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THE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER'S ROLE IN  
MAXIMIZING LEARNERS' INITIATIVE  
IN ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE  
CLASSES IN LESOTHO

by

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*An individual research essay submitted to meet the requirements for the degree*

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SUPERVISOR: DR R.C. ULLYATT

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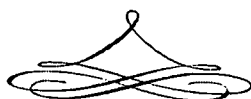
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This study is dedicated to my secondary school principal

*The late 'Motsi Makhokhoba*

whose concern, consideration, kindness and inspiration paved my way  
to high school and higher education.





## *Declaration*

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I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted by me for the Magister Artium degree at the University of the Orange Free State is my own independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at another university/faculty. I furthermore cede copyright of this dissertation in favour of the University of the Orange Free State.

.....  
**N.M. RANTŠOAI**

**NOVEMBER 2000**

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# Table of Contents

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Page

## *Chapter 1*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION</b> .....            | <b>1</b> |
| <b>1.1</b> <b>DEFINING THE PROBLEM</b> .....         | <b>1</b> |
| <b>1.2</b> <b>RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES</b> ..... | <b>6</b> |
| <b>1.3</b> <b>RESEARCH METHODS</b> .....             | <b>6</b> |
| <b>1.4</b> <b>PROGRAMME OF STUDY</b> .....           | <b>8</b> |

## *Chapter 2*

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>LITERATURE STUDY</b> .....  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>2.1</b> <b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....   | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>2.2</b> <b>THE IRF PATTERN OF CLASSROOM DISCOURSE</b> .....   | <b>12</b> |
| <b>2.3</b> <b>TYPES OF QUESTIONS AND THEIR EFFECT ON SECOND<br/>LANGUAGE LEARNING</b> .....                          | <b>23</b> |
| 2.3.1     Referential questions and how they promote language use .....  | 31        |
| <b>2.4</b> <b>COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE</b> .....   | <b>35</b> |
| <b>2.5</b> <b>ACCURACY-BASED AND FLUENCY-BASED TEACHING AS MANIFESTED<br/>IN SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS</b> .....    | <b>39</b> |
| <b>2.6</b> <b>DISCOURSE/TEXT TYPES IN ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSES</b> .....                                      | <b>42</b> |
| <b>2.7</b> <b>SEATING ARRANGEMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON LEARNER<br/>INITIATIVE IN SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSES</b> .....   | <b>52</b> |
| <b>2.8</b> <b>TEACHER'S AND LEARNER'S ROLES IN MAXIMIZING<br/>LEARNER INITIATIVE</b> .....                           | <b>59</b> |
| 2.8.1     Allen's (1987) trifocal curriculum .....   | 71        |
| 2.8.2     Interlanguage and its role in the second language teaching-learning process .....                          | 74        |
| 2.8.3     First and second language acquisition/learning .....   | 81        |
| 2.8.4     Learner autonomy and how it can promote maximum initiative<br>in language classes .....                    | 89        |
| 2.8.5     Motivation manifested in second language learning .....  | 93        |
| 2.8.6     Aims of learning English as a second language as manifested in<br>language classes .....                   | 101       |
| 2.8.6.1     Characteristics of classroom discourse and mundane conversation .....                                    | 102       |
| 2.8.7     The use of prescribed textbooks and authentic materials in the language<br>teaching-learning process ..... | 106       |

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| 2.8.8 Outcomes-based education (OBE) as manifested in language classrooms ..... | 109  |
| 2.9 CONCLUSION .....  | 118  |

### *Chapter 3*

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION .....               | 120 |
| 3.1 INTRODUCTION .....                         | 120 |
| 3.2 RESEARCH SETTING AND DATA COLLECTION ..... | 120 |
| 3.3 DATA ANALYSIS .....                        | 124 |

### *Chapter 4*

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| FINDINGS .....                    | 129 |
| 4.1 INTRODUCTION .....            | 129 |
| 4.2 PRE-INTERVENTION .....        | 129 |
| 4.3 INTERVENTION PHASE .....      | 146 |
| 4.4 POST-INTERVENTION PHASE ..... | 158 |
| 4.5 CONCLUSION .....              | 175 |

### *Chapter 5*

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH ..... | 177 |
| SUMMARY .....                             | 184 |
| OPSOMMING .....                           | 186 |
| ABSTRACT .....                            | 188 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY .....                        | 189 |
| APPENDIX : QUESTIONNAIRE .....            | 222 |

## *List of Tables and Figures*

---

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| Table 2.1: Distinction between accuracy and fluency activities .....                                   | 42   |
| Table 2.2: Distinction between written and spoken discourse .....                                      | 45   |
| Table 2.3: Changing views on the nature of language learning .....                                     | 63   |
| Table 2.4: Differences between traditional and outcomes-based learning .....                           | 118  |
| Figure 1.1: Collection and analysis of data .....  | 8    |
| Figure 2.1: A typical three-part structure .....   | 15   |
| Figure 2.2: Layout of a typical classroom for forty students in secondary<br>schools in Pakistan ..... | 53   |
| Figure 2.3: Different seating arrangements in class .....  | 58   |

## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

|      |   |                              |
|------|---|------------------------------|
| CM   | : | Communicative Methodology    |
| TL   | : | Target Language              |
| SLA  | : | Second Language Acquisition  |
| STT  | : | Student Talking Time         |
| TTT  | : | Teacher Talking Time         |
| TBLT | : | Task-based Language Teaching |

Notes on the text and transcription conventions:

The spelling and punctuation have been taken as they are in the original quotations (especially the transcriptions).

### TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Excerpts are numbered (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), etc.

Turns are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc.

|                |   |                              |
|----------------|---|------------------------------|
| S              | : | Student                      |
| S <sub>1</sub> | : | Student one                  |
| S <sub>2</sub> | : | Student two                  |
| Ss             | : | Students (speaking together) |
| T              | : | Teacher                      |
| R              | : | Researcher                   |

The abbreviation S refers to a student. However, in the text itself, learner and student are used interchangeably.

### Signs:

|              |   |  |
|--------------|---|--|
| //           | : | Interruptions and overlaps             |
| =            | : | Smooth interrupted turn transitions    |
| —            | : | Stress                                 |
| (Inaudible): | : | Excerpts that could not be transcribed |
| ( )          | : | Non-verbal actions                     |
| ^            | : | Silent stress and falling intonation   |
| (.)          | : | Micro pause                            |
| ...          | : | Pause                                  |
| -            | : | Hesitation                             |
| Italics      | : | Sesotho words                          |

## INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

### 1.1 DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Teachers sometimes allow the teacher-learner relationship to dominate the conversation so strongly that it produces a typical pedagogical form of interaction: the teacher always initiates, the learner only responds. This greatly limits the communicative functions that learners need to use and interactional skills they need to practise (Littlewood, 1995:47).

Thus, second language teachers need to refocus their roles in the language teaching/learning process (cf. Richards & Lockhart, 1994:3; Wallace, 1998:254). Some language teachers still adhere to a traditional classroom discourse that entails a series of speaking turns which alternate between a teacher and students, beginning with the teacher (see White & Lightbown, 1984:233; Prinsloo, 1996:9). This means some teachers confine themselves and their students to producing a teacher-controlled initiation-response-feedback (IRF) pattern of interaction. In this way teachers normally have or take two turns while students take only one (see Johnson, 1995:9; Ur, 1996:227; White & Lightbown, 1984:233; Boulima, 1999; Mchoul, 1978:191; Mehan, 1979:285 and 1985:121; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975:21; Sinclair & Brazil, 1982:49; Lightbown & Spada, 1993:72). Teachers are the only ones who ask and give feedback (evaluate or follow up) in classroom interactions, while the students are limited to responding. This pattern shows that the students' language environment - everything learners hear or see in the language they are learning (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982:278) - is not

natural, as most of the time they are exposed to classroom drills and dialogues which focus mainly on language structure. Witness the extract below:

(1)

1. Teacher: Why did Mr Smith choose this car? Which form of adjective should we use? Why did he choose this car?
2. Anna: It cheap.
3. Teacher: Can you make a sentence ... Do we use the comparative or superlative? What do you think? Why did he buy this car?
4. Anna: That car cheap. He no have much money, so that car cheap, he buy.
5. Teacher: Right, but, remember we studied the comparative and superlative of adjectives... OK, we said to make them we use "er" and "est", remember?
6. Anna: Yeah.
7. Teacher: So, which is it, the comparative or superlative?
8. Anna: Comparative.
9. Teacher: Comparative?
10. Anna: Superlative?
11. Teacher: Right, the superlative, cheapest, it's the cheapest one.

(Taken from Johnson, 1995:10-11.)

The pattern of interaction in the example above is typical of the IRF discourse cycle mentioned above (see turns 1 to 11). The teacher's focus is on the use of the correct form of the adjective, while Anna (Student) "focuses on the meaning of the teacher's questions" (Johnson, 1995:11). This pattern of discourse is in line with what Dulay *et al.* (1982:13) point out in the extract below:



As many high school ... students have learned, to their chagrin, if one is exposed to classroom drills and dialogues, one may acquire substantial classroom communication drills but still remain at a loss in other areas of social discourse. And of course, with no exposure at all, no learning can take place.

In other words we cannot guarantee whether Anna really knows the answer and can use it (superlative form of 'cheap') appropriately outside classroom situations. That is why Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1997:14) insist that "communication in the classroom is at best only a semblance of real communication, yet it prepares the learner for the type of situation and circumstances she might encounter outside the classroom." The implication is that classroom discourse should maximize learner initiative – a learner response pattern which includes multiple learner-learner exchanges followed by content feedback by the teacher (Greyling, 1998a:iv). According to Astin in Jacoby (2000:9) this kind of teaching or classroom interaction (when learner initiative is maximized) involves students in their learning as "research suggests that the more time and effort students invest in their learning and the more intensely they engage in their own education, the greater will be their achievement, growth, satisfaction...". He also maintains that "students learn by becoming involved" and he further encourages students' involvement in their learning as "the amount of student learning and development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quantity and quality of student involvement in it" (Astin in Jacoby, 2000:10).

What is problematic about traditional classroom discourse is that teachers do most of the talking and forget that:

...getting students to speak - to use the language they are learning - is a vital part of the teacher's job. Students are the people who need practice, in other words, not the teacher. In general terms, therefore, a good teacher maximizes STT and minimizes TTT (Harmer, 1998:4).

Harmer's view of creating opportunities for language learners to use language is echoed by Antón (1999:303) as she states that :

the analysis of interaction shows that learner-centred discourse provides opportunities for negotiation ... which creates an environment favourable to L2 learning. In contrast, teacher-centred discourse is shown to provide rare opportunities for negotiation.

According to this analysis, a desirable language learning cannot successfully take place in traditional approaches where, as Antón (1999:304) points out, "...classroom teaching is conceptualized as the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the passive learner" (see Au, 1993:48 and McKenzie, 1992:224). Therefore, the classroom discourse cycle should always "provide conditions for learning" (Malamah-Thomas, 1987:vii). The IRF interactional pattern inhibits the students' participation and development in the second language (see Van Lier, 1988:105). It is the task of the teachers to develop their students' communicative skills, instead of concentrating on mere "mastery" (Richards & Rodgers, 1986:103) of structures only (see Crookes & Gass, 1994:142).

The way in which classroom interaction is presented plays a very crucial part in developing the school leavers' communicative competence, which will be discussed in detail in the sections that follow this one, as they can neither be employed nor be in a position to further their studies if they cannot express themselves clearly in English as the second language (see Canale, 1983). The same applies to their final examinations. They cannot pass their final Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) examinations, for if they fail English regardless of how well they have performed in other subjects, they only obtain a General Certificate of Education (GCE) which is recognized neither by their tertiary education nor by their employers. Kroes in Chimbganda (1998:75) reminds us that the second language is needed for communication in employment and further education (see *The Pretoria News*,

April 11, 2000). It is therefore essential to develop communicative competence in both teachers and students as this will assist the pupils in the formulation of their written language and so contribute to improving their final examination results.

It is this problem of teacher-dominated language classrooms and the importance of maximum learner initiative as discussed above that forms the focus of this study. This researcher visited seven Form E/Form 5/COSC (an equivalent of standard 10 or Grade 12) language classrooms in four high schools in Lesotho in 1999. At their request I have refrained from identifying these schools by their names. In precounselling lessons samples of classroom discourse were collected from teachers whose classroom interaction manifested the characteristics of traditional IRF discourse as described above. Then, after counselling sessions with the teachers conducted according to Bowers' (1987) counselling model, data were collected, analysed and compared with those of the pre-counselling lessons. The problem of minimum learner initiative and its opposite, the importance of maximum learner initiative, was identified in five 80-minute and two 40-minute pre-counselling lessons. The results from these classes in Lesotho, where learner initiative is not maximized, were comparable to Chimbganda and Kasule's (1999:143) findings that "many high school students are unable to express themselves orally, and their written English is full of mistakes and high failure rates in public examinations are the norm every year." In other words the students' low proficiency is likely to affect their performance. The teachers were then counselled in the counselling/intervention phase so that there could be a shift from the IRF interactional pattern to a relaxed classroom situation that elicited maximum learner initiative. The intervention phase was followed by six 80-minute and one 40-minute post-counselling lessons in which the teachers' classroom discourse elicited optimal learner initiative, and these were monitored by the researcher. Then the teacher and the researcher together analysed the post-counselling lessons and found that the planned shift in classroom discourse patterns had occurred. There was

maximum learner initiative whose aspects will be discussed in details in subsequent chapters.

