

THE NATURE AND QUALITY OF CLASSROOM VERBAL INTERACTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the nature and quality of classroom verbal interaction obtaining in a primary school classroom. A case study design was adopted for this study. Only one class comprising of 15 boys and 15 girls was used to study verbal interaction between the teacher and pupils. The study found out that the teacher talked more than the pupils did. This means that classroom verbal interaction in primary classrooms is still teacher- dominated, thus, confirming earlier research findings on classroom verbal interaction analysis, that, in the researches they did, teachers talked 2/3 of the time while pupils talked only 1/3 (Flanders, 1970; Nagel, 1992; Muhammad, 2005; Nyambura, 2012). Educators generally agree that children learn most by doing, yet, this awareness is rarely translated into classroom teaching methods. The study recommends that similar studies be conducted across grades and extended to secondary school level.

Keywords: Classroom interaction, verbal interaction, classroom interaction analysis, interaction analysis instrument

INTRODUCTION

Classroom interaction is critical to the teaching and learning situation. Class talk offers a promising tool for helping instructors create a more interactive, student-centred classroom. Class talk is a useful tool for engaging students in active learning and also for enhancing the overall communication in the classroom. It is, thus, the teacher's responsibility to create for learners, an enabling environment; one in which they experience intellectual, social and emotional growth. The amount of teacher and pupil talk in the classroom situation facilitates effective and efficient interaction. This means that the nature and amount of talk has profound bearing on the nature and quality of teaching and learning obtaining in any classroom situation. In order to understand the nature of interaction obtaining in classrooms, communication researchers have developed classroom interaction observation instruments. These instruments have been used for coding and analysing classroom verbal interaction patterns. The results of classroom interaction analysis can help classroom practitioners change their ways of teaching if the analysis show that classroom interaction is teacher-dominated. The commonly used classroom interaction analysis instruments are those developed by Flanders (1970) and Malamah-Thomas (1988). This study was based on the instrument developed by the researcher but of course with a lot of inspiration from the aforementioned authors. The instrument was used to code and analyse the verbal interaction patterns obtaining in a live Grade 6 English language lesson.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Traditional methods for teaching at primary school level employ a lecture format of instruction in which the majority of students are passively listening to the instructor, one which connotes that students are blank slates on which the environment writes.

Dusfresne, Gerace, Leonard, Mestre and Wenk (1996) contend that current views of learning and instruction challenge the wisdom of this traditional pedagogic practice by stressing the need for the learner to play an active role in constructing knowledge. It should be remembered that the journey to the construction of knowledge is always under construction. In general, teacher talk seems to be largely concerned with the smooth running and management of the classroom. The practice of engaging learners in challenging discourse is rare. Research in the United States (US) suggested that 2/3 of the teaching sessions studied were usually spent in talk and 2/3 of that talking was done by the teacher (Flanders, 1970). Investigations in British Primary Schools have shown similar figures (Galton, Simon and Croll 1980; Bennett, Desforges, Cockburn, Wilkinson, 1984). In 22 of the 30 classrooms they observed, Schumuck and Schumuck (1984) in Arends (1988) reported teachers talking 3/4 of the time and commented that this was more than the 2/3 teacher talk Flanders (1970) had earlier on observed.

