

Understanding Teacher-Child Relationships in a Classroom of 4 Year Olds Through Discourse Analysis

담론 분석을 통해 살펴본 4세 반 유아의 교사와의 관계 이해

정가운(Kayoun Chung)¹⁾

국문초록

본 연구에서는 유치원에서의 훈육과정을 관찰하고, 이에 대한 담론을 분석함으로써 교사와 학생 간의 관계 형성 과정 및 유형에 대해 살펴보았다. 이를 위해 미국에 위치한 대학부속 유치원에 재학 중인 만 4세 학생 32명과 지도교사와의 대화 내용을 녹음하였으며, 지도교사와의 심층면접도 실시하였다. 분석 결과, 교사-아동간의 관계 형성 유형은 크게 친밀, 독립, 갈등적 관계의 세 유형으로 구분되었으며, 대부분의 아동들은 교사와 친밀 또는 독립적 관계를 보였다. 단지 3명의 학생이 교사와의 갈등적 관계를 보였는데, 이는 교사의 차별적 처사 때문이 아니라 교사가 긍정적인 상호작용을 시도했음에도 불구하고 학생들이 교사의 암시적인 단서를 놓치거나 무시함에 따라 부정적 상호작용이 반복되면서 발생되는 것으로 밝혀졌다. 즉 학생들의 미성숙한 사회적 기술로 인한 것이었다. 따라서 본 연구에서는 교사가 학생과의 갈등적 관계 형성 과정을 인지하고, 그들을 위해 명시적인 훈육방법을 제공해야 할 필요성에 대해 제안하였다.

Key Words : teacher-child relationships(유아-교사 관계), discourse analysis(담론 분석), classroom discipline(훈육).

I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher-child relationships have always been regarded as significant components of school life (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Pianta & Steinberg, 1992).

Early schooling not only delivers knowledge to young students but also develops a disposition for learning. Previous studies have demonstrated that a positive relationship with teachers and peers in early schooling helps the child to build a life-long

¹⁾ Lecturer, Ewha Womans University

Corresponding Author : Kayoun Chung, Mido Apt. 212-12101 Dachi-dong, Kangnam-gu, Seoul 135-837, Korea
E-mail : kayoungchung@gmail.com

positive disposition for learning (Katz & McClellan, 1997; Katz & Chard, 2000). This study measures teacher-child relationships by using discourse analysis of their interactions in a discipline situation in a classroom of 4 year olds.

The previous studies on teacher-child relationships were strongly influenced by attachment theories and methods (e.g., Birch & Ladd, 1997). To examine teacher-child relationships, most recent studies used the *Student Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS)*, which is a teacher-report measurement combined with an attachment test and literature on teacher-child relationships (Pianta, 1994). Even though Pianta(1992) devised the scale, he admitted that it had an important limit, its focus on teacher's perspectives, and he called for multiple methods, such as an ethnographic point of view, to interpret teacher-child relationships.

To understand the reciprocal process of teacher-child relationship building, I used discourse analysis of daily teacher-child interactions in the classroom. Discourse analysis is interested in "language-use in social context" (Stubbs, 1983, p.1) going beyond analysis of the sentence or a single utterance. Concerned with the organization of language in use, discourse analysis particularly highlights interaction or dialogue between speakers. In particular, discourse analysis can articulate three components of teacher-child relationships. First, teacher-child interactions as discourse enable the researcher to see a single teacher-child interaction not as an isolated random event but as a continuous process of building regular patterns (Cazden, 2001). Second, the dialogical nature of discourse analysis

highlights both parties' participation in relationship building (Bakhtin, 1981 as cited in Wertsch, 1991). Third, discourse analysis can explain how language is enacted in the teacher-child relationship (Gee, 1991). In other words, discourse analysis can clarify what role language-exchange plays in building the teacher-child relationship. Teacher-child relationships are built by continuous interactions between teacher and child. Because I cannot examine every detail of daily interactions in the classroom, I narrow down the interactions to discipline situations. The discipline situation occurs when a teacher tries to control a child's misbehavior and prevent misconduct by using various strategies, such as restating the rules, staring, moving closer, distracting, punishing, and so on. The discipline situation often happens when the interests of two parties are different. I chose the discipline situation first because the way two parties negotiate their interests will provide rich language data and second due to extremity of the situation, their relationship will be exposed more clearly. Analyzing language use between the teacher and child in a discipline situation will reveal the process of how their relationship is enacted through language use.

