Revision Processes Used by Deaf Middle School Students: A Grounded Theory

Dr. Christina Yuknis

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Grounded theory methodology is an inductive form of reasoning that is grounded in data and results in the development of a theory grounded in data that can be displayed using a conceptual model.

The grounded theory is composed of categories and their major defining properties.
Grounded Theory Overview

- A methodology that researchers use to explain processes through the construction of a set of propositions.

- Propositions are constructed using a structured approach that is grounded in data.
  - This is done by identifying critical elements and categorizing the relationships of the elements.
Grounded Theory Overview

- Constant Comparison
  - Initially, comparing data with other data to develop categories and properties
  - Later, the comparison is data with categories and properties
Literature Review

- **Initially**: the purpose is to show a gap in the research, not to apply a framework
  - Idea is to let the data speak for itself without preconceived notions.

- **During data analysis**: to locate research that applies to the findings
  - It can support or not
Problem & Background

- Deaf students have historically low literacy rates

- Researchers have focused on narrow aspects of writing: adjective use, verb tense, number of words

- Very little research on revision
  - These studies tend to focus on products.
  - Quantitative – How many and what types of changes?
Problem & Background

- Few researchers have analyzed meaning-making – those have been quantitative studies of the number of propositions used in a text.

- There is also research on strategies that teachers can use with their students.
  - Dialogue journals
  - Teaching specific skills (i.e., using adjectives)
  - Using rubrics
Purpose of the Study

- Studies on writing focus on product. This study focused on process.

- Before truly appropriate strategies to help children improve their writing can be developed, educators need to understand how they approach writing tasks.

- Revision is an area which was particularly weak for my middle school students, which is why I focused on that aspect of the process.
Research Questions

- In GT, questions are written in such a way as to get at processes – open-ended to allow for exploration and in-depth study.

- How do deaf children in middle school construct meaningful texts?
  - How do the texts that deaf middle school students write differ in their intended and conveyed meanings?
  - How do syntactic features evolve as deaf students revise their writing?
Grounded Theory Sampling

- Purposeful - intent is not to obtain representation of a population

  - Initial sample has a set of characteristics on which the participants are as similar as possible in order to develop initial categories and properties

  - Later, *theoretical sampling* is used to increase the heterogeneity to test and fully develop categories and properties
Participants: 8 students & 2 teachers

- Initial sample:
  - 5 eighth graders that use MCE

- Additional participants identified through theoretical sampling:
  - 3 seventh graders that use Cued Speech

- Teachers: 1 deaf, 1 hearing
Grounded Theory
Procedures

Data Collection: “All is data.” (Glaser and Strauss, 1968)

- 9 videotaped interviews with the students
- 2 videotaped interviews with the teachers
- 21 videotaped classroom observations
- 19 writing samples (each sample was a text that had multiple drafts)
Grounded Theory Analysis

Coding

- *Open Coding* – initial coding process
- Name pieces of data
- Done very close to data (line-by-line, word-by-word, etc)
- Initial development of categories and properties

- *Axial Coding* – connecting categories to subcategories, properties and dimensions

- *Selective Coding* – assembling and refining the theory or conceptual model
Grounded Theory Analysis

Memo Writing:
- Memos are written constantly throughout the process
- Write to:
- flesh out categories
- question assumptions
- examine hidden meanings in language
- connect categories
- ask questions
- identify new direction in data collection

Saturation:
- Data collection occurs until categories are saturated.
- Categories are saturated when new data yields no new insights or data.
The Grounded Theory

DOING

EXPERIENCING

Interacting with Text
- naming the purpose of writing
- naming the purpose of revising
- going through the motions
- simulating revising

Interacting with Self as Reviser
- negotiating expectations
- keeping up appearances
- performing disengagement
- wrestling with confidence
- displaying resilience

Interacting with Instruction
- seeking approval
- seeking assistance
- deferring to authority
- overdepending

KNOWING

Living in Language
- “Think English!”
- sense-making
- encountering language breakdowns

Fixing Wrongs
- identifying wrongs
- making changes

Living in Language
“Think English!”

Metacognitive awareness: “It’s hard to think and write sentences.”

Vocabulary knowledge: “It’s hard for me to understand the different big words. So I look to the teacher to give me answers many times, and I have to figure out how to use the big words.”
“Think English!”

- Syntactical knowledge: “I don't know when something's wrong.“

- Awareness of audience and message: “I don’t know...I can read it, but I feel if other people read it, they might not know. People might think differently when looking at this (essay).”

- Awareness of changes: “Because this sentence (pointing) is the topic sentence. So it needed to be moved to the top.”
Living in Language

- Sense-making: the intent of the author and how the message is conveyed

- Students accept the responsibility, but rely on teacher assistance to accomplish.

- Teachers take on this role: “I’ll tell you if it makes sense.”
Teacher Control of Sense-making

Ms. L: (Takes pencil from Ramona and erases something, then underlines something.) You don't write. I will write an example for practice. (Ramona nods.) You won't re-write this later. No. (Ramona shakes head no as teacher signs NO.) This is the last one, then it's finished. (Ramona nods.) I am going to show you how to write it, so you can see what I'm doing.

Ramona: Yes.

Ms. L: Next time, you will do the same thing yourself. You won't do a second draft, this is the final one. Then we will put this away and it's done. (Ramona shakes head.) What I'm showing you, you will learn. (Ramona puts her head in her hand on the table.) Watch and I'll show you. (Ms. L starts writing on the paper. Ramona starts rubbing her hand and looking at other students.) No watch. (Ms. L continues writing on the paper. Ramona looks over at the other students again.) Ignore them and pay attention here.

Ramona: Alright. (Ms. L continues writing Ramona's essay. Ramona appears to be watching, but does not appear engaged or to really understand what is going on.)
Encountering Language Breakdowns

- Students have limited strategies for navigating breakdowns.
- Repair through questions
- Repeat words or signs
- Use associations (the teacher says something, and students respond with an associated concept)
- Using vague language (or flowery signs)
- Agree with the teacher
Major Findings Overall

- Students have not developed metacognitive abilities.
- Students are unengaged in the writing and revising processes.
- Teachers control much of the process.
  - Topic, structure, content
  - Determine what needs to be revised
  - Determine when an essay is acceptable
Practice
- Mode of Address (Elizabeth Ellsworth)
- Teaching students to “Think English”
- Cognitive strategy instruction
- Developing metacognition

Research
- Test the theory further
- Study phenomenon from teacher perspective
- Examine the processes by using other methodologies

Implications