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I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK NOW: TYPES AND ANALYSES OF BIDDING IN THE IEC

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ABSTRACT

This ethnography focuses on how students bid for a chance to speak in the classroom setting. English learners attending two different leveled classes were observed. The learners attended classes in the Intensive English Center at St. Cloud State University. Observations showed that there are many types of bidding students use, both verbal and nonverbal. Instructors were also observed bidding for attention. Ethnographic analysis showed that verbal bidding was important and common in the observed classrooms. It was found that verbal bidding did not drastically hinder or interrupt the classroom. Additionally, students bid differently depending on their gender, culture, and classroom environment.

1.0 Introduction

Bidding to speak, a common classroom strategy for students, is a highly complex system of rules. Bidding can transform in order to meet the needs of climates in any particular classroom. This ethnography attempts to identify and analyze the bidding strategies of two groups of international students studying English at St. Cloud State University in St Cloud, MN. It will also address the acknowledgements of bids by the instructor. The ethnography will begin with a description and will conclude by analyzing observances of bids. All student names have been changed to respect privacy.

2.0 Background

I observed two different classes at SCSU. The university attracts international students who come to pursue a variety of degrees. International students take an ACCUPLACER test, which measures their level of English. They are then placed into a leveled class in the Intensive English Center (IEC) and receive intensive and often all-day English classes. The classes in the IEC range from 1-5, with level 5 students having the most English skills. The goal of the IEC classes is for students to learn enough academic English, higher-academic skills, and culture to succeed in regular college classes at SCSU.

2.1 Level Two

I observed a level two class that met Monday through Friday at 9:00 am. This particular class was a speaking and listening class. The students in the class also met at other times of the day for different classes, such as vocabulary and writing. The instructor for the speaking and listening class was a graduate student. She was a native U.S. Caucasian who had been teaching in the IEC while completing her TESOL master's degree. She also instructed the same students later in the day for a vocabulary class. Thirteen students attended the level two class, one was Korean, two were Iranian, and eleven were Saudi. All of the students were male, except for one Saudi female. The Iranian students spoke Arabic as their first language, so all students in the class could communicate with each other in their native languages, except for the Korean student.

The room in which the level two class met was quite small. It was located on the first floor of the building. It measured about 15 x 15 feet, and seemed quite cramped for thirteen students, many desks, and an instructor. The student desks were arranged in a half-circle with desks lining three walls of the classroom. Students sat very close to one another because of the small dimensions of the room. My observations took place from a chair in the front corner of the room. The compactness of the classroom and the arrangement of the desks have been beneficial agents in the type and amount of bidding that occurred during instruction. The type of class will also be shown as a factor of types of bids students chose to use. This will be explained more later on.

2.2 Level Four

I observed a level four class that was held at 2:00 pm each day in a large room on the third floor of the building. The class met for two hours every day of the week, except Thursday, when the class only met for one hour. The instructor was a native U.S. Caucasian female who attended the graduate TESOL program at SCSU. For both hours of instruction, the class focused on English academic compositions. The classroom was quite large. It was estimated to measure around 40 x 25 feet. It was equipped with Smart technology, and had a computer and projector screen in the front of the class. The room was set up so that it was wider than it was deep. The desks were arranged in a classic classroom style, with all desks in rows and facing the front of the class. There were about four desks that went across the room and four desks per row. The desks were about four to five feet long, and the chairs were not attached to the desks. Most students sat two to a desk. Because of the multitude of desks, students mostly spread out across the room unless the instructor arranged group projects. Then, two desks were arranged into one large table, so four students could sit near each other.

The second hour of class often utilized a computer lab located in the basement of the building. Students used the computer lab for writing their compositions under the guidance and support of the instructor and other students in the class. The computer lab was about the same size as the main room level four met. The tables on which the computers rested upon lined three walls of the room. When students used the computers, they faced one of the three walls, with their backs turned from the front of the room. When the instructor spoke or used the projector, all of the students had to turn to face the front of the room. During individual work time typing compositions on the computer, students who bid did so with their backs turned to the instructor. This will be further detailed in later sections of bidding analysis.