The research questions are as follows :

1. What types of teacher-child relationships exist in the preschool classroom?
2. How do those three types of teacher-child relationships develop through daily classroom interactions?
3. How are those three types of teacher-child relationships similar and different?

II. METHODOLOGY

From May 2001 to September 2001, I conducted a case study of a classroom of 4 year olds in a day care center. As Stake (1995) mentioned, interpretation of detailed interactions of a case will find contextual examples of some general processes. I believe that in-depth study of a classroom will convey general ideas of how children build relationships with teachers in the classroom. To understand these relationships, I focus on the verbal interactions between students and teachers in discipline situations in the classroom. I also pay attention to the social context where this verbal interaction is enacted, such as non-verbal interactions, environments, materials, and so on. In addition, I interview a teacher in the classroom in order to understand her evaluations of her individual relationship with a child. I examine the case using discourse analysis, and the results lead to separate teacher-child relationship categories.

1. Research Site and Participants

The data for this study were collected during a full-day program at University Child Care Laboratory (UCCL)¹⁾, which is affiliated with a large university in Illinois, US. I chose a full-day program because teacher-child interaction is more developed than in a half-day program. Choosing 4-year-old children helped me collect more verbal data than non-verbal data. The full-day program operates 12 months a year except on official

university holidays (e.g., Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.) and during 2 weeks in August when preparations for the new semester are made. The center is open from 7 : 30 a.m. to 5 : 30 p.m., Monday through Friday. UCCL teachers spend a considerable amount of time with students over the year.

The class had 20 children, one head teacher, two assistant teachers, and one to two volunteers. I observed 32 children because it was summer, a high student turnover period. The group of 32 children included children who moved from the 3-year-old to the 4-year-old class. This situation gave me a chance to compare how teacher-child interactions begin and how they develop. UCCL purposefully balanced ethnicities in proportion to the ethnic populations of the town. Almost 30% of the students were from countries other than the United States. The population of students was approximately 15% African American, 25% Asian or Asian American, 50% European American (including Hispanic), and 10% interracial.

This study focused on the head teacher, Becky, who was in her late 20s and who is European American. In general, the three teachers operated under the same discipline policy. Their strategies for discipline were coherent, and they maintained their coherence by holding weekly staff meetings. The head teacher, however, is most responsible for managing the classroom, making decisions, and enforcing the rules.

2. Procedure

My major sources of data were observations,

1) All names in this paper are pseudonyms.

informal and formal interviews, and the artifacts regarding the discipline policy at UCCL. I observed the class for 2-3 hours 3 days a week. During the observation, I audio-taped teacher-child verbal interactions with the aid of a wireless microphone that the head teacher wore. I recorded nonverbal interactions, the environment, and the materials involved in the interactions in my field notes such as the sandbox or scissors. While observing in the classroom, I conducted informal interviews with the teachers. This interview was also recorded in the audio-tape the teacher wore. I transcribed the audio-tapes on the same day of the observation and combined the transcribed data with my field notes. After the formal data collection period, I performed follow-up formal interviews and audio-taped them. All data I collected in the school were transcribed into language data and coded language data by using discourse analysis. After analysis, I also did member-checking with the teacher to validate my categorizations of the teacher-child relationships.