The Observational Research and Classroom Learning Evaluation (ORACLE) study showed that the highest percentage of teacher talk in junior classrooms was generally devoted to supervising tasks. There was not much emphasis on talking about the substantive content of tasks (Galton et al 1980). This observation was further buttressed by Nagel (1992) who found out that classroom practices were very traditional, repetitious and extremely teacher-centred. Nagel (1992) reports that, in more than 200 lessons she observed, she came across one-way communication in teaching. She points out that communication was generally performed at very low cognitive levels, mostly recall and reference to memory. This pattern of classroom communication was also observed by Galton et al (1980) when they said that most of the talk by teachers was in the form of statements of fact. Very little time was spent on asking questions which required learners to think for themselves in any kind of open-ended, problem solving capacity. In support of the foregoing, in his analysis of extensive data from 15 teachers, Bellack in Morrison and McIntyre (1999) found teacher dominance in the amount of classroom discourse. In such a scenario, the teacher's responsibility is that of structuring the lesson(s), soliciting responses and reacting. There is a high level of fact-stating and explaining by the teacher but "low level interpreting and opining" Bellack in Morrison and McIntyre (1988:188). Yet, Redfield and Rousseau (1981) in Arends (1988) made the observation that asking higher level and thought provoking questions had positive effect on student achievement and thinking. In light of the foregoing observations, Nagel (1992) came to the conclusion that this one way low level communication was a very unfruitful combination for students' cognitive development and learning. According to Nagel, these observations and findings indicate the important role of what goes on in the meeting between the teacher, the learners and the learning activities if quality education is to be achieved.

Talk is an important element of classroom life. This can be affected by the interaction and communication patterns between teachers and pupils and between pupils. There is a possibility of teacher-researcher developing his/her observation or coding schedule to suit his/her own purposes (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1992). It is against this background that the researcher developed his own verbal interaction observation instrument to find out the nature and quality of classroom communication obtaining in a primary school classroom.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Byrne (1987) posits that interaction analysis is valuable feedback material in establishing the types and frequencies of teacher to pupil and pupil to pupil talk. It, thus, means that classroom interaction analysis is a guide to assessing the teacher's effectiveness in lesson delivery with a view to making necessary adjustments. In this study, verbal behaviours were categorised according to teacher and pupil talk. The numbers of tallies in teacher and pupil

categories were converted to percentages to make clear the reading and understanding of the verbal classroom interaction analysis instrument. Tallies, were the basis on which the nature and quality of verbal classroom communication was measured. Paralinguistic elements of classroom communication were not the subject of this study.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1992) submit that the growing body of classroom research is intended to uncover the “black box” of the classroom in order to discover the factors which influence pupils’ experience of classroom life. Classroom research alerts teachers to some of the subtle and complex processes of verbal interactions that directly shape and influence learning. It reveals what routinely obtains in the classrooms with a view to improving classroom practice (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1992). This results in ratings of teaching style, classroom climate and the quality of teaching. Quality teaching is that which fosters understanding and equips learners to apply their learning in new circumstances (Stones, 1994). Other than just benefiting the classroom practitioners, classroom research results can be used to improve teacher education programmes in teachers’ education colleges. In appraising classroom research, Wragg (1994:103) says, “Research into classrooms needs to be seen as adding something... no matter how small”. This means that, smaller projects, particularly done by teachers and school heads in their own classrooms and schools respectively, can make valuable impact on local practice (Nagel 1992; Wragg, 1994). For this reason, classroom research needs to be upstaged because of its potential to improve practice when it is appropriately translated into pedagogic action.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A large body of research has been carried out in the area of verbal interchanges between teachers and pupils in classrooms. While classroom research itself cannot tell teachers how to teach, it does point to some of the subtle and complex processes that directly shape and influence learning. Because of lack of classroom interaction data in Zimbabwean primary schools, this study was carried out to determine the nature and quality of verbal classroom interaction obtaining in a Grade 6 English lesson at one primary school in Chinhoyi urban district in Zimbabwe.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The classroom interaction observation study was guided by the following questions:

1. How much talk does the teacher do in a lesson?
2. How much talk do pupils do in a lesson?
3. What is the content of talk by both the teacher and pupils?
4. What are the main features of talk observed in the lesson?
5. What are the suggestions for improvement of the main features of talk observed in the lesson?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A research design is defined by Durrheim (2006:34) as “a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between the research questions and the execution or implementation of the research.” As the aim of this study was to observe and describe the interaction patterns between teacher and pupils, qualitative methodology was used. To answer the research questions, naturalistic inquiry was used because of its unobtrusiveness and accuracy in presenting to others the real world events and experiences that unfold in a particular

environment (Patton 1990 in Wilson (1999). According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) in Punch (2004) the social world in naturalistic research is studied as far as possible in its natural setting and the observers neither manipulate nor stimulate the behaviour of those whom they are observing. However, quantitative components cannot be avoided in this study since percentages are used to present and report the findings.