3.0 Types of Bidding

The types of bidding observed in the level one and four classes will be explained in detail below. The types of bidding observed are not intended to be inclusive of all bidding behaviors in classroom settings, and rather are intended to be described and analyzed within the context of the classes observed. The types of bidding are categorized into sections of non-verbal and verbal bidding.

3.1 Non-Verbal Bidding

3.1.1 Hand Raising: Three Types

If asked about the most common type of bidding found in classrooms across the United States, most would answer hand raising. Hand raising was common in level two and level four classrooms in the IEC at SCSU. Raising a hand to bid may seem simple at first. However, it

consisted of numerous forms during observations. Students were observed raising their hands to ear or eye level. This type of bid will be referred to as a *short hand bid*. Most students rested their elbows on their desk for this type of bid, while a few tucked their elbow close to their bodies. Many students who used a short hand bid also somewhat cupped their hands, and not all fingers were fully straightened. This type of bid seemed to be a mature and non-urgent way of asking permission to speak. Another type of hand bid was when students fully erected their arms over their heads. Students who were not acknowledged bidding in this manner often lowered their forearms to rest on top of their heads until the instructor was ready to acknowledge bids again. This type of bid will be referred to as a *fully extended hand bid*. A third type of hand bidding is very similar to the short hand bid, with the difference being that the student would raise only an index finger (one-finger bid) or an index and middle finger together (two-finger bid). This type of bid will be referred to as a *finger bid*, and differentiation will not be made between a one-finger bid and a two-finger bid, because of their close similarities. The majority of all types of hand bids were accompanied by other non-verbal cues related to bidding. Students who bid with their hand also often looked directly at the instructor, or in the near vicinity of the instructor. Some students also changed their posture to sit more erectly in their seats. Additionally, hand bidding was coupled with verbal bids and shout outs, which will be explained further in a different section.

3.1.2 Proximity

Proximity was another way of bidding nonverbally. Students would mostly use this type of bidding before or after class. Students would use their entire body by walking up to a specific area and standing somewhat motionless until the instructor acknowledged them to speak. The area in which students stood waiting was between one to four feet from the instructor. It usually occurred in the instructor's area, near her desk, or other places in the front of the room that was claimed by the instructor. Proximity bidding often included other non-verbal communication, like eye contact or waiting in a very still manner. Interestingly, there was one observance of a student using proximity to bid during a level four class. Sitting, the student wheeled his chair in front of the instructor's desk, stood up, and waited to be acknowledged by the instructor who was standing on the other side of the desk. Both the instructor and student laughed about using his chair as transportation to bid.

3.1.3 Touching

Touching was a type of non-verbal bidding that was observed only when a student wanted to communicate with another student. Touching was not observed when bidding to an instructor. Touching was also not observed between coed peers. Touch bidding was accompanied with a verbal bid at times. This type of bidding was only seen in relaxed settings and group work. Students would mostly touch the arm, hand, or shoulder of a peer. The touching of a peer's personal items on desk, like a notebook or textbook, was also observed. Students were also seen touching the desk of a peer as a means of bidding. The area surrounding the student, as well as the student's personal items, were seen as an extension of the student's body. A student would only touch these items intentionally if communication was desired.

3.1.4 Eye Contact

Bidding by using eye contact was observed mostly as a supplement to other types of bidding. This type of bidding is often associated with specific Asian cultures. Students used eye

bidding alone during group and individual work time, but it was not observed as a solitary bidding method when communicating with an instructor. My inexperience with eye bidding as a solitary method of bidding to an instructor has most probably hindered my ability to recognize it during observations.