3. Data Analysis

To understand the organization of language use in this classroom, I used discourse analysis. From the transcribed language data, I first focused on discipline situations, that is, when a teacher tries to control a child's misbehavior and prevent misconduct by using various strategies. This process helped me understand classroom discipline from a new perspective. I was able to understand the implicit meanings behind the explicit meanings of

the language in discipline situations. For example, disciplinary interactions are often regarded as negative, but sometimes positive or even neutral comments are used to discipline the child. Teachers distracted the child from doing the wrong behavior by praising what was done well or pointing to other things in the classroom. The boundary of the discipline situation was expanded to positive interactions. Second, in disciplinary interactions, I coded the language data according to who initiated the interaction, in what specific way the interaction was initiated, and how turn-taking proceeded. This process helped highlight both the teacher and child's contributions to relationship building. Then I grouped the coded disciplinary interactions between the teacher, Becky, and the child into four categories : positive interactions initiated by the teacher (PIT), positive interactions initiated by students (PIC), negative interactions initiated by the teacher (NIT), and negative interactions initiated by students (NIC).

I grouped the teacher's interactions-such as praising students, showing interest in students, and helping students-into the PIT category. I grouped child-initiated conversation with the teacher-such as asking for help from Becky-into PIC. I categorized telling rules to the students and intervention with students in conflict into NIT. The NIC category includes students' arguments with Becky and their telling Becky what others did wrong. I interpreted the number of interactions initiated by students as a reflection of how comfortable the students felt with Becky.

III RESULTS & DISCUSSION

1. Types of Teacher-Child Relationship

After coding interactions as PIT, PIC, NIT, and NIC, I reorganized the data by each child and counted which interactional style was dominant. If PIT and PIC were dominant in a child’s interactional style, the child’s relationship with the teacher was categorized as *intimate*. If NIT and NIC were dominant in the interactional style, the child’s relationship with the teacher was categorized as a *conflicted* relationship. If neither negative nor positive disciplinary interactions were observed, I considered the child to have an *independent* relationship with the teacher. This categorization was revised from Birch and Ladd’s categorization (1997) : closeness, dependency, and conflict relationships. Birch and Ladd’s categorization was based on the *Student Teacher Relationship Scale* (STRS), which reflects teachers’ perspective. However, my analysis tried to consider children’s view within the context with the teacher in order to categorize the relationships.

Table 1 indicates the results of the analysis. Most of the children were in intimate and independent relationships with the teacher. Only a few continuously got involved in conflicts with the teacher. Because the data were collected during a transitional period, two different groups of 4 year olds were observed-children who finished the 4-years-old class in August and who just started the 4-years-old class from August. In the following section, I explain in detail how the relationships

Table 1. Categorization of Teacher-Student Relationships.

Ethnicity	Intimate	Independent	Conflicted
Older 4-Year-Olds			
E.A.	Kate Mary Mindy	Noah Shaw	Abby
A.A.	Amy	Kai	
A.S.	Veronica Misha Clive	Ashley	
I.R.			Bryan
Ethnicity	Intimate	Independent	Conflicted
Younger 4-Year-Olds			
E.A.	Beth Eva Kim Susie Jack	Carol Edna Michael Monica Abe George	
A.A.	Calvin		Charles
A.S.	Sue JT YJ		
I.R.		Jim	

Note. Intimate (I)=18; Independent(D)=11; Conflicted (C)=3. E.A=European American; A.A=African American; A.S=Asian American; I.R= Interacial American.

are distinguished from each other. When referring directly from my data, I indicate the child’s relationship with the teacher in a parenthesis. For example, if I would refer to interaction between Kate and the teacher, because Kate has intimate relationship with the teacher, I put (I) next to the name like Kate (I). For independence relationship, I put (D) and for conflicted relationship, I put (C) next to the name.

2. Development and Characteristics of the Teacher-Child Relationship

1) Intimate Teacher-Child Relationships

The children in intimate relationships often approached and chatted with the teacher, and Becky also often approached them and got a response from them. Occasionally, teacher-child conflicts occurred. In these cases, the children usually defended themselves well, or at least Becky understood why the child exhibited the behavior.