## **1.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of this research is three-fold: (i) to identify and analyse the typical discourse patterns employed by the teachers in the selected language classrooms (Data Set 1) from the point of view of  $\pm$  initiative, that is, to see whether they maximize or minimize learner initiative; (ii) to sensitize teachers to their discourse styles by means of an intervention aimed at eliciting optimal learner initiative as manifested in the classroom discourse, and (iii) to monitor changes in the teachers' discourse styles after the intervention. In the light of the above aims the researcher proposes to make a summary of findings and recommendations and give it to the: (i) heads of departments (HODs) and principals in the schools where data were collected; (ii) resource teachers throughout the country; (iii) subject advisors, and (iv) inspectorate team, so that they can hold workshops for language teachers in their schools, regions and districts and sensitize them to the constraints of the IRF discourse cycle and the importance of maximizing learner initiative so that students' interaction may answer their classroom and daily needs - a crucial tenet of Outcomes-based Education (OBE). Critical language awareness is required, as language teachers are required to develop their students' communicative competence by maximizing learner initiative (Greyling & Rantsoai, 2000).

## **1.3 RESEARCH METHODS**

The researcher has reviewed applied linguistics, English language teaching and language teaching methodology for a theoretical orientation of minimum and maximum learner initiative in language classrooms.

Lingual data were collected from seven Form E language classrooms in four high schools in Lesotho in 1999. The data were audiotaped and analysed for evidence of maximization of learner initiative at the level of classroom

discourse. Where this appeared to be lacking, Bowers' (1987) teacher counselling model was used as a basis for heightening the awareness of teachers to initiative-maximizing discourse strategies. There had been structured interviews between the researcher and the language teachers and a questionnaire to be completed by the students. This was done because qualitative researchers insist that those who are involved or studied should provide a participant's perspective of the events studied (Freeman, 1996:371). The audio recordings were transcribed on a turn-by-turn basis. The copy of data transcriptions is lodged with the Department of English at the University of the Orange Free State.

Data analysis was performed on the basis of Bowers' (1987) teacher-counselling model which will be illustrated in Chapter 4. After the identification of recurrent discourse patterns the researcher suggested some changes to the teachers concerned and then monitored the implementation of such changes.

The following figure (1.1) is illustrative of Bowers' (1987) counselling model.

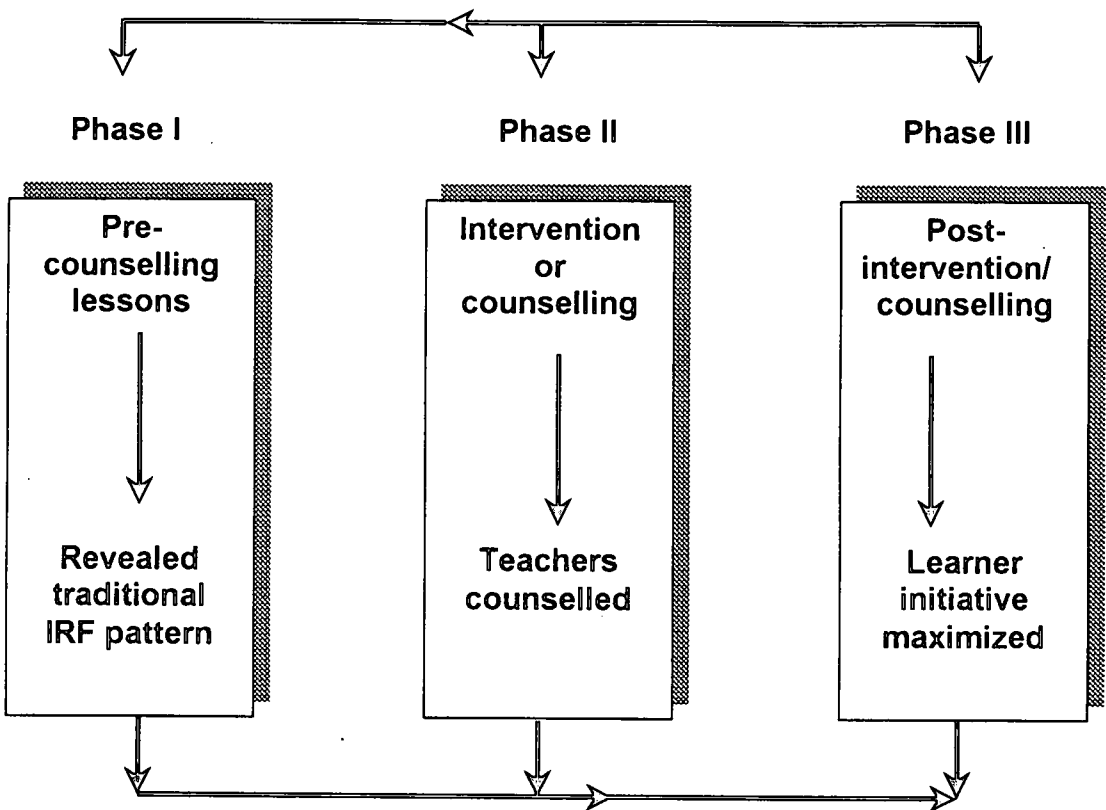


Figure 1.1: Collection and analysis of data

1.4 PROGRAMME OF STUDY

The programme of study involves the following aspects:

Chapter 2 of this study focuses on the literature dealing with various aspects of learner initiative, that is, discourse cycles that minimize and maximize learner initiative and their compatibility with OBE. Chapter 3 examines the research methodology used in this study. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of discourse samples according to the IRF pattern of classroom interaction. In other words, the three phases of Bowers' counselling model are discussed and implemented. Chapter 5 provides a conclusion and makes recommendations for teacher training and a shift from the IRF pattern of interaction to a more relaxed learner-centred type of learning, based on the findings of the previous chapters. It also discusses possibilities for future research and development.

## Chapter 2

---

### LITERATURE STUDY

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Before embarking on a detailed examination of various aspects of learner initiative, it is necessary to take a closer look at classroom discourse as it gives us much insight into the classroom situation that minimizes or maximizes learner initiative. Greyling (1998a:iv) refers to learner initiative as "a learner response pattern which includes multiple learner-learner exchanges followed by content feedback by the teacher." This definition is supported by Kinginger (1994:29) as she points out that "...learner to learner conversations are believed to present many advantages as supplements to work in a teacher-directed large group format." Learners can actually share linguistic knowledge if they work together.

It is also important to understand what a classroom is. Van Lier (1988:47) defines a second language classroom as "...the gathering, for a period of time, of two or more persons (one of whom generally assumes the role of instructor) for the purposes of language learning." It is in this gathering where we find discourse – a continuous-stretch of language larger than a sentence, often, constituting a coherent unit such as a sermon, argument, joke or narrative (Nunan, 1993:5). Salkie's (1995:ix) further explanation of discourse or text reveals that it refers to "...a stretch of language that may be longer than one sentence" (see Van Dijk, 1980 and Fairclough, 1995).

Hoey (1991:65) elaborates on the above definitions of discourse and states:

Whenever anyone asks a question and someone else replies, they are together creating a discourse. Similarly, whenever someone writes a letter to a friend or a paper for a conference, he or she is again creating a discourse, though it will only be completed when it is received and interpreted by the friend or the conference participants. A discourse, then, can be crudely characterised as any reasonably self-contained stretch of spoken or written language that is longer than one sentence...

According to Mehan (1985:121) the classroom discourse, as contained in an 'event' or lesson, can therefore be said to display:

...the majority of academic information... exchanged between teachers and students. The instructional phase, like other phases, is composed of characteristic interactional sequences. This exchange of academic information in interactional units is called 'elicitation sequences.' These units are ...sequential in that they occur one after the other in interaction.

It is the kind of exchange mentioned above that sometimes leads to Initiation – Response – Feedback (IRF) discourse cycle in traditional language classrooms. According to Sinclair and Coulthard (1975:17) the IRF discourse pattern should be seen as soliciting, responding and reacting moves, respectively. These researchers' observation is that a teacher initiates a traditional discourse cycle by asking a question or commanding a class in order to: "...elicit (a) an active verbal response on the part of the persons addressed... All questions are solicitations, as are commands, imperatives and requests." When the teacher asks a question, he expects the class to respond and this leads to a responding move, and then he evaluates the response. Thus, he solicits (initiates) and reacts (evaluates or follows up)



while the class only responds (see Johnson, 1995). This pattern of interaction is teacher controlled. This IRF pattern of interaction can only accommodate teacher-student interaction and not student-student interaction. Much of the IRF discourse pattern will be illustrated in later sections in this study.

In this study, the researcher reflects Sinclair and Coulthard's IRF model. Instead data analysis in this study is based on Bowers' (1987) counselling model. Therefore the research consists of three major phases, namely: the precounselling, the intervention, and the post-counselling phases. Bowers (1987:138) maintains that "...individual teachers, whatever their professional preparation, benefit from the personal advice of those who see them in action and recommend paths for development". Therefore the researcher will record and transcribe the lessons that will be analysed according to Bowers' model. This phase is called "Record & Analyse." After the analysis of the lessons, where the analysis reveals that student response is minimized by the teacher's discourse style, the researcher will help teachers maximize learner initiative in their classroom discourse. Lastly the teacher, together with the researcher, will implement suggestions in a post-counselling lesson and then evaluate the lesson in response to Bowers' (1987:150) questions: "What can I do to help this teacher? What might the teacher do, and ask me to do, in order to improve performance?"

Aspects of concern in this research are: (a) student participation and (b) teacher's questioning and topic control during a lesson, and (c) whether (a) and (b) above are conducive to maximizing or minimizing learner initiative. Then, after the intervention phase of counselling, the discourse cycle should manifest the desired effects of greater student participation, increased learner initiative and use of connected discourse instead of single utterance responses in the IRF interactional pattern.

The following section will therefore deal with the following aspects of learner initiative:

1. The IRF pattern of classroom discourse;
2. Types of questions and their effect on second language learning;
3. Communicative competence;
4. Accuracy-based and fluency-based teaching as manifested in second language classrooms;
5. Discourse/text types in English second language classes;
6. Seating arrangements and their impact on learner initiative in second language classes;
7. Teacher's and learner's roles in maximizing learner initiative.

## 2.2 THE IRF PATTERN OF CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

Our goal is a learning nation that is equipped to take advantage of the challenges and opportunities that the new century brings (Asmal, 2000:4).

The above quotation indicates that our second language learners should be in a position to use English in and outside the classroom situation. These students will then use English in their professional practice. One of the challenges confronting most students today is failure to meet potential employers' expectations of exhibiting relevant communication skills. Opportunities arise for competent language learners to make their mark in the employment terrain serving as professionals in media and communication related fields. In other words, language teaching should, according to Doff (1996:136), be done in a way that accommodates mundane language use. Foster (1998:87) emphasizes Doff's point and states that second language learners' "experience of learning English formally does not necessarily match their European or North American counterparts". Thus, second language teaching/learning should facilitate students' communicative ability.

We must not ignore the fact that most, if not all, second language learners normally become exposed to the target language in the classroom (see Foster, 1998:87). This problem is highlighted by Chimbganda and Kasule

(1999:142) in their discussion of problems of English as a second language (ESL) in Botswana as they point out that:

...the language of education at secondary school is English while Setswana, the language of the majority of the people, is the lingua franca. This means that the majority of ESL pupils... have a limited contact with the target language. The teachers, therefore, have to work hard, not only to overcome their own linguistic deficiencies, but also those of their pupils. The situation is aggravated by the fact that one cannot rely on the community to reinforce the concurrent process of ESL learning and development, because the wider community does not use English for their day-to-day communication.

According to Charles (1996:58), the situation above can only be remedied if: "...what is learned is exercised in a situation which has a direct public outcome". What is meant here is that language learning should be aimed at using it (language) in social contexts (Charles, 1996:57). So Callow and Callow (1992:6) strongly support this idea as they maintain that a communicator forms a core part in communication. This is further illustrated by Allwright and Bailey (1991:19) as they encourage language teachers to bear in mind that:

Interaction, in class or anywhere, has to be managed, as it goes along, no matter how much thought has gone into it beforehand. Even more important for teachers, though, and for language teachers in particular, is the fact that it has to be managed by everyone taking part, not just by the teacher, because interaction is obviously not something you just do to people, but something that people do together, collectively.

