (2001:874) view authority as made up of two features: being "in authority" and being "an authority". The former refers to a person's ability to supervise events, while the latter refers to a person's position as "the possessor and transmitter of sanctioned forms of knowledge" (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001:874). In teaching practice, it becomes difficult to distinguish between these two elements, as educators possess both "the power to direct classroom activities [as well as] the knowledge that the students need to acquire" (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001:875; cf. Christie, 1995).

In summary, this study follows Buzzelli and Johnston (2001) by viewing authority as a parallel enactment of being 'in' and 'an' authority.

2.1.2 Bernstein's (1990; 1996) pedagogic discourse

To investigate the parallel enactment of authority, Buzzelli and Johnston (2001) employ Bernstein's (1990, 1996) framework of pedagogic discourse.

In this framework, classroom discourse can be investigated by studying the manner in which the “instructional discourse” is embedded within the “regulative discourse” (Bernstein, 1990:188). The former refers to the knowledge and skills students are required to master, while the latter refers to individual learners’ socialisation into society’s norms/rules (Bernstein, 1990:188; cf. Christie, 1995; Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001). To illustrate the relationship between these two discourses, Bernstein (1996:46-48) states that:

“Often people in schools and in classrooms make a distinction between what they call the transmission of skills and the transmission of values [...] In my view there are not two discourses, there is only one [...] [t]he regulative discourse [which] is the dominant discourse [...] that creates the criteria which give rise to character, manner, conduct.”

Therefore, the process of instruction is always embedded within the regulative discourse (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001:876-877; cf. Christie, 1995). As a result, pedagogic discourse is a discourse which “embeds competence in [social] order and [social] order in competence” (Bernstein, 1990:185; cf. Liu & Hong, 2009; Dalton-Puffer 2005). This notion is directly related to being ‘in’ and ‘an authority’, as both may be used: 1) to educate students on the knowledge/skills they are required to master [instructional discourse], and 2) to order the process of instruction, according to societal norms and values [regulative discourse] (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001; Christie, 1995).

In summary, the parallel enactment of authority occurs within the instructional and regulative discourse. For example, teachers may direct students’ behaviour – by virtue of being ‘in authority’, but also because they are an expert on the topic under study (‘an authority’). These activities aim to achieve the learning outcomes of the lesson [instructional discourse], but are inevitably influenced by, or embedded in, the societal norms and values which influence student-teacher interaction [regulative discourse]. The following section illustrates this relationship by referring to Buzzelli and Johnston’s (2001) study.

2.1.3 Instructional and regulative discourse

This section will briefly discuss the manner in which Bernstein’s (1996) pedagogic discourse was applied by Buzzelli and Johnston (2001), in order to contextualise the research aims of the present article.

As mentioned earlier, Buzzelli and Johnston’s (2001) research investigates the parallel enactment of authority, within the instructional and regulative discourse. By analysing a single case study, they were able to draw attention to a teacher’s strategies for dealing with a specific challenge. In their case study – which was set in a third-grade classroom in the United States – the educator aimed to stimulate students’ development as individual writers. This aim forms part of the instructional discourse, as it is one of the educator’s learning outcomes. The teacher’s dilemma was introduced when one of the students’ essays mentioned alcohol. Believing this to be inappropriate for a third-grade learner, the educator attempted to guide the learners to the same conclusion. Since this attempt is related to the educator’s conception of appropriate conduct, it is part of the regulative discourse.

However, in accordance with constructivist principles (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001:881), the educator could not simply enforce her view on the learners. Instead, she was required to engage

them in the learning process. To achieve this goal, the teacher asked her students to debate standards of appropriate conduct. By doing so, she was able to lead students to the conclusion that alcohol should not be mentioned in third-grade essays.

Buzzelli and Johnston (2001) draw attention to the fact that the teacher addressed her dilemma by being 'in authority' and 'an authority' at different times. With regards to the former, the educator directed classroom activities in a manner that was consistent with her views on teaching. This enabled her to systematically guide learners to the conclusion that certain topics should not be mentioned in third-grade essays. Finally, by acting as someone who is 'an authority' on writing, she reiterated that good writers are able to censor their own writing in accordance with the criteria of their setting (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001:878-881). As a result, the teacher was able to embed the skills of a good writer (instructional discourse) within the ability to censor one's writing (regulative discourse; Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001:879).