Example 1 Outdoor playtime (7/27/01)

[Mindy (I) and Amy (I) were on the play structure.]
 Becky Come here. I cannot talk with you up there.
 Kate (I) Mindy and Amy called me "poopy head" two times. I told them, "Don't call me names," but they kept doing it.
 [Amy interrupts Kate to defend her behavior.]
 Becky It is Kate's turn to talk.
 [After Kate talks, Becky asks Amy what happened.]
 Amy (I) I called her "cookie," not "poopy." I thought it was her last name.
 Becky It is not. Her name is Kate, and if you are not going to call her that, you have to be away from Kate.

In Example 1, Amy defends her behavior by saying she misunderstood Kate's last name. Becky was not convinced by Amy's excuse, but at least Becky could not accuse Amy of being completely wrong. Similar to this example, children with an intimate relationship with the teacher were more comfortable in expressing themselves and initiating interaction.

2) Independent Teacher-Child Relationships

An independent relationship is in some sense what all teachers pursue as a final goal to achieve in their relationship. Especially in American culture, independence is considered to be a positive quality. The children in independent teacher-child relationships did not approach the teacher as often as the children in intimate or conflicted relationships did. Although Becky continuously approached the children in this category and showed interest in their work, they usually did not respond for various reasons. Some children in this category were self-motivated and were engaged in their task and did not want to be disturbed. They did not like adult intervention even when it involved praise. The others were shy and just uncomfortable with being around the teacher at this point. Thus, there were various reasons that could not be generalized.

Example 2 Indoor playtime (7/02/01)

Jim (D) Look at what I am doing.
 [Jim shows some children his cutting skill, and Becky is at that table. However, Charles (C) at the table snatches the scissors from Jim because the child was using them before Jim.]
 Becky He [Jim] didn't know you are using them. There is no name on it. Instead of grabbing them, next time what are you going to do, Charles?
 Jim I am going to leave here.

As example 2, although Becky tried to help him, Jim moved to another area. Interestingly, in this category older 4 year olds and younger 4 year olds show some differences. On one hand, in the case of older 4 year olds in independent relation-

ships, the children were usually independent and managed themselves well. They did not need to interact with Becky much, and they did not have conflicts with the teacher. They showed less conflict with other friends, too. On the other hand, younger 4 year olds were in the process of building relationships. The younger ones cannot be categorized permanently as having independent relationships. Soon, the children would switch to other relationship categories. Some younger 4 year olds were prone to conflicts with Becky. Yet, the children could not defend themselves in teacher-child conflicts, possibly because the children just had started a relationship with her and were still adjusting to this new relationship.

3) Conflicted Teacher-Child Relationship

A conflicted relationship does not mean that two groups hate each other. Two groups' interests were often opposite, so the teacher had to intervene often. Children in conflicted relationships interacted with the teacher even more than children in a intimate relationship. The children in conflicted relationships often approached the teacher but mostly in inappropriate contexts.

Example 3 Snack time (8/24/01)

[Children at the star table are chatting with Becky while eating their snacks.]

Charles (C) I have a story about apples.

Becky Swallow the food first and then tell us.
[After swallowing, Charles tells the story he made up.]

Becky It was a good story, Charles.
[Transition from snack to bathroom--Charles is trying to tell Becky something.]

Becky I CAN understand you when food is not in your mouth.

In example 3, even though Charles tried to approach the teacher, Becky could not respond him positively right away because Charles was doing it in an inappropriate way. However, a minute later in transition time, Charles repeated the same mistake.

The most distinctive difference appeared in how the children dealt with teacher-child conflicts. The children with conflicted relationships often allowed Becky to choose the last level of strategies to redirect their behavior. In other words, the children did not voluntarily redirect their behavior until Becky had deprived them of toys or play. Becky repeatedly was required to talk with the child about the same issue, and finally, she had to choose an extreme measure to stop the behavior. The children usually made Becky use the final step in her discipline hierarchy.