3.1.5 Verbal Bidding

Verbal bidding was noticed throughout the observation period, and occurred either independently or with other non-verbal bidding strategies, like hand raising or eye contact. Verbal bidding consisted of one or two words directed at the instructor. The most common word used to bid was "teacher". Others include, "Miss", "yes", "yes, Miss", "yes teacher" "excuse me", and "okay". Students would use a verbal bid to communicate with the instructor the same way a non-verbal bid would be used. They would say verbalize the bid, and then wait to be acknowledged by the instructor. Students also used verbal bids to communicate with peers in class, and would then use the peer's name as a bid. Other peer-to-peer bids include, "hey", "yo", and "excuse me". The following is an example of an interjection used as a verbal bid that was accepted by the instructor. The conversation that takes place is about students needing to take a placement exam.

<i>Instructor:</i>	<i>I've only seen it 3 times, there's also a listening part with headphones.....We have class on Monday for one hour, be ready to present. If you are not here, I will mark you absent.</i>
<i>African male:</i>	<i>Ok (call out) (smiles).</i>
<i>Saudi male:</i>	<i>Ahhh...(short hand bid, eye contact)</i>
<i>Instructor:</i>	<i>Hmmm hmmm... (2 steps towards him)</i>
<i>Saudi male:</i>	<i>How many points do you need to pass?</i>
<i>Instructor:</i>	<i>Oh...the ACCUPLACER?</i>
<i>Saudi male:</i>	<i>Hmmm hmmm.</i>
<i>Instructor:</i>	<i>Well, I'm not sure about the points, but just come ready with a clear head and a good night's sleep.</i>

The Saudi male uses a short hand bid and the interjection "ahhh" to bid, and the instructor acknowledged this bid. Interjection bids were only seen used in combination with non-verbal bidding directed towards the instructor during instruction. However, interjection bids were observed being used alone with peer-to-peer bidding during group work and individual work time.

3.1.6 Call Outs

Often, students did not use any bidding strategies and started speaking without necessarily being acknowledged. This will be referred to as a *call out*. Call outs often occurred with other forms of non-verbal bids, like hand raising, eye contact, and other body language. Analysis of call outs will be shown in upcoming sections. It will suffice to say that the level two speaking and listening class used more pure call outs than level four, who used more call outs mixed with non-verbal bids. Even though pure call outs are often criticized in some educational settings, call outs in the settings observed were not seen as negative. Multiple and rapid call outs within a short period of time were the only occurrence that caused the instructor to direct

acknowledgments more formally, but students were not reprimanded for such call outs. It was common to observe interjection words beginning call outs, such as "um" and "ah". Some of these interjections could have been categorized as verbal bids, but they were commonly directly followed with utterances that did not wait for the acknowledgement of the instructor.

4.0 Acknowledgement and Authority

It was observed that all students were allowed to bid, although specific students did a larger quantity of bidding than others. In fact, some students did not bid at any time during whole group instruction, and instead opted for bids during individual seat work or group work time. Although it will not be a focus of the ethnography, it is also interesting to mention that instructors also bid to speak in class. Instructor bidding took place when students were involved in individual or group work not directed by the instructor, and the instructor wanted to either communicate with the whole class or regroup the class back to instructor directed activities. For this type of bidding, the instructor would use verbal and non-verbal bids to regain control of the class. Instructors took a position of power by moving to the front and center of the classroom often near a white board, projector screen, or instructor desk. Common verbal bids were statements including "Okay everyone", "Can I have you attention for a moment?", and "Everyone look up here quick". These statements were louder than an average speaking voice of any student bid and were often repeated until all students had acknowledged the bid by stopping all activity and making eye contact with the instructor. There was not a sense of a power change when instructors bid. The instructor bids still possessed authority over the students when these bids were not used.