The Case Study

Best and Kahn(1993)define a case study as a way of organising social data through examining a social unit in order to have a view of social reality. This social unit can be a school, a group of teachers or a class. Thus, a case study was adopted in this study to have an in depth understanding of what goes on in primary school classrooms as far as verbal interaction patterns between teachers and pupils are concerned.

Sampling

Purposive sampling was used. Merriam (1998) says that purposive sampling technique involves identifying participants who are likely to satisfy the needs of the researcher. In this study, the researcher used Grade 6 pupils whom he thought were more mature learners in the primary school apart from Grade 7 pupils who were busy writing their end of term tests hence care was taken not to disturb them.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection techniques used in this study included observation and field notes where observation was the main data gathering technique. Working as a non-participant observer, the researcher simply walked into the classroom with the class teacher and sat at the back of the classroom without disturbing or influencing the interaction in any way. Data were collected through non participant observation in which observations were made under natural conditions (Kumar, 2005: Creswell, 2007). Field notes in this study comprised of detailed descriptions of interactions that obtained between teacher and students as well as between students in the classroom during seatwork.

The Observation Instrument (Appendix A)

The observation instrument, Observation sheet (I-V), was developed to make possible and facilitate the coding of verbal interchanges between teacher and pupils in a lesson. The instrument shows the pattern of verbal interaction between the teacher and learners and between learners themselves. The observation instrument has five tables. Observation sheet (I) shows the amount of talking done by the teacher as he talked to different pupil categories. The amount of talking is shown by tallies which are converted to percentages. The reasons for teacher talk are shown in Observation sheet (IV). Observation sheet (II) shows different pupil categories talking to the teacher and the reasons for doing so are contained in Observation sheet (V). Observation sheet (III) shows pupil talk in groups but in this case there was no group work in the lesson observed.

Procedure

Research activity in schools requires that the inquirer gets access to the school and the classroom as well. Access to schools and classrooms is not something that one can take for granted (Eisner, 1991). Thus, the researcher sought permission from the Ministry of Education, Sport, Art and Culture to access the schools. With permission granted, the researcher then accessed the school and the classroom through the head and the class teacher. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and the way it was going to be achieved. In turn, the researcher was introduced to the class as a visitor who was interested in knowing how they (pupils) were learning.

Using a self-made verbal interaction analysis instrument (Appendix A), the researcher observed a Grade 6 English language lesson and coded all verbal interchanges made between the teacher and pupils and between pupils. Each verbal statement made during the course of the lesson was coded by making a tally in the distinct and appropriate categories for teacher and pupils talk. The numbers of tallies in teacher and pupil categories of talk were converted to percentages to make clear the reading and interpretation of the observation interaction analysis instrument. It was on the basis of this instrument that the overall picture of the communication pattern in the lesson was seen and analysed. Non verbal forms of interaction were not the subject of this research; hence, they were not coded. The tables below show how data were presented and analysed.

DATA PRESENTATION

Table 1. Amount of Teacher and Pupil Talk in the Lesson

<i>Talk</i>	<i>Number Of Tallies</i>	<i>Percentage Talk</i>
Teacher	51	63
Pupil	30	37
Total	81	100

Table 1 shows the amount teacher and pupil talk in the English lesson. The teacher talked more (63%) than the pupils (37%) of the total talking done in the lesson.

Table 2. Amount of Talk Done By Pupils Talking To Teacher in the Lesson

<i>Pupils</i>	<i>Number Of Tallies</i>	<i>Percentage Talk</i>
Boys	15	50
Girls	15	50
Total	30	100

Table 2 shows a balance of talk between boys and girls in the lesson. Both categories talked an average of 50%. The only difference comes when different pupil categories talked to the teacher as individuals. This information is shown in Observation sheet (II) of the actual observation instrument (Appendix A). For example, the girl high achiever category (Observation sheet II) talked the most to the teacher (33.3%) while girl low achiever category talked the least (16.7%) in the lesson.