In summary, educators who operate from a constructivist perspective are required to facilitate students' learning by engaging them as active learners (Brokensha, 2007; Bárcena & Read, 2004; Conrad & Donaldson, 2004). This confronts them with unique challenges, which can be investigated by viewing the instructional discourse as embedded within the regulative discourse (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001). This article aims to investigate this phenomenon within the context of the NATP.

2.2 CLT and Constructivism

This section discusses CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) and Constructivism, as both perspectives exert a strong influence on the context from which the article's data were collected. Consequently, one may expect authority to be used in accordance with the principles of these perspectives.

With regards to CLT, researchers from Roberts (1987) and Allen (1987) to Savignon (2007) and Belchamber (2007) have noted the emphasis that this method places on learner autonomy, as a means for developing communicative competence. Educators must, therefore, use their authority in a manner that 1) stimulates student participation, and 2) allows for the development of communicative skills that can be used outside the classroom. For this reason, the current study pays specific attention to the degree to which educators dominated the discourse, as well as the degree to which students' contributions reflected natural conversations. With regards to the latter, efforts were made to determine whether control of the conversational floor reverted to educators once a student had answered a question, and whether students were able to select the next speaker in a spontaneous manner.

Constructivism proposes that "[l]earning [should be] an active process in which meaning is developed on the basis of experience [and] collaborat[ion] with meaning negotiated from multiple perspectives" (Smith & Ragan, 1999:15; cf. Bárcena & Read, 2004). With regards to authority, this view implies that educators must be willing to negotiate meaning with students, in order to facilitate knowledge construction.

2.3 Learners as active participants in classroom discourse

A range of empirical studies have investigated ways to stimulate learners' participation in language classrooms. Candela (1999, 2005) examines the role of Mehan's (1979, 1985)

initiation-reply-evaluation sequences (IREs). Hellermann (2005), Smith (2006) and Brokensha (2007) investigate the use of peer-interactions, while Chun (1994), Sotillo (2000) and Kung (2004) analyse the role that synchronous computer-mediated-communication (CMC) can play in this regard. Schleef (2009) has also conducted a quantitative study on cultural differences between German and American lecturers.

This study aims to build on the above-mentioned research by examining the manner in which teachers have responded to one of the challenges which are inherent in attempts to facilitate student participation. The study focuses on the micro-level of “naturally occurring discourse” in tutorial lectures (Macbeth, 2003:246). Therefore, the main focus is on student-teacher interaction, instead of group-work or CMC. The following section discusses the setting of the current study.

2.4 The NATP

The New Academic Tutorial Programme was selected as the setting for the article’s research. This setting was considered appropriate since it aims to create a learning environment that will encourage active student participation, in a manner that is consistent with Communicative and Constructivist principles. As such, the use of authority should reflect these approaches. The article’s research is, therefore, justified by the need to determine whether or not this is the case.

NATP lectures function as a supplementary form of education. In this capacity, tutors are required to function as model students, rather than lecturers. For this reason, tutorial lectures are meant to focus on students’ needs, as well as learning strategies. Each tutor is assigned to a group of no more than twenty-five students, so that he/she may be able to attend to individual needs. It should be mentioned that this article is limited by the fact that it does not pay attention to the gender or race of individual tutors. This limitation was caused by the fact that, at the time of data collection, all the tutors in the NATP were Caucasian and predominantly female. Furthermore, only three tutors (one male and two females) were willing to participate in the research. Ideally, future studies should take these variables into account. Researchers who are interested in analysing cultural differences, with regards to teaching style, are referred to Schleef (2009), who provides a useful framework for such investigations.

All tutors were native speakers of English, or possessed L1 competence. Two of the four tutors held an honours degree in English, while the other two were in the process of completing their third year of study. Students are predominantly non-native (L2) English speakers.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sampling procedures

The case studies for the article’s research were taken from a larger corpus of audio-recorded lectures, which was being collected for a comprehensive analysis of classroom talk. These two lectures drew the researcher’s attention, as the respective tutors were required to deal with situations in which a student had expressed a view which might have offended fellow learners. These lectures were then transcribed and analysed as case studies (cf. appendix for transcription

conventions). The research is, therefore, clearly qualitative in nature, as it is based on a detailed analysis of a relatively small sample. However, as mentioned by Camiciottoli's (2008:1228):

small corpora allow for follow-up qualitative analysis to interpret the findings within the specific context, which would be clearly impossible with very large corpora. Thus, this methodological approach can be seen as an acceptable trade-off that succeeds in providing insights that may be useful for related types of research with similar objectives.