When students bid to an instructor, a power hierarchy was revealed. The instructor held the power to acknowledge or not to acknowledge the bids that students made. Instructors acknowledged bids in a number of ways. The most common acknowledgement was a combination of verbal and non-verbal cues. Instructors typically used the student's name to call on them to speak. Instructors also used "yes" alone or before the student's name. Instructors also made eye contact with the student whose bid was acknowledged and also directed their body toward the student. At times, the instructor also took one or two steps forward in the direction of the bidder. An extended arm with a single index finger or open hand with all fingers pointing toward the bidder was also a signal of acknowledgement to speak. Many other students in the class also made eye contact and/or turned their bodies to face the student whose bid was being acknowledged by the instructor.

5.0 Analysis

The following sections are comprised of analyses of bidding observed in the IEC level two and level four classrooms. Analyses have been subcategorized below. Spradley's (1980) ethnographic structures have been taken into account in these analyses. Several tables precede the analyses and will be referred to throughout this section. All examples used come directly from the dialogue recorded in class. All names have been changed to protect student identity.

Dimensions of Contrast								
Name of Class	Number of Students	Size of room	Time of day	Instructor	Native Country of Students	Major Goals of Class	Males vs. Females	Level of English
Level 2	14	very small 15 x 15	9 am	native U.S Caucasian female	1 Korean 2 Iraqi 11 Saudi	speaking/ listening	12 vs. 1	intermediate
Level 4	16	large 35 x 25	2-4 pm	native U.S Caucasian female	3 Korean 3 Chinese 5 Saudi 4 African 1 Turkish	writing	14 vs. 2	high

Table 1

Level Two Classroom: Dimensions of Contrast							
Student bid types directed at instructor	Lecture	Direct question asked to whole group	Individual/seat work	Instructor-led test	Instructor led checking of answers	Before/after class	Total
Short hand	2	3			11		16
Fully extended hand					1		1
Finger(s)		5			7		12
Proximity						5	5
Touch							0
Eye contact (only)							0
Verbal bid			2	3	5		10
Call out	7	31	1	4	4		47
Mix of call out and non-verbal		4					4
Mix of verbal bid and non-verbal		7			10		17
Total	9	50	3	7	38	5	Grand Total 112

Table 2

Level Four Classroom: Dimensions of Contrast							
Student bid types directed at instructor	Lecture	Direct question asked to whole group	Individual/seat work	Class discussion	Instructor led checking of answers	Before/after class	Total
Short hand	5	1		7			13
Fully extended hand	1		17				18
Finger(s)	4	5		4			13
Proximity			1			7	8
Touch							0
Eye contact (only)							0

Verbal bid			3				3
Call out	3	15		3			21
Mix of call out and non-verbal	5	5		2			12
Mix of verbal bid and non-verbal	2	4	12				18
Total	20	30	33	16	N/A	7	106

Table 3

Percentages of Bids	Verbal	Non-verbal	Mixed verbal and non-verbal	Mixed call out and non-verbal	Call out
Level 2	9%	30%	15%	4%	42%
Level 4	3%	50%	17%	11%	19%

Table 4

5.1 Rules of Bidding

Several underlying rules of bidding took place in the both classrooms. First, students who chose to bid accepted waiting as part of bidding. The wait time to be acknowledged by the instructor during instruction was less than during individual or group work time. Because the level two class met in a small room and much of the time was spent instructing, students had a much shorter wait time than level four students. During level four instruction time, students sat spread out across a large room, and the instructor could not see all students as easily as in level two. During time in the computer lab, the instructor circled the class and helped individuals. As a result, wait time became longer because the instructor's time was spent with individuals. The instructor also had to remember the order in which students had bid for help. A second underlying rule during student bidding was to comply with the multitude of times bids were not acknowledged by the instructor. Instructors did not acknowledge bids for several reasons. At times, too many students bid in such a short period of time that the instructor could not acknowledge them all. The instructor sometimes only wanted one answer, and thus only one bid was acknowledged. Other times, the instructor did not want to spend any more time on a specific topic and so stopped accepting bids. Another reason for not acknowledging student bids was simply because the teacher had not recognized the bid. This happened quite often during level four individual or group work activities because the teacher had so much space and so many students to individually consult with. Bids also went unrecognized during instruction in both levels because of a student not bidding clearly enough, or because of unwanted multiple call outs instead of bids. An example below illustrates the latter.