Example 4 Outdoor playtime (8/31/01)

[Charles (C) is bumping his bike against the playhouse.]

Becky Charles, look at me. You should not do this. You keep making wrong choices. Take the bike off the porch.

[After a while, Charles bumps the house again.]

Becky You have to leave the playhouse alone. It can hurt the bike. Only teachers can move the house. Go around.

[After a while, Charles hits the house again. Then Becky asks Charles to get off the bike.]

Becky We talked, and you did not listen.

In example 4, Becky asked Charles not to bump the house two times and told him what to do instead of bumping the house, but he did not listen. By the third time, Becky had no other strategy except to deprive him of the bike.

As example 5, sometimes the child in conflicted relationships also drives his or her behavior to extremes, which results in a natural consequence, as well as forces the teacher's intervention.

Example 5 Snack time (8/03/01)

[Bryan (C) is trying to keep a fly away from the snack table.]

Becky Please leave the fly alone. I am afraid you'll spill the others' milk. Leave him alone, Bryan. [This directive is repeated a few more times. Finally, he spills his milk.]

Becky Get a paper towel. You need to clean it up all by yourself. Use some more paper towels.

The children in conflicted relationships did not defend themselves well in teacher-child conflicts. Similarly, even though these children interacted often with the teacher, they did not do so in a way the teacher considered appropriate. In spite of continuous warnings and signs from the teachers before the intervention, these children did not understand and pushed the teacher to take the last resolution of classroom discipline.

In sum, children in intimate relationships often approached and interacted with Becky in a positive way, and in conflicts, the children defended themselves well. In independent relationships, the older 4 year olds were independent and knew well not to have conflicts with Becky and the other children. However, the younger 4 year olds were in the process of developing relationships, yet they were not close enough to approach Becky or defend themselves in conflicts. In the conflicted relationships, children approached Becky in inappropriate ways, although the children interacted with Becky often. In conflicts, the children pushed

Becky to use the harshest discipline strategies such as withdrawing rights. The children did not defend themselves well, either.

3. Similarities and Differences in the Teacher-Child Relationship

Through investigating interaction styles in intimate, independent, and conflicted teacher-child relationships, I found some similarities and differences across the relationship categories. Each relationship category shares some similarities, which can explain the common nature of teacher-child relationships. In spite of the common nature of relationship building, subtle differences lead to different teacher-child relationships. These differences across the categories explain distinctive elements of each relationship and the reasons for the difference. The following discussion will show how conflicted teacher-child relationships can also be a learning process for the child and provide a solution for recovering routinized conflicted relationships. Through examining similarities and differences in the relationship categories, I will discuss what is involved in building relationships and how a conflicted relationship can be recovered.

1) Similarities

Continuity. Relationships are continuous. In all categories, the type of the teacher's relationship with a particular child was ongoing. Relationship categories were not decided by one specific incident between Becky and the child. Several similar incidents accumulated, and then repeated similar interactions build the type of relationships Becky

had with a particular child. Certain interactions between a particular child and Becky were repeated several days a week. Continuity in positive interactions reinforced the relationship to be more positive, and negative interactions reinforced negative relationships. This continuity built and confirmed the type of relationship Becky had with specific children. In a comparison of example 6 and example 7, similar interactions between the teacher and Bryan and Clive were repeated.

- Example 6 Transition from snack to bathroom (8/03/01)
 [Bryan and Clive wrestle playfully while sitting in their chairs.]
- Becky OK. Clive and Bryan, go ahead and wash your hands.
 [Clive goes to the sink, but Bryan chases Clive and tries to wrestle again.]
- Becky Take a sponge to your table, Clive.
 [Bryan wrestles with the other children at the sink again.]
- Becky Bryan, today is the last day of UCCL. Do you want to have a happy last day or a bad last day?
- Bryan ... [mumbles : unintelligible].
- Becky You need to make a good choice. You should not play with water, and you should listen to my words.
 [The class has group time and goes out to the playground. During group time, Bryan has to leave the group because he is talking during group time. After group time, Bryan also goes outside.]
- Becky I opened the sandbox. Bryan, I opened the sandbox. You can play there. [However, Bryan refuses to play in the sandbox.]
- Example 7 Transition from snack to bathroom (7/31/01)
 [Bryan (C) and Clive (I) put their arms around each other's necks at the snack table and are playfully wrestling, while sitting on the chairs.]