3.2 Framework of analysis

As mentioned earlier, this article employs a CA approach to replicate Buzzelli and Johnston's (2001) study, with special emphasis on Bernstein's (1990; 1996) concepts of instructional and regulative discourse.

CA is particularly well suited to the study of social interaction, as it is influenced by its institutional context (Drew & Heritage, 1992). CA allows researchers to trace the development of talk-in-interaction, as a sequentially organised event that is influenced by underlying conventions/norms (Psathas, 1995). In the present article, however, CA is limited by the fact that it is used in a qualitative manner. The article's findings will, therefore, benefit from subsequent analyses to judge its reliability.

4. Results

As mentioned earlier, two lectures in particular demonstrated a specific challenge with which educators may be faced when encouraging student participation: the expression of potentially offensive views by one or more students. The following sections report the article's findings by discussing each of these two lectures.

4.1 First lecture

This section discusses the findings for a second-year tutorial lecture on *The Color Purple*, by Alice Walker. In the previous turns, S2 has stated that she finds it difficult to relate to the novel's characters. Subsequently, S4 expresses a question on this matter.

94: S4: -can I just ask her so:meting?=
[ja]

95: T: =YES

96: S4: what do you mean you can't identify with it- in in what se:nse?

97: S2: mea::ning meaning if I if I were a black person and MY parents were talking about ALL these things that have happened? then I could feel more- NOT meaning I can't identify but JUST [1.2] do you understa:nd what I'm try:ing [to]=

98: S4: [ja]

99: S2: it's not it's not my::::=

100: S3: personal experience=

101: S2: YES it's not my: personal experience [0.4] being there::, and being a sla::ve, and these people beating the wome::n, and- it's that's that's why it's difficult to identify with [it]

102: S3: [you] didn't grow up like that?

103: S2: YES exactly::

104: S3: we we didn't see like::

105: T: ok.

106: S2: ja. [0.5] and that's why-

107: S4: -it broadens your horizons-

108: S2: -exactly exactly THAT's why we must read boo::ks books like this.

109: S5: I also feel that in a very strong sense that- no offence [0.5] to anybody [0.5]

110: T: just say it

111: S5: I just want to say that- ok I grew up in a part of Sout-South Africa? where I wasn't kept in a con- in a uhm-

112: T: -like a cocoon

113: S2: ((laughs))

114: S5: in a cocoon [1] I was [1.7] I grew up with seeing everybody's points of view and I was comfortable since I was like five years old with like [0.9] all different kinds of views↓ but the thing is with↑- no offence but with the majority of Bloemfontein students as soo:n as they read a book which puts them in an uncomfortable position or it's something that they're not used to they back [away]=

115: S2: =[yes]

116: S5: = and they go [0.9] I don't like this book, I don't want to read it, umm I don't want to [1.7] I don't want to mess with this because it makes me fee:l uncomfortable- or umm we don't actually talk about this stuff at ho:me↑ so I don't think- I don't really want to touch on the topics or on the issues and I think people sho:uld step away from that- DEAL with it. it happens that's why you have to read the book↑ so that your general knowledge widen or broaden so that you can realise there's more to life THAN BLOEMFONTEIN

117: S2: ((laughs))

118: S5: there's a wider world OUT THERE- now it's not against anyone but its just the perception that I got

119: T: Adele I- I agree with you- and please nobody should feel offended but I agree with you because especially when we were doing poss the sec- possessing the secret of joy by Alice Walker- which like I told you last week is a HORRIFIC nightmare of a book-

120: S5: Dr Brooks actually touched on that part=

121: T: =ja and you know some people- she said to people if you feel like you want to leave the classroom you ca:n and some people actually DIDN'T attend the lectures because they felt too uncomfortable and I feel- you know if that is the way you feel [0.5] it's fi::ne but [0.3] read the book give it a cha:nce you know [0.2] see see what's going on but at LEAST you have an OPINION about it [0.2] you know it's better than someone reading it and just not having an opinion- so if it makes you feel uncomfortable

it means that Walker is doing her job [0.5] because she WANTS to make you feel uncomfortable [0.2] she doesn't want you to read the book and put it down and go that was SUCH A NICE STORY↑ ok so-