Instructor: “expensive”....how many syllables? (Writes it on board)
3 students: Three (call out)
Instructor: Where is the stress? (Marks syllables on word)
Said: Ex (call out)
Sabrina: Pen (call out)
Mohamed: Ex (call out)
Abdi: Pen (call out)

Said: *Ex (call out)*
Instructor: *Ahmed*
Ahmed: *.... Ex*
Instructor: *Let's look in the middle of the word....it's pen (marks it on board)*
Sabrina: *I said pen, teacher (Smiles) (call out).*
Instructor: *(Laughs) Ok, good.*

The instructor in this case had several students who were calling out answers instead of bidding. One student actually called out again after not being acknowledged by the instructor. The instructor did not acknowledge any call outs and after a few moments called on a different student to answer. The student that was called on had not bid or called out. This example is not to demean call outs. In fact, instructors accepted numerous call outs in both classes. The level two instructor accepted twice as many call outs as the level four instructor. This may be related to the small size of the room, the concentration of students who came from the same country, or the fact that the class was goal-oriented towards the improvement of speaking and listening skills. The following is an example of the level two instructor acknowledging many call outs at once.

Instructor: *What type of games did you talk about?*
Mohamed: *Board games.*
Sabrina: *Life is a long game.*
Instructor: *Hmm hmm.*
Abidnoor: *You win, you lose.*
Instructor: *(Nods)*
Khalif: *Cheating.*
Instructor: *How is life like cheating?*
Mohamed: *Cheat on a quiz.*
Instructor: *Yes, you can cheat on a quiz. What happens if you get caught?*
Mohamed: *Game over (no bid, 1 second).*
Instructor: *That's right, game over (She pretends to rip a paper in half) and an F, too. (Laughs)*

The acknowledgements the level two instructor used above vary. The instructor used a non-verbal nod, a verbal "hmm hmm" and even used a question to acknowledge and expand on Khalif's and Mohamed's call outs. Intriguingly, students in both level two and level four were more apt to speak when the instructor acknowledged multiple call outs. One way to encourage student speech during whole group instruction was to acknowledge call outs, verbally and non-verbally, and even give time for call outs to continue without silencing students. Essentially, several call outs in a small time period gave other students confidence to also call out, perhaps also without being anxious about the correctness of their answers.

5.2 Level Two vs. Level Four

Commonalities that level two and level four students share can be seen in the percentages recorded in Table 4. Both levels used verbal bids the least. However, students in both classes used verbal bids frequently with non-verbal bids. An example of a verbal and non-verbal bid follows.

Instructor: Who wants to try [number] seven?
Sabrina: Yes, teacher (short hand bid, eye contact).
Ahmed: (short hand bid) (eye contact)
Abdi: (finger bid) (eye contact)
Instructor: Ok, Sabrina.
Sabrina: (she reads and answers the question)
Instructor: Yes, good, “update” is correct.

Sabrina's use of verbal and non-verbal bids won her the primary acknowledgement of the instructor. Even though two other students bid at the same time, the student who used a wide variety of bids was the most recognizable, or appeared to have a stronger desire to speak than the others.

Another common theme both level two and level four classes share is that most call outs occurred during activities when the instructor asked a question to the whole group. In fact, high levels of combined bidding and call outs occurred during times of these teacher-directed questions. The type of question did not seem to matter. The instructor could ask an open-ended opinion question, or a yes/no question, and students would still call out or bid, although it seems that there was a slightly higher concentration of call outs during questions than involved a short response.

Level two students call out more than they bid. Percentage-wise, these students used pure call outs 42% of the time. Level two used call outs more than twice the amount of times level four students did. Call outs were even allowed during a spelling test. An example shows this, although some parts have been omitted because of their insignificance to this point:

Instructor: Number four, “twins”.
Student: One or more than one? (call out, looks at Instructor)
Instructor: Twins..plural...more than one.