- Becky Bryan and Clive.
 [They are not listening.]
- Becky Bryan and Clive, go wash your hands.
 [Clive goes to the bathroom, but Bryan is chasing Clive.]
- Becky Bryan, you may go to the little bathroom, and Clive, go to the art sink to wash your hands.
 [Bryan does not go to the little bathroom.]
- Becky Bryan, I changed my mind, and I don't think you heard me. Go to the little bathroom.

Through these repeated interactions, Bryan's conflicted relationship with Becky was confirmed, and Clive's intimate relationship with her was assured. Continuity in relationships is also the same in peer relationships. Routinely repeated interactions build and confirm the relationship. Repetition is influential in deciding the teacher-child relationship in the classroom.

Compromise. In all the relationship categories, both Becky and the children endeavored to have positive relationships. When Becky had negative interactions, then a positive interaction usually followed. She worked hard to build a positive interaction with all the children in her classroom. She intentionally looked for opportunities to compromise a negative interaction with a positive interaction. Like example 3, when Charles tried to talk with his mouth full, Becky corrected his misbehavior with negative interaction but when he later told the story without food in the mouth, Becky did not forget to praise his story. The children also actively tried to have positive interactions after negative interactions. Although compromises appeared often in interactions in conflicted relationships, a compromise cannot alter conflicted relationships because the number and degree of

negative interactions usually exceed the compromising positive interactions. In other words, a compromise hardly changes the continuity of the type of relationship the teacher and child have already built.

In the case of Bryan, who had a conflicted relationship with Becky, both the teacher and child found positive interactions difficult. An examination of what happened in example 6 suggests the difficulties in compromising in a conflicted relationship. Becky had conflict with Bryan when he did not wash hands and wrestled with other children in the classroom, so she tried to have a positive interaction by opening the sandbox for Bryan. However, Bryan refused Becky's favor without any particular reason. Bryan simply did not understand Becky's intention.

Rules and Justification. In all categories, Becky and the children used rules as a tool to justify their behavior. Rules also became a tool to defend their behavior. In the following example, Becky did not argue about why fighting games were not allowed because the rule was already known. Children also used the rules to negotiate what they could do.

Example 8 Indoor play (7/26/01)

- [Bryan and Abby are playing in the block area.]
- Kai (D) Becky, Bryan (C) is fighting.
 Becky Bryan, I don't think it is safe to pick Abby (C) up. It can be dangerous. Abby, if you don't like Bryan picking you up, say that you don't like it.
 Abby I don't like it.
 Becky Are you fighting with someone, Bryan? Kai told me.
 Bryan I was not fighting against him. I was fighting

with Abby.

- Abby Bryan was fighting with me before.
 Bryan Abby punched me in my tummy first.
 Becky What was happening before? [to Abby] What made you start fighting?
 Abby We were playing a game.
 Becky What was the game?
 Bryan Demon.
 Becky How do you play the game? Because I don't know it.
 [Abby explains the game and what happened.]
 It is a fighting game.
 Bryan It is not a fighting game. Someone has to be the kid...no...the frog and...cat...
 Abby There was [a] fight.
 Becky Which one fights? Which character fights?
 Bryan Demon cat fights...no...didn't fight.
 Becky I am confused.
 Bryan They didn't really fight. When the frog says, "Rabbit," then Kate(I) should say, "Yuk."
 There is no fighting part.
 Becky So, you [Abby] didn't know the rule. There was a misunderstanding. Do we fight at UCCL?
 Abby No.
 Becky I will move this [a block], so it won't fall down. It looks dangerous.
 [Then Becky moves to the drama area, and Bryan is playing at being a frog alone. Abby joins Kate in the building block area.]