Table 3. Focus of Talk-Pupils Talking To Teacher

<i>Pupils ' reasons for talking to teacher</i>	<i>Answering questions</i>	<i>Asking questions</i>	<i>Seeking permission to leave class</i>	<i>Asking for material</i>
<i>Number of tallies</i>	38	1	1	1
<i>Percentage</i>	94	2	2	2

Information in Table 3 was extracted from data in Observation sheet (II) and Observation sheet (V).The teacher was spoken to, in the lesson, by all categories of pupils except group and whole class categories. The reasons for these categories of pupils talking to the teacher

were primarily to answer the teacher's questions. There was 94% pupil talk to the teacher on answering questions showing that the lesson was predominantly pedagogic and, therefore, teacher-centred. Only 2% of the reasons for pupils talking to the teacher were on asking content based questions. The other two reasons for pupils talking to the teacher were for asking for permission to leave class and asking for material. Each of the two reasons accounted for 2%. Pupils neither initiated ideas nor sought clarification of content.

Table 4. Focus of Talk-Teacher Talking To Pupils

<i>Reasons for talking</i>	<i>No of tallies</i>	<i>Percentage talk</i>
Discussing main points	9	14
Praising and encouraging pupils	11	16
Supervising pupils' work	15	22
Socialising	2	3
Asking Questions/Eliciting responses from pupils	31	44
Reprimanding pupils	1	1
Total	69	100

Table 4 shows that the teacher talked more by asking questions or eliciting responses from pupils which accounted for 44%. Talk on supervising pupils' work had a 22% rating. Praising and encouraging pupils to participate in the lesson had 16% rating while discussing main points had 14%. Most of the teacher's talk is shown as having a pedagogic inclination, which is, in essence, the most important talk in teaching in as far as it facilitates pupil learning. Socialising shows an insignificant 3% in spite of it being an important relational skill that motivates learners and shows that they (pupils) are valued by the teacher and that they are part of the community of learners. There was not much reprimanding of pupils (1%) in the lesson; an indication that the class was well behaved thus pointing to the fact that the teacher was good at class management.

CONTENT OF TALK – TEACHER

Amount of Time Spent on Social/Personal Discussion

Table 4 and Observation sheet (IV) show that there was only 3% social talk with pupils which could be, in this case, taken to mean talk on social /personal discussion in a lesson.

Supervision of Learners' Work

Supervising pupils' work is a very important component of teaching. Observation sheet (IV) shows that the teacher spent 22% of the total talk time speaking to pupils on supervising their work. This was quite a fair percentage of talk on supervising pupils' work. Rogoff (1990) maintains that it is only through close collaborations that the novice is likely to learn more effectively and efficiently.

Discussing Main Points

Reference is made to Observation sheet (V) and Table D on the teacher's focus of talk. Discussing main points with pupils accounted for 14% of the total reasons for which the

teacher spoke to his pupils. Much of teacher talk was on questioning and eliciting responses from pupils which constituted 44%.

CONTENT OF TALK: PUPILS TALKING TO TEACHER

Observation sheet (V) shows that the content of pupil talk was primarily on answering the teacher's questions. This component of pupil talk has a 94% rating. Pupils' other reasons for talking were asking content based questions, asking for permission to leave the class and asking for materials to use during the course of the lesson. These three components of talk had 2% rating each. The remaining two components-asking for content clarification and initiating ideas were not catered for in this lesson.

Main Features of Talk Observed and Suggestions for Improvement

In the English lesson under review, pupils were making oral sentences using the structure ".....but also...." The learners were seated in ability groups which were the teacher's classroom management style which the researcher did not influence. This arrangement made coding of classroom verbal interaction fairly easy. The understanding of the composition of the groups was the basis on which the instrument was used in coding verbal behaviour and interaction patterns obtaining in the lesson.