Student: Nine? (Instructor only had said up to number 8, he wanted to go faster)
Instructor: Participant (answering his question).
Student: Par-tic-i-pant?
Instructor: Participant/
Student: Hmmm...

Instructor: Number 13....is “tend”.
Student: What? (call out, doesn't look up from paper)
Instructor: “Tend”.
Student: Teacher (call out, eye contact).

<i>Instructor:</i>	<i>(makes eye contact with the student)</i>
<i>Student:</i>	<i>(has his spelling test paper ready to hand her)</i>
<i>Instructor:</i>	<i>Thank you (takes his spelling test paper from him).</i>

This example shows multiple call outs during a spelling test that were acknowledged by the instructor. Although one associates silence with test taking, these call outs were allowed to continue, and did not disrupt the flow of the test at all. Students who needed words repeated or clarified called out while others listened and checked their answers while the instructor answered. Neither the students nor the instructor seemed to feel that the call outs were distracting or gave an unfair advantage to test takers. Students did not cheat by looking at another student's test, or by asking a neighbor for help. All of the call outs were directed to and answered by the instructor.

There are a variety of theories behind the quantity of level two call outs. Table 1 shows contrasting features of both classes. First, the goals of the classes are quite different. Level two is a speaking and listening class. The instructor expects students to speak and the students know they are expected to speak. Many activities in class include speaking and listening tasks both in small group and in whole group settings. The level four students and instructor focused their energy into writing compositions, and so fewer activities justified call outs during instruction. The smaller room and compactness of desks that level two students utilized probably created a feeling of amity, and also made recognizing bids quicker and easier for the instructor who had less physical space to cover than in level four. All but three of the fourteen level two students were Saudi, and all but one of the students spoke Arabic as a first language. This effectively built much camaraderie, trust, and leniency between students, which in turn granted students more opportunities to speak freely. Level two students knew less English than level four students, which could have been a factor in the amount of call outs seen in the tables above. Students who are still learning a second language work harder to encode messages, and when a message has been created in the second language, it is easily forgotten if not uttered immediately. Level two students also might have felt like their oral English needs to be practiced, heard, and critiqued by the instructor, and so greater efforts were made to be heard in class.

Level four students used non-verbal bids more than any other type of bidding or call out. In fact, 50% of all bids or call outs were non-verbal. Students used hand raising the most. In comparing this to level two, several of the same theories apply. Level four classrooms were much larger in size, focused on writing, contained many more cultures and languages, and the students knew English well enough to survive as individuals in the class setting. Consequently, the activities during class time suggest the most prevalent reason for the numerous hand bids. Many periods of observation of level four were spent in the computer lab with students working independently on compositions. Because students faced a computer screen and not the instructor, verbal bidding or calling out would not have achieved positive recognition from the instructor. The instructor spent most of her time sitting or kneeling, helping individual students at their computers. Calling out in this situation would not be an option because no whole group activity is being completed and no teacher directed questions are being asked. Although a few verbal bids for the instructor occurred, the instructor probably could not handle hearing multiple verbal bids while simultaneously listening to the student being helped. Students possibly foresaw verbal bidding to the instructor as rude when the instructor was helping another student. The best option to achieve teacher assistance was to use a non-verbal bid. It is interesting to

mention here that at least 17 fully extended hand bids were observed. This was only seen once in the level two class. It seems that because of the vast space of the computer lab room, compiled with the fact that students did not face the instructor, gave a student who used extended hand bidding a better chance of being acknowledged by the instructor.

5.3 Female vs. Male Bids

The few females that attended level two and level four classes had different styles of bidding than the males. The female bidding style also changed according to level. The sole female in the level two class often surpassed the rest of her class in regards to the amount of bids, call outs, and instructor acknowledgements. She sat in a back corner of the room, and so physical proximity to the teacher was not a factor. During group work, she was always observed leading. Her male partners often became passive and communicated less often. They also seemed to agree with her ideas, comments, and answers more than when in an all-male group. An example illustrates this male passivity.