Becky's class has "no fighting game" as a rule. Although Bryan has a conflicted relationship with Becky, he defends his behavior with the justification that he was not playing a fighting game, but Abby misunderstood what they were playing. Based on Bryan's justification, Becky let Bryan play. In my observation, Bryan and Abby were actually playing a fighting game, but Bryan defended his behavior by using the rule that was appropriate for the class. In this example, I found

how Bryan skillfully used the rule. Bryan reconstructed the situation with a plot he made to defend himself. What was interesting to me was, though Becky guessed Bryan was making the situation up, she allowed his justification as an excuse for the behavior. Becky in this classroom was not the authority who knows everything and made a judgment based on her knowledge. She made her decisions based on what the child told her. If the child could defend himself or herself well using logical reasoning, he or she could be exempted. This supports the importance of communication skills between Becky and the child.

Bryan had a conflicted relationship with the teacher. In addition, he also had many conflicts with friends in the classroom. Becky and Bryan tried hard to improve their relationships. A conflicted relationship was not positive for his life in classroom. However, it was hard for the teacher and child to go beyond their relationships that had become routine. Bryan kept missing the cues Becky gave, and then Becky had to be negative and more extreme than she had meant to. Bryan usually crossed the line Becky could bear. However, referring to Example 8, I think that Bryan started to realize how to communicate and manage himself to have better interactions with Becky (even though Example 8 is not ethically right). That was a meaningful moment of learning for Bryan.

2) Differences

Rules and Cues. How children in intimate, independent, and conflicted relationships deal with teacher-child conflicts is quite different.

Children in conflicted relationships often go beyond the teacher's last defense line, and then Becky and the child often displayed extreme behavior to each other. Withdrawing the child's right to play or toy was one example of extreme behavior. The element that made the most distinctive difference depended on the child's ability to understand the implicit rules and communication cues. The rules were modified in accordance with the contexts. The children needed to recognize implicit rules from Becky's cues and situations. Through the cues, Becky and children interacted and negotiated. The children with conflicted relationships sometimes missed the communication cues from Becky or challenged them. Example 7 provides an example of missing communication cues. In example 7, when Clive (I) and Bryan (C) playfully wrestled during the snack time, Becky tried to stop their misbehavior by distracting them, that is to say, asking them to wash their hands. Clive recognized that when Becky said "Wash your hands," this also meant that he should stop wrestling and was able to maintain positive relationship with the teacher. However, Bryan did not recognize the double meanings of "wash your hands" and did not stop wrestling. Bryan did not understand the communication cue from the teacher. Thus repeated incidents of missed communication reinforced Bryan's conflicted relationships with the teacher.

Example 9 Outdoor play (8/27/01)

[Charles (C) is taking rocks out of the rock pile and riding a bike.]

Becky Charles, keep the rocks in the rock pile.

[Charles is not listening.]

Becky You heard me. Keep the rocks in the rock pile, Charles.

[Charles is still not listening. Becky goes near and holds Charles.]
 Becky You heard me. Look at me. I am not laughing. Are you picking them up?
 [Charles starts to pick up the rocks.]
 Becky There you go.
 [Charles is again playfully riding the bike and stops picking up the rocks.]
 Charles Like a taxi driver.
 Becky Take the bike out. Thank you. Pick the rocks up first. There are things you need to do.
 [Charles is not listening to Becky.]
 Becky You are not listening. It is not a choice.
 [Finally, Charles picks up the rocks.]
 Becky Thank you, Charles.

Jack ((yelling)) Don't dump it.
 Becky ((excitedly)) I am so proud of you. You did not cry, and you used your words to them.