122: S4: ja she wants you to think

123: T: ja tho:se are the kind of feelings that you have to experience and if you can get through the boo:k and be like ok I didn't like- like I HATE possessing the secret of joy I think it's a RUBBISH book [0.1] but I read it. [0.5] and I told Dr Brooks what I thought about it and I told her I think this book is CRAP. and she said ok well that's fine at least you have an opinion↑

CLT emphasises the importance of allowing students to use language as a resource for developing communicative competence (Savignon, 2007; Belchamber, 2007). In turns 96 to 109, learners are allowed to discuss the novel under study through an autonomous debate. As opposed to the lectures analysed by Mehan (1985), control of the conversational floor does not return to the tutor after a student's turn. Instead, the learners are able to co-construct meaning through social interaction with their peers, while the tutor plays a facilitating role (cf. Maor, 2005; Jacobs, 2004; Hellermann, 2005; Smith, 2006; Killen, 2000 on the role of social interaction). In turn 109, however, S5 assumes control of the floor. Immediately, she warns her peers that she is about to express a potentially offensive view. With some encouragement and assistance from T (turn 110 and 112), S5 states that students from Bloemfontein are likely to shy away from the explicit and controversial content of *The Colour Purple*. Consequently, students from Bloemfontein are cast as conservative, in S5's view.

In turn 119 and 121 T responds to this opinion by using two strategies, which are supported by references to her personal experiences as a student. Firstly, she draws attention to the tutorial lecture as a context in which students are allowed to express controversial, and potentially offensive, views. Secondly, she outlines the manner in which students should respond to controversial literature. Note that the last aim is achieved without criticising students from a specific geographical location. In fact, the problem presented by students who refuse to read controversial texts is reformulated as an academic issue, instead of a characteristic of specific groups of people. These two strategies are clearly related to the regulative discourse – as they are concerned with the criteria for appropriate conduct in a specific context. T's turns construct tutorial lectures as a context in which students are expected to: 1) read the literature, 2) develop opinions, and 3) to communicate these opinions freely. All students are required to acknowledge and follow these norms, as illustrated in subsequent turns.

As part of the first strategy, T states, in turn 119: “please nobody should be offended”. By doing so, T aims to construct the lecture as a context in which students should be able to express views/opinions without fear of offending their peers. In turn 121, she draws attention to the value of developing individual opinions: “if that is the way you feel [0.5] it's fine but [0.3] read the book [...] at LEAST you have an OPINION”. By outlining standards of appropriate behaviour, T embeds the instructional discourse [developing students' understanding of the novel under study] within the regulative discourse [students are allowed to express personal views].

As noted earlier, the second strategy builds on the first, by describing T's views on how students should approach explicit and potentially offensive literature. Again, this is achieved by framing

the standards of appropriate conduct for students of literature. In turn 121, T describes the notion that students of literature are required to develop personal opinions of the materials under study, regardless of whether or not they are offended by it: “people actually DIDN’T attend [...] they felt too uncomfortable [...] if that is the way you feel [0.5] it’s fine [...] but at LEAST you have an OPINION” [...] it’s better than someone reading it and just not having an opinion”. In this statement, T notes that students are not required to approve of the material. However, they are still expected to read and interpret it. Thus, the instructional goal of the lecture is embedded in regulative criteria.

With regards to the parallel enactment of authority, it may be noted that by explicitly taking control of the conversational floor T is acting ‘in authority’. This allows her to avoid discussing the character of Bloemfontein students, by focusing on the conduct of literature students. Subsequently, T also functions as ‘an authority’ on literary analysis, by discussing the characteristics of a good student. Her status as ‘an authority’ on literature is reinforced in later on in turn 121: “Walker is doing her job [0.5] because she WANTS to make you feel uncomfortable”.

Finally, in order to support her views on appropriate conduct for literature students, T relates her experiences as a student. In particular, she refers to reading *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (a prescribed novel for third-year students): “123: T: [...] I HATE possessing the secret of joy I think it’s a RUBBISH book [0.1] but I read it. [0.5] and I told Dr Brooks what I thought [...] and she said ok well that’s fine at least you have an opinion↑”.

In summary, T begins to address her challenge by framing the notion of what conduct is appropriate in the context of literature tutorials. Thereafter, she discusses the correct way of approaching potentially offensive literature. This allows her to avoid the issue brought up by S5. Finally, to illustrate the behaviour she has discussed, T recounts her experience as a student who did not enjoy the novel under study. As a consequence, students may be able to relate to T and become more receptive to her regulative discourse.