If interaction is what Allwright and Bailey have defined above, we are now in a position to tell whether the traditional classroom discourse really complies

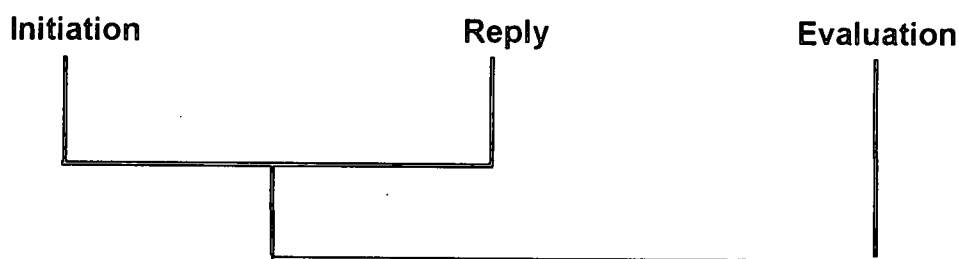
with the above definition of interaction. According to White and Lightbown (1984:233) "...the teacher asks the student a question or tells him to answer: the student answers: the teacher reacts to the answer" (see McHoul, 1978:191). This structure is further elaborated by Mehan (1985) in his observation that most of the interaction in the classroom is between a teacher and students (teacher-student interaction). Before turning our attention to an analysis of the above extract, it is imperative to briefly define a "turn" or "turn at talk" in order to facilitate our understanding of what actually happens in language classrooms. Goffman (1981:23) defines the "turn" as "...an opportunity to hold the floor, not what is said while holding." (see Thorne, 1997:478.) Several studies show that teachers talk more than students as they begin and end the discourse (see White & Lightbown, 1984; Sinclair & Brazil, 1982; Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Mehan, 1979 and 1985; Lightbown & Spada, 1993; Cook, 1991; Ur, 1996; Boulima, 1999; to mention just a few examples). This kind of dominance normally leads to "social inequality" which gives the teacher a "privileged access" to communication in the classroom (Caldas-Coulthard & Coulthard, 1996:84-5). Thus:

...teachers usually control communicative events, distribute speaking turns, and otherwise have special access to, and hence control over educational discourse. On the other hand, students have in principle access to talk in classroom only when talked to and invited to speak (Caldas-Coulthard & Coulthard, 1996:86).

These researchers' observation is that minimum learner initiative inhibits learning as students are not fully engaged in the learning process. In his expression of the dangers of the IRF discourse style, Gibbins (1996:2) mentions that "Mutuality in the learning process can be made visible by the 'division of labor' in the course, thus emphasizing a complementary approach by the instructor and student in common and shared experience in the discipline." But the traditional discourse cycle is at odds with Gibbins's

perception of learning, as will be discussed in details below.

Boulima (1999:5) points out that the IRF pattern typifies the traditional classroom discourse pattern as "'initiation' opens the exchange, 'response' constitutes a reply to the preceding 'initiation', and 'feedback' evaluates the preceding 'response' and closes the exchange" (see Ur, 1996; White & Lightbown, 1984). Sinclair and Coulthard (1975:17), pioneers of classroom discourse, refer to the IRF interactional pattern as soliciting, responding and reacting moves, respectively. According to these researchers, when the teacher asks a question, he expects the class to respond and this results in a reacting move. In other words, he is giving feedback. Thus the teacher solicits (initiates) and reacts (evaluates or follows up) while the class only responds. It is therefore self-evident that classroom discourse usually comes in a three-part structure (cf. Boulima, 1999). Mehan (1985:121) describes the typical three-part structure of classroom discourse as two adjacency pairs, as he illustrates in Figure 2.1:



**Figure 2.1: A typical three-part structure**

(Taken from Mehan, 1985:121)

Figure 2.1 above indicates that:

Initiation-reply is the first adjacency pair. When completed, this pair becomes the first part of the second adjacency pair. The second pair is the evaluation act, which comments on the completion of the initiation-reply pair (Mehan, 1985:121). (See Figure 1.)

What is indicated in the above extract is that the three-part structure of classroom discourse occurs as a question, answer (response) and comment (feedback/evaluation) (see Ur, 1996:226). McHoul (1978:198) refers to this structure (IRF) as "question-answer-comment (Q-A-C)". This again implies that students' participation or involvement is very limited. So Kruger and Van Schalkwyk's (1993:3) [ing] aim of "...the active participation of the teacher and the pupils contributes to the core or essence of educative teaching" is defeated.

The following excerpt is typical of the IRF interactional pattern. It has been taken from a Form E language lesson in one of the high schools in Lesotho.

(2)

11. T: Changes relating to pronouns. Okay ^  
Pronoun 'I' becomes pronoun?
12. S<sub>s</sub>: He or she.
13. T: He or she. Okay? Eh... what other changes?
- (Taken from the researcher's pilot study in 1998.)

In turn 11 in excerpt (2) above the teacher asks the students to tell him what the pronoun 'I' becomes in passive voice. Students, in turn 12, give an answer "He or she." To show that a response is the desired one, in turn 13, the teacher says "He or she. Okay? "What other changes are there?" Thus he is making a reacting move which completes the IRF discourse cycle. This interaction has three parts, namely initiation (I), response (R), and feedback (F). The last part distinguishes classroom discourse from real-life interaction, as Mehan (1985:126) comments that "the presence of the third slot, which evaluates the completion of the immediately preceding initiation-reply pair, is a distinguishing feature of educational discourse".

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975:18) state that reacting moves are:

...occasioned by a structuring, soliciting, responding or prior

reacting move, but are not directly elicited by them.

Pedagogically these moves served to modify (by clarifying, synthesizing, or expanding) and/or to rate (positively or negatively) what has been said previously.

That is why Mehan (1985:121) maintains that the purpose of the last part of the IRF discourse pattern is to "evaluate the content of the previous reply". In other words it (feedback) informs the respondent whether his or her response is acceptable or not. It even states where and how the answer should be repaired. For example, in excerpt (3) below the teacher's reaction in turn 29 "Okay ^ The previous day or the day before, eh?" implies that the answer is incomplete.

(3)

27. T: Uhm ^ Then ...uhm ^ Yesterday? (Initiation)  
 28. S<sub>s</sub>: The previous day. (Response)  
 29. T: Okay ^ The previous day or the day before, eh? (Feedback)  
 (Taken from the researcher's pilot study in 1998.)

This is why Mehan (1985:121) emphasizes the fact that "question-answer sequences that are followed by evaluations rather than acknowledgements can be explained by the difference between known-information questions and answer-seeking questions".

Several researchers refer to reacting moves in various ways. For example, others call them feedback, evaluation, assessment or reinforcement (see Nowlan, 1990; Sherman, 1995; Sinclair & Brazil, 1982; Johnson, 1995; Moore, 1992; McMillan, 1997; Harmer, 1998; Good & Brophy, 1997; Cook, 1991; Ur, 1996; Nunan, 1991; Boulima, 1999). McMillan (1997:123) mentions that in order for feedback to be effective, it should pinpoint "...the correctness of an answer; that is whether it is right or wrong ...tell students what they got right and what they missed, ... students need this kind of feedback to improve

their learning.” In other words we should not only say “Right”, “Good”, “Okay”, “Excellent”, “All right”, and “That’s right” as they do not give students enough information about their performance, “they provide very little that is helpful” (McMillan, 1997:125). He further points out that feedback is said to be effective only if it enables the students to identify and correct weakness in their performance. In this way it is given “to help and promote learning” (Ur, 1996:243).

Petty (1993:48) warns teachers not to avoid praise as students “hate being ignored; they will be encouraged by praise; and as long as their successes are recognised and praised, they will find any reasonable criticism challenging rather than demotivating”. Petty’s point in this case is that feedback can also be used in order to motivate students to participate in classroom interaction or activities, provided the teacher creates opportunities for all of them to be involved. He further states that we must “look for something to praise in every piece of work”. That is, even if the answer is incomplete or in wrong tense, students should be praised for that “partial success”. Petty’s (1993:48) view of helpful feedback is illustrated in the example below:

“Keep it in the future, Sheila can you see where you slipped into the past tense? Yes, that’s it. I like your opening sentence.”

In this example the teacher informs Sheila to correct her tense and at the same time she (Sheila) is praised for her opening sentence (see DiGiulio, 1995:50). However, Petty (1993:51) also insists that “Reinforcement should come as soon as possible, and should be experienced by every student”. But it also depends on whether the IRF discourse culture involves everybody in classroom interaction. Feedback should be given only when it is necessary as it:

...is most effective when it is delivered as a spontaneous but accurate message, giving the teacher’s genuine reaction to



student performance, and when it includes a specific description of the skill or behaviour that is commended. You should praise students simply and directly, in natural language, without gushy or dramatic words. A straightforward, declarative sentence is best. Try to be specific about what you are praising, and include your recognition of the student's effort (McMillan, 1997:126).

Moore (1992:207), like other researchers, has a negative view of "common verbal ...one-word comments or phrases such as "Good", "Excellent", "Correct" or "That's right" " as they become redundant and helpless if they are overused, as it has already been mentioned earlier. He (1992:207) therefore advises that feedback should be expressed in different ways in order for it to "remain fresh and meaningful". In contrast to the tradition of the IRF discourse cycle, Moore (1992:241) suggests that:

Rather than giving reinforcement after the initial response to a question, you should allow as many students as possible to respond, then reinforce all of them for their contributions. You can return to the best answer for further comment.

But the problem is whether the interactional pattern in the IRF discourse cycle gives room for many responses to the teacher's question. The use of effective feedback therefore demands a change of interactional pattern in language classes. Teachers should give their students equal participation opportunities and thereafter:

*Reinforce students answers sparingly.*

Remember that the reinforcement of every student response can kill a discussion. Students often fear that they will be unable to compete with the preceding reinforced responses (Moore, 1992:244).

What the above extract implies is that our feedback as teachers should encourage more participation on the part of the students. They should not be hindered by our praise to other students. Nowlan (1990:34) states that a positive reaction informs students about their success in answering the question, and this promotes their desire to give desired answers (cf. Richards & Lockhart, 1994:188). Some teachers' feedback is a repetition of the student's answer, as it happens in turn 13, in excerpt (1) above. The teacher says, "He or she". Nowlan (1990:33) pinpoints how dangerous this form of feedback can be, as:

...the pupils will not listen to each other, but will wait for you to repeat the correct answer. As a result they will not learn to consider answers and decide for themselves whether they are correct or not. Rather praise the pupil in some way so as to indicate your agreement ...give a non-verbal response such as a nod of the head or smile.

Classroom discourse is incomplete without feedback that is given tactfully in order to involve all the members of the class. It has already been mentioned earlier in this section that it is this feedback that distinguishes classroom discourse from real-life interaction.

However, Mehan (1985:122), White and Lightbown (1984:235), and Sinclair and Coulthard (1975:54) have observed that it sometimes happens that a student does not give an expected answer immediately or sometimes he gives an incomplete or incorrect answer. The teacher then uses a variety of strategies in order to get the response. He (the teacher) may prompt, repeat the question, simplify it, or give the turn to another student (see excerpt (4) below):

(4)

15. T: Adverbs. Okay ^ Adverbs such as?

Tsoanelo?

16. S<sub>3</sub>: (Silence.)  
17. T: Mabina?  
18. S<sub>4</sub>: (Mumbles) N-o-w.  
19. T: Eh ...uhm?  
20. S<sub>4</sub>: Today.  
21. T: Today becomes what?  
22. S<sub>5</sub>: That day.  
23. T: That day. All right ^ All right ^ Another one ^ Tholang?

(Taken from the researcher's pilot study in 1998.)

S<sub>3</sub> does not answer the teacher's question in turn 16 and so the teacher gives that turn to another student (S<sub>4</sub>) and this then leads to an extended sequence which occurs in I-I-R-I-R-I-R-F pattern (see turns 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23 in excerpt (4) above). The teacher's reaction in turn 19 indicates that he does not accept or understand the response in turn 18. These (three-part and extended sequence interactional patterns) emphasize the following aspects of classroom discourse described by Ellis (1992:38):

1. There is frequently a rigid allocation of turns.
2. Who speaks to whom at what time about what topics is subject to strict control with the result that competition and individual learner initiative are discouraged.
3. There is little opportunity for the negotiations of openings and closings.
4. Turns are allocated by the teacher, the right to speak always returned to the teacher when a student turn is complete and the teacher has the right to stop and interrupt a student turn.

A critical analysis of the aforementioned characteristics implies that this type of classroom discourse calls for minimization of teacher dominance in order to create opportunities for language learners to use language in classroom interaction (Littlewood, 1992:98). Thus we will have answered Barkhuizen's

(1998a:98) call that "being able to speak effectively, both in the classroom for academic purposes and outside the school in everyday life, is a very important skill which needs to be acquired by English learners (see Allwright & Bailey, 1991:130).

One other constraint of the IRF interactional pattern is that due to the amount of talk done by the teacher, most of the students are not allocated talking turns during lessons. Ur (1996:237) conscientizes teachers by warning that:

Its results do not, however, provide a very representative sample of what most of the class know or do not know, since only a minority have a chance to express themselves, and these are more advanced and confident (see Tsui, 1996:153).

However, he does not totally reject question-answer-comment or Teacher-Student-Teacher (TST) discourse structure as it is "...useful, since it allows the teacher to monitor immediately, and learners may also learn from each other's responses". But this does not mean that teacher talk, which according to Cook (1991:90) refers to - the amount of speech supplied by the teacher (see Richards, Platt & Platt, 1992:375), should dominate the students talk and so hinder active participation which facilitates learning (see Mackey, 1999:560). In support of this point, Allwright and Bailey (1991:21) say that creating and giving everyone a chance to use language in the classroom is crucial in learning and developing the second language. Evidently, due to time constraints teachers will be tempted to allocate turns only to bright students and by so doing neglect and inhibit other students' involvement (see Shamim, 1996) as Tsui's (1996:153) study reveals that "when there is more teacher talk, there will be less student participation, resulting in long silences in the classroom that will prompt the teacher to talk even more" (see Mackey, 1999; Johnson, 1995).

The IRF discourse pattern cannot produce the kind of students that Asmal (2000) calls for. That is, our students are not well-prepared for the new

century. It is fitting at this stage to conclude that the traditional IRF discourse cycle does not promote learning in second language classrooms and this will be further illustrated of teachers' questioning styles in the section that immediately follows this one.