Teacher Talk

Results of the amount of talk between teacher and pupils in this lesson show that the lesson was teacher- dominated (Table 1). The teacher did much of the talking at the expense of pupil talk as shown by teacher talk tallies which convert to 63% as compared to pupil tallies which convert to 37%. There were some disparities in that, in some cases, the teacher would talk to the class which forced pupils to act as required by the teacher without necessarily responding verbally. For example, when praising pupils, encouraging, supervising pupils' work or reprimanding, the pupils would not make any verbal responses. It is this scenario that accounted for the disparity between teacher and pupil talk. The classroom interaction scenario of the lesson under review almost confirms earlier research findings by some scholars who say, in the lessons they observed, 2/3 and 1/3 of classroom talk is teacher and pupil talk respectively (Broman in Funk and Tripletti 1972; Gorman 1974; Flanders 1970; Bowers 1980; Galton et al 1980; Bennett et al 1984; Schumuck and Schumuck in Arends 1988; Nagel 1992; Bellack in Morrison and McIntyre 1974.) While teacher and pupil percentage talk (63% and 37%) do not translate exactly to 2/3 and 1/3 teacher and pupil talk observed earlier, they are fairly very close to confirming these earlier findings. The verbal interaction pattern was evidently teacher- dominated and attempts to make pupils talk more in a lesson should be most commendable. The observations are at variance with the fact that classroom interactive talk by pupils is one of the primary means by which learning is accomplished (Hall and Walsh, 2002).

Talking more on a given task develops learners linguistically since language is a tool for learning. Pupils are then able to control their learning in line with the constructivist view of learning which advocates pupils' active participation in acquiring knowledge. To this effect, Barnes in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (1996:245) say, "...we learn not only by listening passively to the teachers, but by verbalising, by talking and arguing." The teaching exemplified by Barnes in Cohen et al (1996) allows for pupils' active participation as enshrined in Bruner's (1966) philosophy of constructivism. All pupils flourish in a classroom environment where there is an emphasis on language enrichment promoted by opportunities to explore talk (Hook and Vaas, 2000). Hall and Walsh(2002) further note that, because schools are important sociocultural contexts, their classrooms, and more specifically, their discursively formed instructional environments created through teacher-student interaction,

are consequential in the creation of effectual learning environments and ultimately in the shaping of individual learners' potential.

As earlier pointed out, pupils in this class, learned in ability groups. During the course of the lesson, the teacher did not cater for individual learning differences. If the teacher had grouped his class in mixed ability, this could have enhanced collaboration amongst group members in their diverse learning abilities. According to Rogoff (1990:39), this would result in "shared problem solving with an active learner participating in culturally organised activity with a skilled partner who is central to the process of learning in apprenticeship". The apprenticeship system often involves a group of novices(peers) who serve as resources for one another in exploring the learning task at hand as well as challenging one another(Rogoff,1990). Rogoff (1990) cites Lave (1988) as saying that apprentices learn to think, argue, act and interact in increasingly knowledgeable ways with people who know something well, by doing it with them as legitimate, peripheral participants. In this lesson fast learners could have been tasked to ensure that all group members within each group had constructed at least a sentence using...*but also...* For example, *Mr Gurure is not just a headmaster but also a farmer*. In small heterogeneous groups, pupils learn to value each other's contribution. Able peers can scaffold the less able ones (Vygotsky in Rogoff 1990). Children also learn to share ideas freely including shy learners as they would not be overshadowed by the whole class. However, Gatsi and Dyanda(2010) argue that peer apprentices, by virtue of their age and inexperience, may not be effective in scaffolding other learners, thus, making the use of peers in scaffolding other learners very tricky. In this study, low achieving pupils were too shy to participate for fear of making mistakes. If the teacher had adopted the strategy discussed above, participation by all pupils would have been guaranteed.