4.2 Second lecture

The following excerpt was taken from a first-year lecture on the play *We Shall Sing for the Fatherland*, by Zakes Mda. The lecture focused on the theme of corruption in the play. In order to activate the learners “pre-knowledge” about the subject, the tutor asked them to discuss the form that corruption takes in the real world (Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1997:171). One of the students (S6) noted that, in his view, corruption is not always reported in accordance with legal procedures.

59: T: let’s- sorry=

60: S2: =no no no umm [0.7] so you:: you don’t thi:nk the:: the people- umm- who is corrupt is actually so: much to blame?

61: S6: they are of cou:rs e they are- at all times- you you know you you you tres- you trespass and all that you you ought to be: punished for tha::t [0.5] but I’m sa::ying [1] most of the time you know from from previous umm cases and so on- which were published- according to me you know from m-m-my umm side I see them as like- people didn’t actually report them you know with the right procedures- the people were not caught you kno::w with assessing their work and kind off like- they were

reported even before investigations were done [0.5] you you know- so: m-m-my point is is that most of the time it's actually on a [0.6] personal level you know- we: don't get some point then you know: w I'm going to [1] open a case for you [0.3] or I'm I'm I'm going you know try to:: make your life more difficult and so on by:: [1.2]

62: T: so if I can summarise? [0.5] what you're saying is::s we see certain PARTS of corruption cases in the media but we are never quite- as the people we are quite enlightened about what happened beforehand? =

63: S6: =yes

64: T: umm [0.7] the WAY in which cases are reported [0.9] shows us that it has a lot to do with personal vendettas and personal struggles and personal gripes that people have with each other so there there there are personal struggles for power [0.5] in the way that these cases are handled =

65: S6: =to add on that [1] most of corruptio:n- ok since well I'm more familiar with the umm provincial ones umm more in depth. most of people who are charged with corruption are millionaires by now cause they GET you know cha::rged, they go to jail for [0.9] maybe three days or something like that↑ after that they win the case and they come back again and sue the the people who umm was pros- umm brought the charge against them [0.5] millionaires- most of them are you know are millionaires by now. so:: it clearly shows that investigations are not done thoroughly and and- for you to umm [1.2] to to implicate somebody wi::th with such things [1.2] you:: you must have seen some things some other things before hand and you must have a valid proof [1.2] so I'm saying the the the protocol or the procedures is not followed coming to that- the way I see it- I don't know [1.4] because I fail to understand why so many cases↑- you know: w charges of corruptions are thrown out of the ca::- out out of the court↑ WHY so many? [2.8]

66: T: what do you think? [3.6] it's a very good question [3.3]

67: S3: it may be personal struggles but it's the TRUTH↑ there is corruption and it must come out so. [1] but I hear what you're saying↑ its- but it is the truth there is there is corruption so:: it must be reported [2.2]

68: T: now let's see if we can apply this↑ [0.6] to the play? umm there are two characters in the play who a::re- who in a certain sense SYMBOLISE corruption [1.3] ofisiri and mafutha [0.5] who is not a character in in [0.3] what's that movie? when I read the name I thought it was a character in the lion king- mafutha it sounds like some or other =

69: S3: mufasa =

70: T: =o::: is that the name

71: S6: yes mufasa ((laughter from other students))

72: T: ye:s I thought something rang a be::ll- anyway [0.3] the:y are:: SYMBOLS of corruption so look at them, look at what they do:: a:nd see if you can TRACE signs of corruption in them

As illustrated in the excerpt, S3 disagreed with S6's view (turn 67). To circumvent conflict between S6 and S3, T changes the topic from corruption in the real world, to corruption

in the play (turn 68). The tutor is, therefore, reminding students that the outcome of their discussions should always be to improve their understanding of the literature under study. This embeds the instructional discourse within the regulative discourse as follows: because T is 'in authority', he can remind students that, within the context of tutorial lectures, personal opinions must always be relevant to the literature under study. Although T's instructional approach required him to allow students to express their views, he uses his authority to remind them that their views must enable them to analyse the material.

An additional strategy, evident in this lecture, involves the use of humour in order to alleviate tension between students. Owing to the fact that NATP lectures serve as a supplementary form of instruction, the relationship between tutors and students may be somewhat less formal. In addition, as each tutor is responsible for only a small number of students, the use of humour in these lectures may be more regular than in formal lessons.