As a newcomer, Charles did not read how seriously Becky was upset, and he challenged her. Becky even explained to Charles about her facial expression and what it meant. However, Charles still challenged her straightforward directions.

Degree of Compromise. In all categories, compromise is an important process in building relationships. When the teacher and the child had a negative interaction, both parties tried to compensate for the loss in their relationship with a subsequent compromising interaction. Although all categories showed compromises, the degree of compromise was different. In conflicted relationships, Becky sometimes desperately looked for a way to compromise and even exaggerated the compromising interaction so that she and the child could overcome the repeated routine of negative interactions.

Example 10 Outdoor play (8/31/01)

[Jack and a few children are playing in the sandbox. Jack fills the dump truck with sand. The other child tries to dump the sand.]

In the beginning of the semester, Jack solved his peer conflicts and teacher-child conflicts by crying. His strategy of crying led to a negative relationship with the teacher. Although Jack yelled at the other child, Becky praised him for using words. To get over the negative relationship with Jack, Becky praised Jack's behavior, though the behavior was not perfectly acceptable. If a child in an intimate relationship yelled, Becky negatively interacted or ignored the behavior. However, in Jack's case, she emphasized the behavior, so they could have a better relationship. Cumulative positive interactions finally allowed Jack and Becky to form an intimate relationship. I think moving from one category to another usually occurred throughout the year they spent together in the classroom. In addition, the teacher had different degrees of compromise for each child. The teacher usually provided more chances for compromise for the child with a conflicted relationship. The teacher worked hard to have a positive relationship with every child in her classroom. Nevertheless, a few children were stuck in routinely negative interactions with the teacher and had to remain in the conflicted relationship.

IV. CONCLUSION & IMPLICATION

To sum up the three findings of the study, first, the teacher-child relationships in this classroom

were categorized as either intimate, independent, or conflicted relationships. Second, these relationships were developed through accumulated different teacher-child interaction styles. All three relationships shared the same four types of interactional styles (PIC, PIT, NIC, and NIT), but each category had different dominant interaction styles. The children with intimate relationships defended themselves well and initiated interaction with the teacher more often. The children with independent relationships were self-motivated and task-oriented rather than relationship-oriented. Even though they did not interact with the teacher often, they had mutual trust and care for each other. Similar to the intimate relationship, the children with conflicted relationships initiated interaction with the teacher often but in a wrong way. These wrong starts often persisted to teacher-student conflict, and the teacher had to choose the strongest measure of discipline to correct the children's behaviors. The accumulation of this pattern led to the conflicted relationship. Third, these differences in each relationship category could be more distinctive in the way children understood rules and contextual cues and the degree the teacher compromised the rule for the children, but we must not forget that there are some similarities that provide hope for change in teacher-child relationships.

These findings imply that teacher-child relationships can and do change; in other words, they can grow. Becky in this study tried to build positive relationships with all the children. She used strategies to build and improve the relationship with her students. This study proposes a way to interpret

teacher-child relationships in a more contextualized manner. This study describes how, even in conflicted relationships, children are actively involved in the learning process of social relationships in the classroom. I do not think that everyone should always have intimate relationships or positive interactions with the teacher. However, conflicted relationships and routinized negative interactions are not positive for children in the long run. Children in conflicted relationships might constantly miss communication cues and construct negative relationships with others, including the teacher. The child in a conflicted relationship might lose a chance to do what he or she wants and has less of a chance to express himself or herself in a better way.

This study does not ascribe the teacher-child relationship to individual traits that decide whether two traits will match or not. A mechanism of personal relationship beyond its personality is examined through discourse analysis. No teacher in the classroom intends to build conflicted relationships with the children. The findings of this study imply that teachers need to be more sensitive about the few children who need help with communication, and it is hard to go beyond the routinized conflicted relationship. The consideration of communication will be helpful for both the teacher and child in daily classroom life. Building relationships takes time, patience, and persistency. Educators have to consistently work hard and reflect their interaction style with each child to consider the child who lacks communicative competence.

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