### 2.3 TYPES OF QUESTIONS AND THEIR EFFECT ON SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

The previous detailed discussion of the IRF interactional pattern has turned our attention to the fact that questions are a distinctive feature of teacher-student interaction. This characteristic of classroom discourse is emphasized by Ur (1996:228) as he purports that "Questioning is a universally used activation technique in teaching, mainly with the Initiation-Response-Feedback pattern..." A number of researchers have made classroom discourse research possible by giving definitions and descriptions of types of questions used in different settings (see Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Mehan, 1979 and 1985; Nunan, 1989 and 1991; Kilfoil and Van der Walt, 1997; Ur, 1996; Tsui, 1996; Ellis, 1992; Lightbown & Spada, 1993; Boulima, 1999; Shepherd, 1998; Good & Brophy, 1997; Cross, 1991; Richards & Lockhart, 1994). Their studies have revealed that the teacher is the only person, in most cases, who asks questions in traditional classroom discourse and this is echoed by Richetti and Sheerin (1999:49) in their observation that some questions do not have desired effects as they still "reside with the teacher" (cf. Good & Brophy, 1997:10; Ellison & Rothenberger, 1999:54). In other words, teachers are the only ones who are still privileged to ask questions in class.

The above-mentioned studies reveal that there is a recurrent use of closed questions in the Q-A-C discourse cycle. These are questions to which there are always specifically desired answers (White & Lightbown, 1984:234). Nunan (1991:192) refers to this type of questions as "factual questions" while they are referred to as "display", "low-order" or "recall" questions by Brock (1986:48), Boulima (1999:75), Richards *et al.* (1992:114), Shepherd

(1998:24), Good & Brophy (1997:102), Richards and Lockhart (1994:187), Ur (1996:229), Nunan (1996:1991) and King (1994:350). These questions are only asked to check whether students have grasped or know the specific information asked for. Ur (1996:229) further states that display questions are merely asked to check whether students know the only "single right answer". (See Mehan 1979:286; Capel, Leask & Turner, 1995:84.)

Brock (1986:49) critically analyses the use of known-information questions and observes that they do not replicate real-life interaction. Teachers are therefore warned against the limitations of these questions, as it will be elaborated later. The use of known-information questions does not only minimize students' opportunities to use language communicatively, but it also denies many students talking turns in the classroom, the one and only place where second language learners are supposed to be exposed to the language. For instance, the following teacher-learner interaction clarifies and exposes the extent to which display questions hinder students' participation and communicative development:

(5)

1. T: Last week we were dealing with ....uhm.
  2. S<sub>s</sub>: (Mumble) Re..por..r..ted speech.
  3. T: Reported speech. All right. What's that?  
Uhm... Lekhotla.
  4. S<sub>1</sub>: Reported speech.
- (Taken from the researcher's pilot study in 1998).

In turn 1, the teacher asks the question so that he can check whether the class still remembers what they had done during the previous week. That is why he repeats the response that was given in turn 2 in turn 3, "Reported speech. All right." This repetition together with the praise "All right" serve as a reaction to the students' response. Turn 4, also, is the minimal response to the question in turn 3. If second language learners always or most of the time

provide answers like the one in turn 2 in excerpt (5) above, they will never be exposed to learning situations as theirs is to recall only what they have been told by the teacher. As Shodell (1995:280) states, "knowing the answer to a question may or may not indicate an understanding of the subject matter." Again we cannot guarantee whether all the students have responded, as those "who avoid a public response situation need to be given opportunities to learn that they can participate successfully" (Good & Brophy, 1997:12; cf. Ellison & Rothenberger, 1999:54). Apart from the fact that students are only exposed to answering known-information questions, the paucity of language used in the IRF discourse pattern illustrates Harmer's statement that "...they don't hear or see enough of it or have sufficient opportunities to try it out" (Harmer, 1998:24). So the teacher's questions should reveal that he wants "to see everyone participating and learning" (Cohen, 1999:19). In addition to this, all the students should be given talking turns so that "...finally, they have opportunities to use linguistic muscles - and check their own progress" (Harmer, 1998:24; cf. Johnson, 1997:47). But this is impossible as only few students are rarely allocated turns because of teacher-domination of the discourse pattern (IRF) (see Johnson, 1997:45).

The study of classroom discourse indicates that display questions result in a larger part of information that the teacher transmits to the students (see Brock, 1986:49; Boulima, 1999:72). However, Harmer's (1998:25) criticism of this traditional discourse is that:

...students don't usually get the same kind of exposure or encouragement as those who - at whatever age - are 'picking up' the language. But that does not mean they cannot learn a language if the right conditions apply. Like language learners outside schools, they will need to be ...exposed to language and given chances to use it.

In short, the kind of language that students are exposed to in the use of display questions cannot in any way be used outside the classroom for social

interaction as students only know how to answer known-information questions. Therefore we must bear in mind that students' learning should not only enable them to answer questions, but even to ask them (Shodell, 1995:280). This is because "questions enable us to access and analyze information and draw sound conclusions" (Richetti & Sheerin, 1999:59). It is again emphasized that teachers should give students a chance to use language communicatively. In one of the teacher-centred lessons that White and Lightbown (1984:231) observed, 'this interaction sequence lasted a total of 91 seconds, and in that time period, the teacher asked a total of 23 questions! Of that number, nine were exact repetitions of "What do you have on that wall?" '

This extract, like others before it, exposes the negative effect of display questions on language learning. If the teacher asks 23 questions within such a short time, how long are the answers to them? Do students think about the answers or do they just recall? If they only recall, how many of them are going to do it within the given time? What will happen to those who do not? This chain of questions can help teachers to make an analysis of their questions and reformulate them in a way that generates discourse that maximizes learner initiative. Nunan (1991:192) gives us an example of closed questions which a teacher asked a class after they had an outing as follows:

What did you do on Wednesday?

It was nice, was it?

Did you look at the animals?

What else?

Zdravko, did you go?

What animal did you see?

Was it good?

Can you draw it?

(From Nunan, 1991:192.)



According to Tsui (1996:151-152) it is this type of question that forces language teachers to be impatient as they already know the answers to them. Mehan's (1979:291) observation in this particular case is that teachers do not allow students enough time to think about the answer as he (the teacher) already knows it. He states that "...teachers often find themselves 'searching' for that answer while students provide various 'trial' responses which are in search of validation as the correct answer". Rowe, in Good and Brophy (1997:376), mentions that in their eagerness to get the answer from the students, teachers sometimes answer their own questions or repeat them, change the wording of the question to facilitate the students' understanding, or they take a turn back and allocate it to another student who is thought to be intelligent enough to provide the desired answer (see Mehan, 1979; Good & Brophy, 1997; Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Tsui, 1996; Capel *et al.*, 1995). The teacher who is always in a hurry to get "only a single correct response to known-information questions" (Mehan, 1979:291) does not usually give enough wait-time to students to think about the questions. That is, the class is not given reasonable time to think and answer the question after it has been asked (see Ur, 1996; Crookes, 1989; Richards & Nunan, 1990; Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Tsui, 1996; Boulima, 1999; Richards *et al.*, 1992; Capel *et al.*, 1995; Johnson, 1997). This behaviour denies second language learners chances to use the language communicatively (Dreyer & Van der Walt, 1991:42) as they already have "...a very restricted range of verbal functions to perform. They rarely initiate and never follow up" (Sinclair & Brazil, 1982:58). This kind of discourse is queried by Zahorik (1999:52) in the extract below:

The teacher gives information, asks questions, praises correct responses, and controls interactions with students in other ways. The students are largely passive in that their role is to listen and follow the teacher's directions.

Shamim's (1996:128) study reveals that questions that students ask in class are usually asked after mustering up courage and they only request their teachers to repeat the page number if they happened to miss it. They also direct a question to their teacher when they want "to confirm" that they have really understood the teacher's directions. Teachers are therefore advised to bear the difference between first and second language learners in mind in order to facilitate the latter's development in the classroom. As Tomlinson and Kalbfleisch (1998:54) point out, "the brain learns best when it 'does', rather than when it 'absorbs'. Thus, all students must think at a high level to solve knotty problems and to transform the ideas and information they encounter." White and Lightbown (1984:241) turn our attention to the notion of students' responses to the teacher's questions. Since the students, in most cases, only speak in response to the teacher's questions, the teacher's questioning style should always consider that:

The first step in answering a question is understanding the question. A native speaker can do this with facility, but a second language learner may have to consciously analyze some or all of the sentence constituents before he knows what it means. Next, he must retrieve the information he needs to answer from long-term memory... The third step is formulating the answer-putting it into words... The last step is activating the muscles in order to produce the answer out loud.

No one can deny that lack of enough wait-time after the teacher's display questions ignores all these required steps in answering questions. We should not always expect students "...to have the answers to our questions on the tips of their tongues" (White & Lightbown, 1984:241).

Display questions determine and confine students' answers in the language classroom, the one and only place where some second language learners are exposed to the language. Shamim's (1996:129) criticism of closed questions in class is that they are sometimes asked to control students' behaviour in a way that will show the rest of the class that a particular student has not been listening, especially if he fails to answer the question (see Good & Brophy, 1997). She further states that some teachers only ask students questions so as to:

...bring them back to the "fold" when they were observed as not paying attention to what was being taught in the front. Thus it seemed that the students in the back were addressed basically for punitive or control purposes (Shamim, 1996:129).

All the reasons of asking questions in language classrooms, mentioned above, contrast with Brown and Wragg's (1993:4) and Ur's (1996:229) reasons why teachers should normally ask questions in class. (See Johnson, 1997:45; Richards & Lockhard, 1994:185.) According to Ur, the following reasons are or should be considered as the appropriate ones:

**REASONS FOR QUESTIONING**

- To provide a model for language or thinking.
- To find out something from learners (facts, ideas, opinions).
- To check or test understanding, knowledge or skill.
- To get learners to be active in their learning.
- To direct attention to the topic being learned.
- To inform the class via the answers of the stronger learners rather than through the teacher's input.
- To provide weaker learners with an opportunity to participate.
- To stimulate thinking (logical, reflective or imaginative); to probe more deeply into issues;
- To get learners to review and practise previously learnt material.
- To encourage self expression.
- To communicate to the learners that the teacher is genuinely interested in what they think.
- (Note: Any specific question is likely to involve more than one of these aims, for example, it might review and practise while simultaneously encouraging self-expression.)

Box 2.1 (Taken from Ur, 1996:229)

The IRF discourse cycle is only compatible with two reasons, that is, "To check or test understanding, knowledge or skill" and "To get learners to review and practise previously learnt material". However, the teacher can modify the IRF sequence to accommodate all the reasons or uses, depending on how he initiates.

Another important point that should be paired with the teacher's questions is that "...by and large, the level of question affects what the student says in response" (Brock, 1986:49). In short, a question can either elicit "Yes, no or short phrase and a complete sentence" from students. It can also call for real

life language use as it will be illustrated later with another type of question. In contrast excerpt (6) below reveals that questions should be asked to seek unknown information.

### 2.3.1 Referential questions and how they promote language use

(6)

1. Speaker A: What time is it, Denise?
2. Speaker B: 2.30.
3. Speaker C: Thank you, Denise.

(Taken from Mehan, 1979:285.)

The type of interaction in the extract above is the one that we encounter in mundane conversation. Speaker A asks for information that he does not have from speaker B who "provides this information" (Mehan, 1979:285). Speaker A then expresses his gratitude to speaker B and says, "Thank you, Denise" for giving him the information. The question in turn 1 in excerpt (6) above, is asked in order to obtain information not known to speaker A and it is referred to as referential, inferential, high-level, open-ended or real question (see Brock, 1986; Ur, 1996; Nunan, 1991; Mehan, 1985; Cross, 1991; Boulima, 1999; Tsui, 1996; to mention but a few examples).

Referential questions do not only differ from display questions in the kind of information sought after, but they also differ from them in the kind of discourse resulting from their use. The answers to the former are usually longer and the sentence structure is not as simple as that of answers to known-information questions (Brock, 1986:49). These differences convincingly reveal that student language is going to replicate real life interaction:

An increased use by teachers of referential questions, which increase a flow of information from students to teachers, may

generate discourse which more nearly resembles the normal conversation learners experience outside of the classroom.

Thus, teachers who frequently use referential questions in class are likely to produce confident learners as "effective teacher-generated questioning strategies encourage students to think" (Richetti & Sheerin, 1999:59). These are the questions that meet the students communicative needs because:

...motive in questioning is to get... students to engage with the language material actively through speech; so an active questioning technique is one that elicits fairly prompt, motivated, relevant and full responses. If, on the other hand, our questions result in long silences, or are answered by only the strongest students, or obviously bore the class, or consistently elicit only very brief or unsuccessful answers, then there is probably something wrong (Ur, 1996:230).

It then goes without saying that the use of referential questions in language classrooms is more effective than that of display questions or "Guess what the teacher wants you to say (Ur, 1996:230) or "predetermined, canned" questions (Elkind & Sweet, 1998:39) as the former are relevant to the aims of second language teaching-learning that will follow later in subsequent sections in this study. Students' communicative ability is developed as they will be given an opportunity to think, show knowledge, understanding or skills and to be actively involved in their learning (see Box 2.1). Richetti and Sheerin (1999:59) encourage the use of these questions as they develop students' "thinking and creativity". However, they also insist that:

...to develop the thinking and questioning abilities of students, the questions must reside with the students. We need to help students develop the capability to ask tough and meaningful questions (Richetti & Sheerin, 1999:59).