This notion is reinforced by the fact that the tutor in the first lecture also resorted to humour when the students digressed from the topic under discussion. While discussing racial stereotypes in *The Color Purple* the students began to discuss problematic stereotypes in the real world. The tutor then used humour to remind students that their comments must be relevant to the novel under study. In this case, however, the tutor's facial expression and tone of voice alone was enough to signal humour.

245: T: Ja I think it's you know it's because it's difficult as well and I think that's one of the things- **just get back to the book ((student's laugh)) that's one of the things that frustrated the author of this article so much** is that the white people where you know like I always [1] um always feel it's almost as if? aww shame those poor little white¹ people- they were so- ag poor them- so it's like a PITY because- I found the thing I wanted- (emphasis added)

5. Implications and recommendations for future research

The findings of this article indicate that the regulative and instructional discourse may provide a useful framework for analysing the manner in which educators respond to challenging situations. These situations appear to stem from the fact that students are encouraged to play an active role in the learning process. The findings suggest that, in response to this situation, tutors in the NATP tend to embed the instructional discourse within the regulative discourse, in order to prevent offensive views from disrupting the lecture.

More specifically, it appears that tutors use references to their personal experiences as students, as well as humour, to support their views on appropriate conduct, and to alleviate tension between students. Owing to the nature of NATP lectures – specifically the fact that tutors function as model students, who deal with relatively small classes – the use of these two methods may be particularly characteristic of this form of instruction. Both strategies are embedded in the parallel enactment of authority, as

¹ It should be noted that the tutor meant to say poor little black people, and was eventually corrected by one of the students. This mistake was unintentional and therefore not part of her use of humour.

informed by Communicative and Constructivist principles. However, as this article employs a qualitative methodology – which is predominantly hypothesis-generating rather than hypotheses-testing in nature (cf. Seliger and Shohamy, 1989: 120) – it is important for future researchers to establish whether these strategies are in fact typical of the instructional medium (tutorial lectures) or whether they simply reflect personal style.

Future research projects may also investigate the efficiency of these methods, so that recommendations may be made to educators who work in similar situations. Finally, the difference between NATP and formal lectures, in this regard, may also be investigated by using instructional and regulative discourse as a framework. In this vein, Schleef (2009) provides a useful framework with which the discourse of tutorial and formal lectures may be compared.

6. Conclusion

The research presented in this article suggests that by focusing on the instructional and regulative discourse of classroom interactions, educators' strategies for dealing with specific challenges may be uncovered. The dominance of the regulative discourse draws attention to the moral component of education. For this reason, research on teaching practices should not only make educators aware of this moral component, but should also provide practical suggestions on how it may be negotiated in order to create a learner-friendly environment.

The article has also drawn attention to the role that references to educators' personal experiences as students may play in supporting, or legitimising, the regulative discourse. As NATP tutors are invariably still students of English – whether under- or post-graduate – this strategy may be especially typical of their lectures.

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Transcription conventions

The conventions used in this study are based on those found in Psathas (1995:70-78).

Utterances which begin simultaneously are indicated with [, and] indicates the end of the overlap:

A: [[I thought that]

B: [[It means that] yes it means that

Utterances which overlap are indicated with [, while] indicates the end of the overlap:

A: I thought [that] the meaning is

B: [yes I]

Latching is indicated with =

A: That is what it means =

B: = yes it means this

Note that when A latches onto B's last utterances it is indicated as follows:

A: That is what it means =

B: = yes it means this =

A: = exactly

Pauses are indicated by noting the seconds and tenths of a second as follows: [1] indicates one second

Sound stretches are indicated as follows: A: I rea:::ly think you should look again

Cut-offs are indicated with –

A: Read the line-

B: It reads as follows

Note that cut-offs may also occur in a single speaker's turn:

A: I thought that- I think if you read carefully

A stopping fall in tone is indicated with a period:

A: It is true. [1.2] Let's go on

When a syllable is stressed, it is underlined:

A: I think that

When an entire word is emphasised it is underlined and recorded in upper-case:

A: Its all about THIS

Marked rising and falling intonation is indicated with ↑ and ↓ respectively

Rising intonation is indicated with ?

A: What do you: thi:nk?

A continuing intonation, predominantly used when uttering a list, is indicated with commas:

A: You say this, I say that, you say that,

Verbal descriptions were also added where necessary, for example ((laughter from all students)).