Another feature observed during the lesson on the part of the teacher was the way he praised his pupils for excellent contributions. Indeed, praise oils the wheels of pupils' learning but varied ways of reinforcement should be used. In this study, the teacher used statements like, "Very good", "Let us clap hands for him/her". Such forms of praise when overused eventually cease to be motivators and, thus, kill children's learning impetus. The teacher could have used statements like, among others; "That is a brilliant idea." "I would not have thought of a better answer than that one." nor "Can you repeat your answer so that I can write it down for others to read". Praise should have high motivational value so that it spurs learners to take further learning risks. Praise should also show that the teacher values pupils' contributions or ideas, an element that was missing in this lesson.

Although there was negligible reprimanding of pupils during the course of the lesson, the one that occurred was demeaning and put pupils to shame. When the teacher was asking questions, one girl was spotted as 'making noise'. The teacher shouted at her saying, "Spiwe (not her real name) shut your mouth and start writing." It was clear that the girl had been hurt. The teacher could have walked to the girl to ascertain what was wrong if anything was wrong at all. If the teacher and his class had established class rules and noise levels understandable to both parties, the teacher could have reminded the girl about the mutually agreed upon rules that control and restrain classroom behaviour. That way, the girl would have realised that rule infraction was not in line with the social order of their class. Scolding pupils hurts their emotional stability which consequently affects their learning. Withall in Dankin (1987) says that children must feel a sense of belongingness, security and freedom to voice their needs. It is the teacher's responsibility, through positive relational skills, to create an incorporate class in which both the teacher and pupils take part in teaching and learning. Sarcasm, shame and humiliation should never be employed to gain control, address failure or subdue high spirits as this squeezes the life and joy out of children's teaching (Watkins, 2005).

On talk about supervision of pupils work, the teacher did a splendid job as he went round assisting the classroom with a view to correcting pupils' mistakes. However, the researcher observed that the teacher was only helping pupils whose hands were raised indicating that they had finished the given task. He was only concerned with fast learners. The timid and slow (who did not raise their hands) were not visited by the teacher. It would have been proper if the teacher went round scrutinising all pupils' work and talking to individual pupils, correcting mistakes and giving praise and encouragement. The researcher had a chance to pip at some of the pupils' exercise books only to discover that some pupils had not written anything; yet, the lesson proceeded just like that. All pupils regardless of ability were asked to write 5 sentences each. Graded work in respect for individual learning differences, where slow learners should have been given less work to do, could have been more appropriate in this case. Fast learners could have been tasked to write more than 5 sentences. This aspect was missing in this lesson.

Questioning was the technique used by the teacher in teaching the structure. This was done very well as the teacher elicited responses from pupils. In cases where pupils were hesitant, the teacher tried to probe them to say what they had in their minds, where upon he shaped and expanded pupils responses in keeping with the behaviourist view of learning (Davies and Houghton,1991).Fast learners showed that they were really in control of their learning as some sentences constructed depicted real social life situation at the school. For instance, some pupils made sentences like, "*Mr Moyo is not just a teacher but also a father*". Mr Moyo taught at the school and had children who learnt there. This kind of thinking by pupils showed an awareness of their social surroundings. This was commendable.

Pupil Talk

Considering pupils' percentage talk (37%), it must be increased. In actual fact, many researchers who have developed observation instruments on classroom interaction analysis like Flanders (1970) Malamah-Thomas (1988) and Brown (1975) are of the strong opinion that, during lessons, pupils should do more talking than teachers. Talk allows pupils to experiment with language and thus develop linguistically, resulting in them developing self-confidence, communicative and analytic competencies. It is only through pupil talk that such competencies are engendered. Using data from her own and others' classrooms, Cazden (1988) revealed teachers facilitated teacher control of the interaction rather than student learning of the content of the lesson through the use of what is termed recitation script. Nystrand and Gamoran (1997) examined eighth and ninth grade classrooms and found out that teacher dominated classrooms were negatively correlated with learning. The study concluded that such student and teacher interaction was a significant factor in creating inequalities in student opportunities to develop intellectually. In this study, if children had been given the opportunity to orally construct sentences in pairs, it would have been more interesting and rewarding. Instead, the teacher used question and answer technique for the greater part of the lesson. Pupils always like to share what they know with their classmates. Discussion is particularly important because it is central to exchanging views and understanding (Pollard and Tann, 1993). Therefore, pupils should not be denied their discussion time as this is a valuable learning vehicle.