They further (1999:58) observe that students are not supposed to receive information from the teachers without asking questions. That is, their thinking should be developed concurrently with their questioning ability. Freeman and Freeman (1998:103) also encourage students' questions as they facilitate language learning.

What is implied by Richetti and Sheerin and Freeman and Freeman above is that the kind of responses and language use elicited by higher-order questions develop the students' linguistic ability. When teachers automatically increase wait-time:

1. The length of responses increases.
  2. The number of unsolicited but appropriate responses increases.
  3. Failures to respond decrease.
  4. Confidence as reflected in decrease of inflected responses increases.
  5. Incidence of speculative responses increases.
  6. Incidence of child-child comparisons of data increases.
  7. Incidence of evidence-inference statements increases.
  8. The frequency of student questions increases.
  9. Incidence of responses from students rated by teachers as relatively slow increases.
  10. The variety in type moves made by students increases.
- (Rowe, 1974:81.)

All the points above reveal that learner initiative is manifested by giving learners enough wait-time to think and produce the desired answers. White and Lightbown (1984:239) recommend that "If we want them to think, we must give them enough *time* to think." The limitations of display and referential questions stress the importance of maximizing learner initiative in second language classes. Ur's (1996:230) solution to teacher's questions that hinder students' participation and actual language use encourage the following in

following in language classrooms:

#### CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE QUESTIONING

1. **Clarity:** do the learners immediately grasp not only what the question means, but also what kind of an answer is required?
2. **Learning value:** does the question stimulate thinking and responses that will contribute to further learning of the target material? Or is it irrelevant, unhelpful or merely time-filling?
3. **Interest:** do learners find the question interesting, challenging, stimulating?
4. **Availability:** can most of the members of the class try to answer it? Or only the more advanced, confident, knowledgeable? (Note that the mere addition of a few seconds' wait-time before accepting a response can make the question available to a significantly larger number of learners.)
5. **Extension:** does the question invite and encourage extended and/or varied answers?
6. **Teacher reaction:** are the learners sure that their responses will be related to with respect, that they will not be put down or ridiculed if they say something inappropriate?

Box 2.2 (Taken from Ur, 1996:230)

The criteria in Box 2.2 above emphasize how *important* and *effective questioning* (emphasis mine) is in second language development. The whole class becomes engaged and activated to use "language as freely and 'communicatively' as they can" (Harmer, 1998:25-26).



## 2.4 COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Richards *et al.* (1992:65) understands communicative competence as “the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to form grammatically correct sentences but also to know when and where to use these sentences and to whom”. Johnson (1995:6) also states that second language learners need communicative competence in order to develop their productive and receptive skills. Thus, students need to develop the ability to use language appropriately in various settings (see Lightbown & Spada, 1993:149; Nyyssönen, 1996:160; Satchwell, 1997:7; Chapel, 1997:1; Canale, 1983:5).

There are four components of communicative competence, namely, grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competences. The first component of communicative competence, according to Nyyssönen (1996:160), is “the knowledge of grammar of an ideal speaker”, while Chimbganda (1998:75) sees it as “the grammatical accuracy of forms, inflections and sequences” (cf. Paulston, 1992:98; Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1997:104; Richards *et al.*, 1992:65). It is in this component teachers have to work hard in order to help students develop fluency through using language. Kilfoil and Van der Walt’s (1997:104) call is that:

In oral work the teacher has to pay attention to aspects of pronunciation and phonics as well as grammatical structure. Accent is not important and can, in fact, be quite delightful, but pronunciation and sentence stress can hinder the communication of meaning.

Canale's (1983:7) discussion of grammatical competence reveals that "...features and rules of the language such as vocabulary, word formation, sentence formation, pronunciation, spelling and linguistic semantics" are to be given special attention in language classrooms. It is therefore evident that this competence should be developed in order to enrich the students' repertoire. The emphasis, again, is on maximizing learner initiative in order for teachers to identify problematic areas. It will then be easy for teachers to take corrective measures and solve the students' linguistic problems. In this way, the traditional IRF discourse cycle cannot fully meet the demands of grammatical competence as students sometimes give "yes, no, short phrase or single word" answers which are always already known to the teacher.

The second component of communicative competence is sociolinguistic competence, wherein:

conventions and cultural factors determine a person's choice of register - that is, vocabulary, tone and degree of formality, her or his paralinguistic behaviour and what is and is not acceptable at different levels. The learning of a language cannot be separated from its text and social factors (Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1997:104).

Chimbanga's (1998:74) definition of this component (sociolinguistic competence) – "the speaker's or writer's ability to express the appropriate message in terms of the person being addressed, the purpose and overall circumstances of the communication" - is echoed by Paulston (1992:98), Richards *et al.* (1992:339), and Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1997:104-5). In his further explanation of sociolinguistic competence Canale (1983:7) makes us aware that:

...it would generally be inappropriate for a waiter in a restaurant

to command a customer to order a certain menu item regardless of how the utterance and communicative function (a command) were expressed grammatically. ...For example, a waiter trying to take an order politely in a tasteful restaurant would be using inappropriate grammatical form (here register) if he were to ask, 'OK, chump, what are you and this broad gonna eat?'

In short, our students, especially second language learners, should be able to use a variety of styles appropriately in different contexts.

The third component, discourse competence, according to Chimbganda (1998:75) refers to "...the ability to select, order and arrange structures and words in a clear and effective way which achieves the intended message". (Cf. Skehan, 1996a:92; Paulston, 1992:92; Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1997:106-107). Our second language learners should display exceptional ability to write or speak according to the rules of different discourse types, for example, they should be able to differentiate a formal letter from an informal one (Richards *et al.*, 1992:111) in order to be said to be competent in discourse norms.

The fourth and last component of communicative competence is strategic competence. This is the speaker's ability to find a way or ways to solve his "communicative problem" (Skehan, 1996a:92) in order to communicate. The same researcher has discovered that:

...strategic competence is compensatory in nature, coming into play when other competences are lacking, either because in the ease of the foreign language user, there is an area of deficiency, or in the ease of a native language user (perhaps dealing with incipient senility), maybe a word is lacking, producing a problem which needs to be circumvented. The implication is that we are concerned with knowledge about how to solve communicative problems in general, which may then be

exploited when actual problems occur and performance is required. (Cf. Canale, 1983:10; Chimbganda 1998:75).

Canale (1983:11) appeals to teachers to develop all the communication strategies in students in order to avoid silence in language classrooms, and it is this opportunity that will highlight the problematic linguistic areas for the teacher to correct and develop. Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1997:106) therefore suggest that:

Strategic competence is an important part of overall communicative competence. Teachers should teach various strategies explicitly so that learners develop a range of options from which they can consciously choose when faced with tasks in the language classrooms. (Cf. Chimbganda, 1998:61.)

In other words the teacher-centred IRF classroom discourse only covers grammatical competence partially through the teacher's emphasis on form as has already been illustrated earlier on. This poses a great problem when learners are given written work as an individual learner has to "...find from his linguistic resources the facilitative strategies which will enable him to convey the intended meaning as accurately as possible" (Chimbganda, 1998:62). Patton (1999:1) also encourages us to "...develop a more efficient delivery system that meets the needs of our customers", who in this case are language learners. That is, language learning should meet the requirements of developing of the all the four components of communicative competence. So, it is up to language teachers to examine the traditional IRF discourse cycle and tell whether it facilitates communicative competence or not.

## 2.5 ACCURACY-BASED AND FLUENCY-BASED TEACHING AS MANIFESTED IN SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

When the objective is accuracy, teacher and learners are chiefly concerned with 'getting the language right': forming correct sounds, words, sentences. When it is fluency, they are concentrating on the 'message': communicating or receiving content (Ur, 1996:103).

The above extract elaborates the difference between accuracy-based and fluency-based language teaching (see Ulliyatt, 1991; Ur, 1996; Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1997; Brumfit, 1984; Boulima, 1999). This explanation can be compared to Richards *et al.*'s (1992:141-142) which refers to fluency as:

- a. the ability to produce written and/or spoken language with ease;
- b. the ability to speak with a good but not necessarily perfect command of intonation, vocabulary, and grammar;
- c. the ability to communicate ideas effectively;
- d. the ability to produce continuous speech without causing comprehension difficulties or a breakdown of communication.

On the contrary, accuracy is "the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences but may not include the ability to speak or write fluently." We can, therefore, at this stage, agree with Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1997:74) as they argue that accuracy and fluency facilitate communicative competence as the former is about "grammatical and syntactical correctness" while the latter is about discourse. This piece of information informs us how inevitable both accuracy and fluency are in language teaching/learning process.

From this brief definition of accuracy, given above, we can deduce that accuracy owes its existence to the traditional method approaches, such as

grammar translation, the direct method, or audiolingualism (Greyling, 1998a:1). Again, he informs us that:

...then one is bound to define accuracy teaching in terms of the structural features of language correctness. These 'methods' are associated with teacher control over learner initiative and classroom processes. Learner initiative is minimized, while the teacher controls the transfer of information.

This then implies that the methods will be associated with teacher control and minimization of learner initiative. The teacher in the teaching/learning environment is the authoritative figure who is presumed to possess virtually omniscient and omnipotent powers to intervene if anything goes awry during the teaching/learning process. The learner then receives knowledge passively as Natal College of Education (1997:51) strongly disagrees that students can "learn by filling them with information, as we can fill a can of water." (See Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1997:9; Greyling, 1998a:1-2; Boulima, 1999:195; Brumfit, 1984:42).

Another feature that is typical of the accuracy-based teaching is the teacher's control over information and classroom processes through questioning, clue-giving, extended sequences of interaction and conveying information which minimize learner initiative. This teacher control and initiative minimizing teacher initiations restrict learner initiative to find the correct answer to a known-information question and the emphasis is on overt error corrections, accuracy and usage. Examples will be dealt with in Chapter Four of this study.

The teacher tightly controls both the subject matter taught, and the kinds of learner contributions through initiation-response-feedback. Where there are short circuits in the interaction, the teacher embarks upon some or other lingual strategy in solving the problem, such as re-initiation, providing clues in facilitating learner responses (see Greyling, 1998a). By so doing the

teacher embarks upon an extended sequence of interaction (see Mehan, 1985). The other features of accuracy-based teaching will be discussed in details in Chapter Four of this study.

"Fluency activities demand extensive writing, listening, reading and speaking" (Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1997:74). That is, there is a need to develop students' receptive and productive skills so that they can be competent in the language. According to Brumfit (1984:56) fluency is concerned with "comprehension and production" of the intended message, that is, whether an addressor can produce the message as intended and whether the addressee can receive the message without any communication breakdown. Boulima (1999:195) has the same view of fluency as he defines it thus:

'Fluency work', on the other hand, aims at developing pupils' ability to communicate a message with ease, not necessarily using perfect intonation, vocabulary, or grammar, but not using utterances likely to cause a breakdown in communication.

On the contrary, fluency activities are aimed at enhancing communicative ability (Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1997:76) as Ur's (1996:103) distinction between accuracy and fluency activities illustrate:

Table 2.1

| Accuracy activities   | Fluency activities   |
|---|--|
| The texts are usually composed of separate ('discrete') items: sentences and words.   | The texts are usually whole pieces of discourse: conversations, stories, etc.                                      |
| Performance is assessed on how few language mistakes are made.  | Performance is assessed on how well ideas are expressed or understood.   |
| Texts may be used in any mode (skill), regardless of how they are used in real life (dialogues may be written, written texts used for listening). | Texts are usually used as they would be in real life: dialogues are spoken, articles and written stories are read. |
| Tasks do not usually simulate real-life situations  | Tasks often simulate real-life situations.   |

(Taken from Ur, 1996:103.)

See (Greyling, 1998a; Brumfit, 1984) for a further analysis of fluency. A detailed account of fluency-based teaching will be given in Chapter Four of this study. Thus we can tell that accuracy teaching alone cannot develop students communicative ability as it is teacher-centred, while fluency-based teaching maximize learner initiative. The other advantages of fluency-based teaching will be dealt with in later chapters of this study.

## 2.6 DISCOURSE/TEXT TYPES IN ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSES

Hoey's (1991:66) concern is that language teachers need to focus on discourse and text types so that they can easily tell whether their language teaching benefits or enhances their students' communicative ability:

It is normally a prime objective of the language teacher to



encourage the learner to develop natural conversation skills in the target language. If the teacher knows what a natural conversation involves, he or she will be in a better position to assess whether their learners are succeeding in developing the conversational skills that they need in order to be effective speakers of the target language.

Hoey's point is that teachers should not ignore the importance of discourse and texts in language learning/teaching. That is, teachers who teach language communicatively help the learners "...to make sense of reality. It is ...therefore a continual renewal of our identity by interacting with the third person world and second person others" (Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 1999:206).

Salkie's (1995:ix) perception of text or discourse, given at the beginning of this chapter, indicates that both text and discourse are both taken to mean one and the same thing, even though Seidlhofer and Widdowson (1999:205-206) are against people who talk "...of either text or discourse as if they were synonymous". They discuss them from different angles. In their view the text results from the process of discourse and:

texts come in all shapes and sizes. They may indeed take the linguistic form of sentences in combination, but that is incidental. They may equally take the form of isolated sentences (KEEP OFF THE GRASS) or phrases (WET PAINT) or single words (PRIVATE) or even letters (P). All such public notices are texts and when we recognize them as such we engage our contextual knowledge to derive discourses from them and read into them what we assume to be the intended reference and force (Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 1999:207; cf. Halliday & Hasan, 1984:294; Coates, 1995:42).