<i>Sabrina:</i>	<i>Do you think games teach morals?</i>
<i>Said:</i>	<i>(pause) I don't know. (laughs) (looks down and then away)</i>
<i>Sabrina:</i>	<i>(translates the question into Arabic out loud)</i>
<i>Said:</i>	<i>(laughs, and pauses) I don't know.</i>
<i>Sabrina:</i>	<i>(half in English and Arabic, gives him an example and looks at him for approval)</i>
<i>Said:</i>	<i>(nods his head)</i>
<i>Sabrina:</i>	<i>(writes her own example in her textbook and pretends like he said it)</i>

During whole group instruction, observations of males competing with bids and call outs were noticeable. Although intriguing, male passivity towards her bids in whole group instruction can also be excluded. Perhaps in a male dominated class, this sole female ensured she would be heard and recognized by over-bidding and over-speaking. It could also be conceived that the instructor over-acknowledged her bids as a means to ensure that she was heard. It could be suggested that this female student simply was more successful in educational settings, or had a more outgoing personality than most males she attended class with.

The two females in the level four class were quite opposite from the female in the level two class. The females in level four were observed bidding only a few times. The females did not ever bid during whole group instruction or discussion. The instructor instead called on them to speak. The two females only used bids during individual work time, and waited for the instructor to walk close by before bidding. Both females were observed actually waiting and watching for the instructor to walk close to them. Only when the instructor walked within five feet did they actually bid. Their bids were mostly a mix of verbal and a short hand raises with direct eye contact. The females always sat next to each other. Often in the computer lab, one female would bid. However, when the instructor walked over to their area, both females ended up receiving help. It could be suggested that two females in a male-dominated class do not feel obligated to prove their worth or be heard as strongly as a single female. Conclusions of passive personalities or self-sufficiency could also be made.

It is interesting to mention here also that no female utilized finger bids during any part of class. Moreover, Saudi males were the only group that were observed using a one- or two-finger bid, although not 100% of Saudi males were seen using it. The finger bid was used with and without verbal bids and call outs, and often was observed using direct eye contact with the instructor. Finger bids were used with direct instruction, and not seen during times of individual seat work or group work.

5.4 Peer-to-Peer Bidding

Noticeable differences in bidding occurred during peer-to-peer communication of students when performing group work or individual work tasks. Students did not use any type of hand raising to bid. It could be suggested that hand bidding is intended to communicate with instructors only. Students used eye contact as a basis for most bids, and often combined it with the use of wait time if the student being bid to was busy with a task like writing or reading. If waiting became too long, the student would often just begin speaking without being acknowledged. Then the student would most often stop the task to listen to the bidder. If the student was busy communicating with another student, the bidder's wait time increased, and then eye contact became even more important. Students were also observed touching a student's arm, shoulder, desk, or personal belongings on a desk, as a means of bidding. The tapping of a pencil on a student's notebook or textbook was also acknowledged as a bid. Curiously, verbal bidding, commonly used by saying a student's name, was only used when the student was more than five feet away from the bidder.

6.0 Conclusion

Although not conclusive of bidding in all school settings in the United States, the students in this ethnography demonstrate that rules of bidding can modify to fit a variety of classroom settings. Perhaps a deciding factor in types of bidding relies on the person who is charged with acknowledging the bids. Physical space of the classroom can also play a contributing role of the quantity and type of bids students make. Gender, nationality, and English level all play vital roles in determining when and how to bid during instruction, and also develop differing functions of how to bid during non-instructional class activities. To meet the needs of a divergent student population, instructors and other educational professionals must adhere to flexible standards of bidding during instruction, and view calling out as a positive method of communication in specific settings unless it directly hinders the goals of the class.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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