In a democratic learning environment, pupils should be free to ask questions about content being learned. The teacher should create a natural setting that gives learners the desire to ask questions. In this study, pupils did not ask questions except for a negligible 2%. In this case, the teacher should have asked if pupils had any questions, but this element was missing. It is an essential part of being a teacher to develop the habit of reflecting on what has taken place in the classroom and consider helpful modifications to classroom practice (Hayes, 2008). The

main argument is that unless teachers and students work and learn in stimulating, psychologically safe and creative environments, accomplishment of goals are unlikely to be guaranteed. What this means is that more student-initiated productive talk is needed than there is today in our classrooms (Bassler, 2005).

CONCLUSION

While classroom interaction analysis is not a panacea to all teaching and learning problems, it does point out subtle issues that need to be considered in the practice of education. Results of such classroom interaction studies provide valuable feedback material for practising qualified teachers, trainee teachers as well as teachers' college curriculum developers to consider issues of classroom interaction analysis in their programmes. The critical aspect is to encourage learners to participate more actively in classroom activities than teachers, thus, making learning more meaningful as learners will control their own learning. This aligns well with the constructivist view of learning which advocates active construction of knowledge by learners. This results in classroom interaction becoming a 'negotiated' enterprise, rather than an imposition of facts as it were.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study makes the following recommendations:

1. A more comprehensive study should involve more than observing one class.
2. The study can also be extended to observing and analysing specific subjects at secondary school level.
3. A study of the interaction patterns between lecturers and trainee teachers would benefit the education enterprise immensely as the findings will be translated to primary school situations between teachers and their pupils.

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APPENDIX A

AMOUNT OF TALKING IN THE ENGLISH LESSON OBSERVED

Observation Sheet I. Number of Pupils: 30 Teacher Talk

	<i>Child Category</i>	<i>Tallies</i>	<i>No of Tallies</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Teacher Talking To Different Pupils</i>	Boy High Achiever	“”””””””	10	19
	Boy Low Achiever	“”””””””	10	19
	Girl High Achiever	“”””””””	9	18
	Girl Low Achiever	“””	4	9
	Group	“”””””””	8	16
	Class	“”””””””	10	19
<i>Total</i>			51	100

Observation Sheet II. Pupil Talk

	<i>Child Category</i>	<i>Tallies</i>	<i>No Of Tallies</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Different Pupils Talking To Teacher</i>	Boy High Achiever	“”””””””	9	30
	Boy Low Achiever	“”””””””	6	20
	Girl High Achiever	“”””””””””	10	33,3
	Girl Low Achiever	“”””””””	5	16,7
	Group		-	-
	Class		-	-
<i>Total</i>			30	100

Observation Sheet III. Pupil Talk Group Work Reasons For Pupils Speaking To Each Other

<i>Asking Each Other Procedural Question</i>	<i>Encouraging Others To Contribute</i>	<i>Sharing Ideas On Task</i>	<i>Report Back</i>
No	Group	Work	Was Used

Observation Sheet IV. Reasons For Teacher Speaking To Pupils

<i>Discussing Main Points</i>	<i>Praising And Encouraging</i>	<i>Supervising Children's Work</i>	<i>Socializing</i>	<i>Questioning/ Eliciting</i>	<i>Reprimanding Children</i>
..... 9 14%	..... 11 16%	..... 15 22%	..... 2 3%	..... 31 44%	..... 1 1%

Observation Sheet V. Reasons For Pupils Speaking To Teacher

<i>Answering Teacher Questions</i>	<i>Asking Content Based Questions</i>	<i>Asking For Clarification Of Content</i>	<i>Asking For Permission To Leave Class</i>	<i>Asking For Material</i>	<i>Initiating Ideas</i>
..... 38 94%	..... 1 1%	..... 0 0%	..... 1 2%	..... 1 2%	..... 0 0%