In this view, then, we may agree that discourse and text cannot be used interchangeably. Evidently, text gives us information or "What is said" (Schiffrin, 1994:379). It is only when we have understood what "KEEP OFF THE GRASS" means and acted accordingly that we have then created a complete discourse. This definition is stressed by Schiffrin (1994:378-379) as she defines:

"text" as the linguistic content of utterances: the stable semantic meanings of words, expressions, and sentences, but not the inferences available to hearers depending upon the context in which words, expressions, and sentences are used.

Richards *et al.* (1992) have the same view of discourse and they refer to it as "larger language units such as paragraphs, conversations, and interviews" (see Thorne, 1997:469; Halliday & Hasan, 1985:2; Coates, 1995:42; Carter, Goddard, Reach, Sanger & Browring, 1997:323).

The most obvious distinction between text and discourse is size as well as number of participants in each, that is, a text can still remain a text without the second person in its production, formation or organization. Secondly, Cook and Seidlhofer (1996:11) refer to text "...as the starting point or alternatively the trace of discourse".

The differences between oral and written discourses is illustrated in the table below:

Table 2.2

|                 | Written discourse   | Spoken discourse  |
|-----------------|---|---|
| 1. Permanence   | Written discourse is fixed and stable so the reading can be done at whatever time, speed and level of thorough-ness the individual reader wishes. | Spoken text is fleeting and moves in real time. The listener may occasionally interrupt to request clarification - must in general follow what is said at the speed set by the speaker.         |
| 2. Explicitness | The written text is explicit; it has to make clear the context and all references.  | The real-time situation and knowledge shared between speaker and listener means that some information can be assumed and need not be made explicit.   |
| 3. Density      | The content is presented much more densely in writing.  | The information is "diluted" and conveyed through many more words: there are a lot of repetitions, glosses, "fillers", producing a text that is noticeably longer with more redundant passages. |
| 4. Detachment   | Detached in time and space from its reading; the writer normally works alone, and may not be acquainted with his or her readers.                  | Usually takes place in immediate interaction with known listeners, with availability of immediate feedback.   |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 5. Organization                               | Conforms more to conventional rules of grammar, and its vocabulary is more precise and formal. | A speaker is improvising as he or she speaks: ongoing alternations, in the shape of glosses, self-corrections and so on produce an apparently disorganized 'stream-of-conscious' kind of discourse. |
| 6. Slowness of production, speed of reception | Slower   | Faster  |
| 7. Standard language                          | Normally uses a generally acceptable variety of the language.                                  | May sometimes be in a regional or other limited-context dialect.  |
| 8. A learnt skill                             | Taught and learned.  | Acquired intuitively.   |
| 9. Sheer amount of importance                 | Shorter.   | Longer, redundant and more important for survival and effective functioning in society.   |

(From Ur, 1996:159-161.)

These types of spoken and written discourses have also been studied by Chafe in Renkema (1993:86), another researcher who mentions that there are distinctive features or characteristics such as:

1. Writing takes longer than speaking.
2. Writers do not have contact with readers.

What is implied here is that words that are used to "join words, phrases, or clauses together such as *but, and when ...*" (Richards *et al.*, 1992:77) are

used quite often in written language and this takes much time. Again, participants in interaction taking part fully as the listeners can commend, ask questions or add more information to the speaker's. However, written interaction "is not part of a shared situation existing between writers and readers" (Renkema, 1993:86).

Students are not expected to produce and receive texts which are not textually functional (Richards *et al.*, 1992:151). Of course, a text will not be considered normal without textuality (cf. De Beaugrande & Dressler, 1994:3). According to De Beaugrande (1980), textuality is determined by: *Cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, situationality, intertextuality and informativity.*

The notion of *cohesion* has been studied by a number of researchers (e.g. Carroll, 1994:156; Ventola, 1999:104; Renkema, 1993: 35; Ostman, 1999:77; De Beaugrande & Dressler, 1994:48). Haliday and Hasan (1985:299) perceive cohesion as:

the continuity that exists between one part of the text and another. It is important to stress that continuity is not the whole of texture. ...the continuity adds a further element that must be present in order for the discourse to come to life as text. The continuity that is provided by cohesion consists, in most general terms, in expressing at each stage in the discourse the points of contact with what has gone before.

A further explanation of the above extract is provided by Richards *et al.* (1992:62) as they consider cohesion as a connection between either parts of a sentence or parts of a text. For example:

(7)

- Angela: Good morning. I want to send a letter to Singapore.  
 Clerk: Yes – do you want to send it air mail or ordinary mail?  
 Angela: I think I'll send it air mail.  
           I want it to get there quickly.  
           How much does it cost?

(From Doff, 1996:101.)

There is a connection between: "a letter" and "it", as "they refer to the same thing" (Halliday & Hasan, 1985:3). 'Singapore' and "there", "air mail" and "it" are also "identical in reference" (Halliday & Hasan, 1985:3). Therefore we are bound to agree with Renkema (1993:35) as he pinpoints that "cohesion refers to the connection which exists between elements in the text" (see De Beaugrande, 1980:19; Halliday & Hasan, 1985:4).

Another standard of textuality is *coherence*. Renkema (1993:35) defines textuality as "the connection which is brought about by something outside the text" (see De Beaugrande, 1980:19; Ventola, 1999:105-106; Carroll, 1994:161). Here is a typical example of a student who fails to cohere to the text:

(8)

167. S<sub>22</sub>: What qualifications do you have?  
 168. S<sub>23</sub>: Eh (inaudible) life to become a nurse.  
 169. Ss: (Giggle).

(From the researcher's present study.)

The students, in turn 169, laugh because S<sub>23</sub> has not answered the question. Instead of telling the interviewer (S<sub>22</sub>) what qualifications she has, she decides to tell about her choice to become a nurse. There are numerous

examples of coherent and incoherent texts but they will be discussed in detail in later stages of this study. It follows that "to some degree, cohesion and coherence could themselves be regarded as operational goals without whose attainment other discourse goals may be blocked" (De Beaugrande & Dressler, 1994:7).

The third standard of textuality is *intentionality*, which is about the speaker's or writer's:

...attitude that the set of occurrences should constitute a cohesive and coherent text instrumental in fulfilling the producer's intentions, e.g. to distribute knowledge or to attain a GOAL specified in a PLAN<sup>9</sup> (De Beaugrande & Dressler, 1994:7).

This criterion is of fundamental importance in text production as the producer does not only speak or write without aim or desire to attain "specific goals with their message, for instance, conveying information or arguing an opinion" (Renkema, 1993:36) (see De Beaugrande & Dressler, 1994:116; De Beaugrande, 1980:19-20).

In addition to *cohesion*, *coherence* and *intentionality*, the text should bear *acceptability* (emphasis mine). According to Renkema (1993:36), "Acceptability requires that a sequence of sentences be acceptable to the intended audience in order to qualify as a text." De Beaugrande's (1980:20) definition of this standard of textuality also shows that the text should display cohesion and coherence for it to be acceptable or communicative. In other words, we should be able to "detect or infer other participants' goals on the basis of what they say" (De Beaugrande & Dressler, 1994:8). For example:

(9)

The Bell Telephone Company warns people:

Call us before you dig. You may not be able afterwards:

Receivers of the above text are bound by the circumstances and knowledge of the language to interpret the text to mean:

(10)

Call us before you dig. There might be an underground cable. If you break the cable, you won't have phone service, and you may get a severe electric shock. Then you won't be able to call us.

How can we divorce intentionality from acceptability if we still encounter texts like (10) above? Because of coherence in the same text, receivers are able to understand what the producer means and so (10) is said to be "more **informative** than sample [9]".

The text can be better understood and interpreted if it has *situationality* (emphasis mine), that is, "...it is important to consider the situation in which the text has been produced and dealt with" (Renkema, 1993:36; cf. De Beaugrande, 1980:20; De Beaugrande & Dressler, 1994:163). Renkema's illustration of situationality is "an acceptance and informative fragment of text" below:

(11)

Shakespeare wrote more than 20 plays. Will you have dinner with me tonight?

This text informs (first sentence) and functions as a request/invitation (second sentence).

The standards of cohesion, coherence, acceptability, intentionality and situationality precede *intertextuality* which according to De Beaugrande (1980:20) "subsumes the relationships between a given text and other



relevant texts encountered in prior experience, with or without mediation" (see Renkema, 1993:36-37; Ventola, 1999:109). De Beaugrande and Dressler (1994:182) have argued that:

Mediation is smaller when people quote or refer to specific well-known texts, e.g. famous speeches or works of literature. Mediation is extremely slight in activities such as replying, refuting, reporting, summarizing, or evaluating other texts, as we find them especially in CONVERSATION.

Intertextuality, therefore, demands the learners' ability to relate the current event or text to others that occurred or came before it.

*Informativity* is taken by Renkema (1993:36) to mean the extent to which a text contains novel utterances or "the extent to which a presentation is new or unexpected to the receivers" (De Beaugrande & Dressler, 1994:139; cf. De Beaugrande, 1980:20). This standard is essential in language teaching-learning process as it sustains students' attention and interest during the lesson. This shows that a content of the text is of fundamental importance, as it should first be acceptable in order for the producer to achieve his goal(s).

All these seven criteria of textuality are to be given special attention in the language teaching-learning process as their careful treatment enhances students' communicative ability or competence. Students will know how, when, and why they can create a complete text that meet all these criteria. By contrast, the teacher-centred IRF classroom discourse does not make room for any of these standards and consequently, communicative ability is hindered and students cannot communicate with others or the world outside their classroom. So language teachers should maximize learner initiative in order to help students to create text with ease, for there is no communication without one.

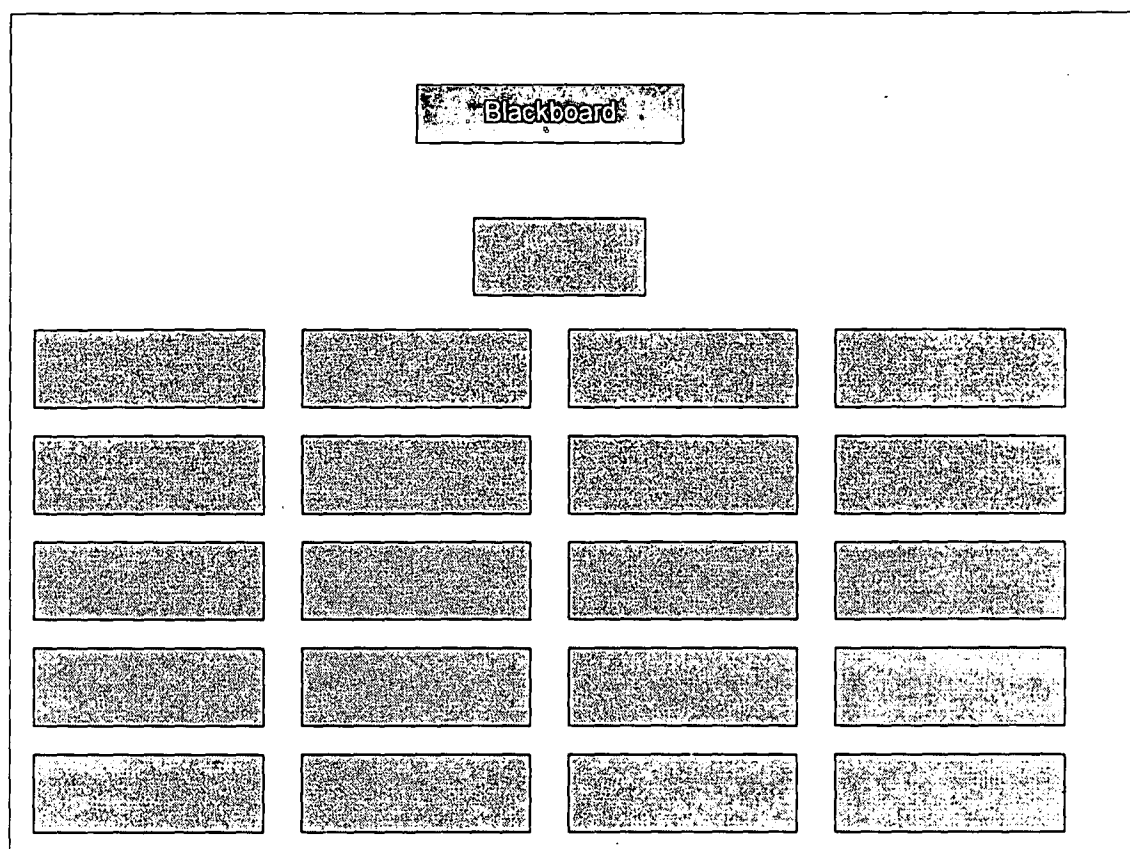
## 2.7 SEATING ARRANGEMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON LEARNER INITIATIVE IN SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSES

According to Freeman and Freeman (1998:149) "English language learners need opportunities for 'functional use of the language they are developing; and classroom organization plays an important role in determining the possible interactions students can have." This view is at odds with what actually happens in traditional teacher-fronted language classrooms where the teaching-learning practice places the teacher in front of students who cannot see the faces of their classmates.

Shamim's (1996:124) study of the classroom teaching and learning process indicates that there are a number of reasons why language teachers are always in front of students. Some of these reasons are:

1. The teachers' lack of awareness and/or feelings of insecurity in using other types of classroom organization.
2. The effect of culture, whereby the teacher is traditionally seen as an authority figure and is given respect for his or her age and superior knowledge.
3. The view of teaching/learning that is prevalent in the community where teaching is viewed as transmission of knowledge.

The same author illustrates the seating plan or classroom organization in the figure below:



**Figure 2.2: Layout of a typical classroom for forty students in secondary schools in Pakistan (Taken from Shamim, 1996:125)**

As shown in the example of Pakistani classrooms above, traditional language teachers:

...usually conduct their classes from the centre of the front of the room. From this position they have an easy access to the blackboard, which is almost always the only resource in the classroom other than the textbook. Thus, teachers directly face the middle two rows, but they can also "keep an eye on" students sitting in two wings of the left - and right-hand side in the front two or three rows. It is not always possible, however, for teachers to "see" the students at the back of the classroom (Shamim, 1996:125).

In short, the language learners' places in the language classroom can either maximize or minimize their active participation and learning. Those who are directly in front of the teacher are the only ones who will benefit from the lesson, while those who are at the back "...outside the teacher's *attention zone*" are likely not going to benefit as they cannot be recognized even if they become inattentive or misbehave. Shamin (1996:138) mentions that:

The effect of location on different types of students in large classes could perhaps be explained better by borrowing an analogy from the field of economics: In large classes, the rich (better students) who occupy the choice locations in the classroom become richer while the poor (weaker students) become poorer.

Harmer (1998:18) also stresses the fact that in most of the language classrooms students are normally seated "in orderly rows". This kind of arrangement restricts the classroom interaction between the teacher and only nominated students as Shamim's figure illustrates, because they are facing each other. There cannot be a conversation between people who are not facing each other. If a student at the back is offered a talking turn, he or she

is talking at the back of other students who are facing the teacher, and so they are not part of the interaction. However, Harmer (1998:19) points out that this kind of seating arrangement cannot be avoided as "in many classrooms of the world, teachers are faced with classes of anywhere between 40 and 200 students at a time. In such circumstances, orderly rows may well be the best or only solution."

Harmer (1998:19) also emphasizes the importance of orderly rows in language classes as the teacher can see all the students:

and the students can all see the teacher in whose direction they are facing. It makes lecturing easy, enabling the teacher to maintain eye contact with the people he or she is talking to. It also makes discipline easier since it is more difficult to be disruptive when you are sitting in a row. If there are aisles in the classroom, the teacher can easily walk up and down making more personal contact with individual students and watching what they are doing (Cf. McLeod in Meyer, 1996:132).

The above extract implies that teacher-fronted classroom teaching-learning practice is not wholly bad. In cases where there are large classes, the teacher is able to teach most of the students "at the same time" (Richards & Lockhart, 1994:148). Again:

- In situations where a mainstream classroom contains a number of ESL students, the ESL students can feel that they are part of the mainstream group and are functioning under equal terms with them rather than being singled out for special treatment.
- It can serve as a preparation for subsequent activities which can be completed individually or in groups.

These advantages do not always benefit English second language learners and several researchers criticize the teacher-fronted classroom teaching-

learning practice as it bars maximum learner initiative and communicative ability and teachers sometimes only allocate talking-turns to students who happen to be in the action zone. (See above.) Students do not learn or understand at the same rate whereas a teacher-dominated classroom "assumes that all students can proceed at the same pace. However, slower students may be lost and brighter students may be held back" (Richards & Lockhart, 1994:148).

The "classroom set up with straight rows facing the teacher" (Freeman & Freeman, 1998:150; cf. Natal College of Education, 1997:127) restricts social interaction, which in turn, impedes communicative ability or competence. Students are denied opportunities to use language amongst themselves so that their spontaneous expression can be sharpened. Rigg and Hudelson, cited in Freeman and Freeman (1998:153), emphasise that social interaction (maximum learner initiative) in second language classes fosters the acquisition of the language for the following reasons:

1. People develop their second language when they feel good about themselves and about their relationships with those around them in the second language setting.
2. Language develops when the language learner focuses on accomplishing something together with others rather than focusing on the language itself. So group activities ... are ideal (p.117).

It has already been pointed out that, due to the set up in teacher-fronted classrooms, the only face that students see face-to-face in class is the teacher's. Thus, there is no social relationship and interaction between the second language learners. Littlewood (1995:47) reminds us that this teacher-led classroom strengthens the notion of domination and states that:

...the dangers of excessive teacher domination may often be reduced by introducing more informal seating arrangements.

When the teacher faces the whole class, his position reinforces his authority as 'knower'. A more informal layout, for example in a circle, can help greatly to reinforce the learners' equality as co-communicators.

Chimbganda and Kasule (1999:145) too report that "in many of the classrooms, interactive learning which permits inter-pupil communication does not take place" because:

The physical set-up of many ESL classrooms ...with rigid rows of crowded desks and chairs facing the lone figure of the teacher at the front, often prevents the setting up of real language learning situation (see Oxford, 1997:451).

Even though an orderly-row seating arrangement is discouraged by some researchers, Harmer (1998:19) argues that some of the classroom activities force an orderly rows set up. However, he insists that all students should participate in classroom activities. This means that language teachers should not have action zones. All or almost all the students should be allocated talking-turns. If there are questions to be answered, they should be asked at random, still bearing in mind that all students are to be given chances to answer questions in order for them to practise language. If students are allocated turns according to the seating plan, the ones who think they are not going to get or be given a chance are not going to concentrate and those who have already answered will no longer pay attention to what is taught.

Therefore teachers are advised to vary the set up in language classrooms and use circles and horseshoes in cases of smaller classes in order for learners to see one another's face and reduce the teacher's dominance as shown below. But where classes are larger, groupwork in which students gather at "individual" or "separate" tables is always the solution (see Harmer, 1998:20; Hastings & Schwieso, 1995:289). Harmer (1998:18-22) suggests a variety of classroom seating arrangements which maximize learner initiative

when used effectively. See Figure 2.3 below.

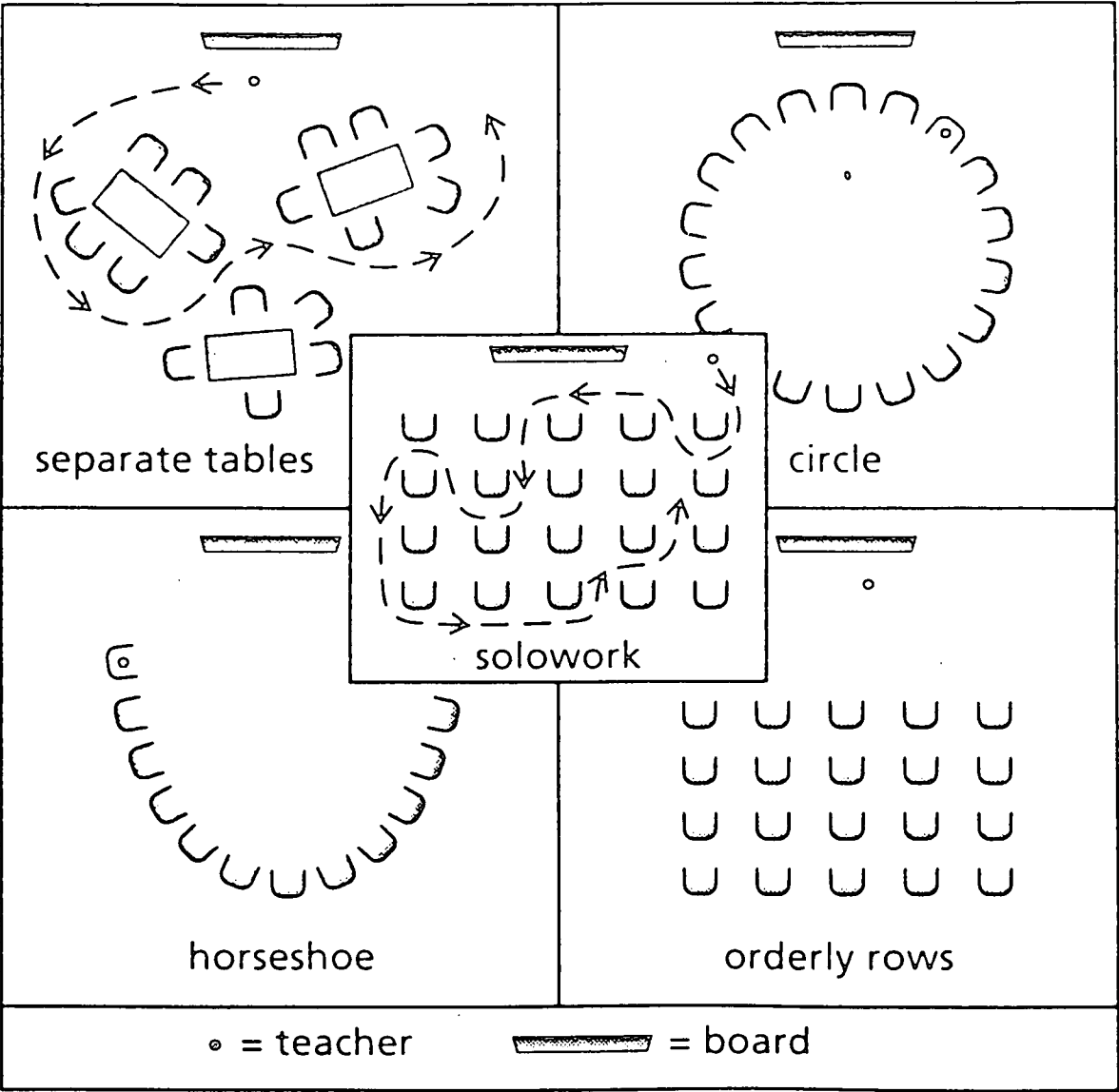


Figure 2.3: Different seating arrangements in class (Taken from Harmer, 1998:18)



Harmer (1998:20) encourages these seating arrangements as well as pair work because they break the monotony of orderly rows and:

there are other advantages too, chief among, which is the fact that all the students can see each other. In an 'orderly row' classroom, you have to turn round – that is, away from the teacher – if you want to make eye contact with someone behind you. In a circle or a horseshoe no such disruption is necessary. The classroom is thus a more intimate place and the potential for students to share feelings and information through talking, eye contact or expressive body movements (eyebrow-raising, shoulder-shrugging, etc.) is far greater (see Oxford, 1997:452).

This extract reveals how inconvenient orderly rows are in language classrooms. This arrangement does not replicate real life communication, the main reason why we teach and learn the second language. It also minimizes learners' initiative and restricts the classroom discourse within the classroom walls. It is of fundamental importance to consider the classroom set-up as it plays a major role in minimum or maximum learner initiative.

Further illustrations and advantages of the above seating arrangements will be dealt with in the following section.

## **2.8 TEACHER'S AND LEARNER'S ROLES IN MAXIMIZING LEARNER INITIATIVE**

The previous detailed discussion shows that "...display questions still dominate, concerns of accuracy by far outnumber fluency attempts..." (Legutke & Thomas, 1991:6). In their emphasis on the repercussions of minimum learner initiative in some language classrooms, researchers have

decided on the shift from the traditional IRF discourse cycle to classroom discourse that is facilitative of second language ability (Johnson, 1996; Johnson, 1995; Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1997; Tudor, 1996; Harmer, 1998; Legutke & Thomas, 1991; Ras, 1994; Long & Crookes, 1994; Freeman & Freeman, 1998; Murphy, 1994; Prinsloo, 1996).

This is because it has been discovered that:

the currently predominant mode of second language delivery used in schools "traditionally adopts such a narrow, utilitarian view of education which does not account for the possibility of the learner participating critically in the learning interaction..." (Venter, 2000:66).

So, this has led to the realization that although the main goal of language teaching and learning is the enhancement of the students' communicative ability, there are no possibilities created for the students to use language communicatively during language lessons (Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1997:12). Their study reveals that:

although learners can repeat structures and dialogues perfectly in the class situation, they revert to old mistakes once they are required to use the language in a less structured, conversational situation. ... The purpose of learning English as a language of wider communication should not be to learn to communicate, but to learn *while* communicating.

Then, we can refer back to the notions of discourse and text and tell whether their definitions are compatible with what actually happens in the IRF classroom discourse and what is implied by Kilfoil and Van der Walt above,

that classroom drills and teacher-centred discourse do not help second language learners to communicate in real-life situations.

This communicative view of the language teaching-learning process is referred to as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Communicative Approach (CA), Communicative Instruction (CI) or learner-centredness (see the researchers mentioned at the beginning of this section). Harmer (1998:32) points out that the communicative approach, unlike other traditional styles of language teaching, covers all the components of communicative competence. In other words, "initially this was a matter of redefining what the student had to learn in terms of communicative competence rather than linguistic competence..." (Cook, 1991:138). Harmer (1998:32) shows that the communicative approach does not totally rule out the fact that students and teachers should give grammatical/linguistic competence attention, but it also draws our attention to:

...language *functions* such as *inviting, agreeing and disagreeing, suggesting*, etc., which students should learn how to use. They also need to be aware of the need for appropriacy when talking and writing to people in terms of the kind of language they use (formal, informal, tentative, technical, etc.) (Harmer, 1998:32; cf. Lightbown & Spada, 1993:70; Richards *et al.*, 1992:65).

Again, if one looks back at the previous discussion of the whole aspect of the IRF discourse pattern, none of the language functions mentioned by Harmer is evident, as language learners only recall what they have been taught, and only if they are allocated talking turns during the classroom interaction. This is at odds with British communicative language teaching which is "throwing out the traditional notion" (Patton, 1999:1) of the authoritative teacher-centred teaching-learning situation in language classrooms. This approach has "enjoyed great popularity throughout the world" (Johnson, 1996:173) since the

mid 1960s (Tudor, 1996:7) when linguists realized the shortcomings of the teacher-fronted language classroom discourse.

Johnson's (1996:173) study of CLT reveals that it does not only focus on language structure, but also on the meaning. Teachers employ "information-gap" and "information transfer" techniques in order to develop the learners' communicative strategies and therefore "message focus is central to CM because it is central to language use, and communicative methodologists aim to stimulate processes of language use in the classroom" (Johnson, 1996:174).

It is instructive at this stage, therefore, to look at the definition of (maximum) learner initiative, which highlights that the whole class teacher-fronted interaction "suffers from low participation rate" (Swain *et al.*, 1999:389). Again it shows that whatever students say in response to the teacher's display questions is not new and therefore lacks informativity. In their analysis of the mismatch between traditional and communicative language teaching, Lightbown and Spada (1993:73) point out that among other differences, "a variety of discourse types are introduced through stories, role playing, the use of 'real-life' materials such as newspapers...". This point stresses the notion of learner initiative as the form of interaction among the second language learners. So in order to avoid responses such as the one below about OBE in the context of CLT, teachers should first of all understand that learner-centred classrooms are the ones "in which learners are actively involved in their own learning processes" (Nunan & Lamb, 1996:9). If teachers beneficially use pair- and groupwork, role play, dialogue, task-based teaching, and interaction between the teacher and students as equals-at-talk, there will not be complaints like:

you go to school where over the years the initial emphasis was on grammar and the formal teaching, but in sort of over a period it slid into the background and there was this whole idea of the

communicative approach. But we [the teachers in the school] have never had an opportunity where you actually had formal training in that, so you had to pick that up as you went along (Barkhuizen, 1998b:94).

It is crucial that language teachers should know the difference between traditional teacher-controlled and communicative language classrooms as shown by Nunan and Lamb (1996:14-15) in Table 2.3 below:

Changing views on the nature of language and learning:  
Traditionalism and CLT

| Teaching           | Traditionalism   | Communicative language  |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Theory of language | Language is a system of rule-governed structures hierarchically arranged.  | Language is a system for the expression of meaning: primary function – interaction.   |
| Theory of learning | Habit formation; skills are learned more effectively if oral precedes written; analogy not analysis.                     | Activities involving real communication; carrying out meaningful tasks and using language that is meaningful to the learner promote learning. |
| Objectives         | Control of the structures of sound, form and order, mastery over symbols of the language; goal – native speaker mastery. | Objectives will reflect the needs of the learner; they will include functional skills as well as linguistic objectives.                       |

|                   |   |  |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Syllabus          | Graded syllabus of phonology, morphology, and syntax. Constrastive analysis.                | Will include some or all of the following: structures, functions, notions, themes and tasks. Ordering will be guided by learner needs. |
| Activities        | Dialogues and drills; repetition and memorization; pattern practice.                        | Engage learners in communication; involve processes such as information sharing, negotiation of meaning and interaction.               |
| Role of learner   | Organisms that can be directed by skilled training techniques to produce correct responses. | Learner as negotiator, interactor, giving as well as taking.   |
| Role of teacher   | Central and active; teacher-dominated method. Provides model; controls direction and pace.  | Facilitator of the communication process, needs analyst, counsellor, process manager.  |
| Role of materials | Primarily teacher oriented. Tapes and visuals; language lab often used.                     | Primary role of promoting communicative language use; task-based, authentic materials.   |

Table 2.3 (Taken from Nunan &amp; Lamb, 1996:14-15)

The differences between the two teaching approaches reveal that teachers who are still most "central and active" (Nunan & Lamb, 1996:15) deny their classes communicative ability in the second language as there is never a time when the teacher gives an opportunity to students to use language with others or see the "learner as negotiator, interactor, giving as well as taking" (Nunan & Lamb, 1996:15). That is, all the CLT views promote the practicality that "language learning programs are aimed at development of communicative competency in a particular language" (Quemstand Department of Education in Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999:496), which means there should be set standards for the students, like "by the end of the year L2 learners should be able to communicate in standard Japanese" (Board of

Senior School Secondary Studies in Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999:496) if they are learning Japanese as their second language. Therefore teachers should create opportunities for their learners to communicate in the target language in the classroom.

Group and pair activities should be intensively used in communicative language teaching as "CLT advocates having students work in small groups in order to maximize their opportunities for communicative practise" (Anton, 1999:303). Consequently maximum learner initiative and communicative competence are enhanced as:

the role of the learner is that of a communicator: students interact with others, they are actively engaged in negotiation of meaning, they have an opportunity to express themselves by sharing ideas and opinions, and they are responsible for their own learning (Anton, 1999:303).

The above extract stresses a shift from the active teacher and passive students to "the development of students' communicative skills in L2," (Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999:495). It has already been mentioned that learner initiative can be maximized through pair- and groupwork and they have similar advantages. They play a very important role for

...it is widely argued that engaging in communicative language tasks helps a learner develop in an L2 in several ways. Tasks provide an opportunity not only to produce the target language, but also, through conversational adjustments, to manipulate and modify it. Checking and clarifying problem utterances ('negotiating meaning') ensures that task participants receive comprehensible input and generate comprehensible output, both of which have been claimed as crucial to second language acquisition (SLA) (Foster, 1998:1).

Teacher-centred classrooms are under fire because there is little or no time for students to produce their own language (output) (Richards *et al.*, 1992:182). This contrasts with Swain's (1996:126) view of the importance of output in language learning:

The importance to learning of output could be that output pushes learners to process language more deeply (with more mental effort) than does input. With output the learner is in control. By focusing on output we may be focusing on ways in which learners can play more active responsible roles in their learning (cf. Markee, 1997:81).

It is evident that any kind of classroom learning that reduces excessive teacher-control, then, increases learner control over the learning process and thus positively answers the call that "language is both process and product" (Swain & Lapkin, 1998:320) as students use it communicatively while learning it (see Leow, 1998:62). This does not only help the students, but even the teacher as he can identify students' linguistic problems that command his immediate attention. Thus the students as well as their teacher have a major role in maximizing learner initiative and therefore developing students' communicative competence (examples will be given in Chapter 4 of this study). Interaction between and among second language learners according to Foster (1998:1).

...is seen as beneficial in several ways: it increases the amount of class time available to an individual student to practise speaking the target language; it decreases the amount of time students spend listening (or not listening) to other class



members interacting with the teacher; it avoids the anxiety and self-consciousness that prevent some students from speaking up in front of the whole class; it allows the teacher more opportunity for individual instruction. In sum, it can help to create a positive and relaxed learning environment.

Communicative Language Teaching has therefore gained great popularity because of the advantages mentioned by Foster and other researchers (see Chimbganda & Kasule, 1999; Brooks, Donato & McGlone, 1997; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Garmston & Wellman, 1998; Hanson, 1998; Elkind & Sweet, 1998; Natal College of Education, 1997; Long & Porter, 1985; Good & Brophy, 1997; Oxford, 1997; Nunan & Lamb, 1996).

Problems attributed to pair- and groupwork can be easily dealt with if the teacher remembers that:

Neither groupwork nor pairwork are without their problems...students may not like the people they are grouped or paired with. ...One student may dominate while others stay silent... groupwork may encourage students to be more disruptive than they would be in a whole-class setting, and, especially in a class where students share the same first language, they may revert to their first language, rather than English, when the teacher is not working with them (Harmer, 1998:21).

But these problems cannot arise if the teacher states the objectives of the (interesting) activity. Students' attention will be retained by information-gap activities. That is, students in a pair or group should not have the same information (Harmer, 1998:88). Prabhu's (1987:46) definition of information-gap activity illustrates that it (information-gap activity):

...involves a transfer of given information from one person to another or from one form to another, or from one place to another -generally calling for decoding or encoding of information from or into language.

This implies that if students are given different tasks to perform, in their respective groups, they will always be attentive and cooperative as they want to listen and learn from others (see Ur, 1996; Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1997; Brooks *et al.*, 1997; Cross, 1991; Richards *et al.*, 1992). This is supported by Richards *et al.* (1992:179) in their recommendation for the use of information-gap techniques because "without such a gap the classroom activities and exercises will be mechanical and artificial" (cf. Brooks *et al.*, 1997:534).

Reasoning-gap activity "exposes the learner to inferencing and reasoning skills" (Greyling, 1998a:27). Here students derive

...some new information through processes of inference, deduction, practical reasoning, or a perception of relationships or patterns. One example is working out a teacher's timetable on the basis of given class timetables. Another is deciding what course of action is best (for example cheapest or quickest) for a given purpose and with given constraints (Prabhu, 1987:46).

The last component of information-gap technique is opinion-gap "which involves identifying and articulating a personal preference, feeling, or attitude in response to a given situation" (Prabhu, 1987:47). This activity calls for students' communicative competence as they have to use appropriate vocabulary to state facts, there is nothing recalled as it happens in the IRF discourse cycle (see Greyling, 1998a:28).

Information-gap techniques, therefore, also develop students' fluency as they are no longer inhibited in expressing express their opinions, reasons and

even give unknown information to a keen audience, the other students and the teacher, this time as an equal-at-talk not as a sole possessor of information and answers to known-information questions. Students are offered an opportunity to use language "at the level of text or discourse" (Greyling, 1998a:28) and so the teacher helps them to excel at standards of textuality which have been discussed earlier in this chapter, the requirement that cannot be met if learning is teacher-centred due to the IRF discourse cycle.

Communicative language teaching can be satisfactorily met through introducing role play and task-based teaching in language classrooms. Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1997:122) and Harmer (1998:92) state that role play activities are those in which students are made to use language as it is used in real-life by placing them in different contexts in which they have to "act accordingly" (Harmer, 1998:92). Students act what has been created by them, using spontaneous expressions (see Netten & Planchat-Ferguson, 1995:50). So these activities are important as they lead students' language to that emphasized in fluency and communicative competence.

Task-based teaching like other activities strives for an achievement of "a particular learning goal" (Richards *et al.*, 1992:373) by the students (see Markee, 1997:82; Skehan, 1996b:38). Students' language learning improves their receptive and productive skills as they can sometimes "be encouraged to ask for information about train and bus timetables..." (Harmer, 1998:31). Nunan and Lamb (1996:33) also suggest that teachers can develop communicative competence in their language learners by giving them some of the following tasks to perform: identify people, talk about past events, report what someone says, make excuses, express regrets, etc. in a variety of settings like home, work, holiday, school, dinner party, and others.

The use of all the activities mentioned above corrects some of the misconceptions common amongst teachers who do not actually understand

communicative approach and its implementation. Thompson (1996) discovered that such teachers explain learner-centredness as an approach that does not encourage the teaching of grammar, listening, reading and writing as it only teaches speaking. They also believe that it only emphasizes pairwork and so the teacher has too much work to prepare for. (See Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999:497).

Greyling (1998a:33) shows us a direction to the meaning and implementation of communicative language teaching as he asks and answers:

How can the teacher ensure that teaching and learning in the classroom are consistent with the aims and objectives of the communicative approach? A solution to this problem is that teachers engage in discourse-based research in their own classrooms. Such discourse studies may focus primarily on teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction in the context of fluency and accuracy work in the classroom. By recording and transcribing lessons, teachers are able to step out of the interaction they want to evaluate.

If these transcriptions show too much teacher-led interaction and less student-to-student discourse cycle he will then reduce his dominance and involve students in their learning. All of them will have then taken active roles in maximizing learner initiative in language classrooms. All these activities "...allow for greater variability in the patterns of communication so as to maximize students' linguistic and interactional competencies and create more opportunities for students to participate in classroom events" (Johnson, 1995:145-146). Allen's (1987) trifocal model below illustrates the difference between active and passive classroom participation. It also shows how the learners' communicative skills can be sharpened.

### 2.8.1 Allen's (1987) trifocal curriculum

Communicative language teaching is also evinced in Allen's (1987) trifocal curriculum model. This variable focus curriculum has three components, namely; structural-analytic, functional analytic, and experiential teaching, which are labelled type A focus, type B, and type C focus, respectively. The former (type A) focuses on grammar and other formal features of language as there

...is the belief that beginning students cannot be expected to communicate effectively in the target language until they have acquired sufficient knowledge of its grammar, vocabulary, and rules of pronunciation (Brokensha, 1997:12-13).

The implication is that the teaching techniques are tightly teacher-controlled, as it happens in the IRF discourse pattern. Students have not yet been exposed to meaning-focused activities.

The teacher is the one who controls grammatical teaching techniques through medium-focused classroom practice (Allen, 1987:4). The structural-analytic approach therefore emphasizes medium-oriented practice in classroom discourse. And Allen (1987:4) states:

Thus, we can say that the principal aim of Type A teaching is to provide practice in the *structural* aspect of language proficiency, which many people see as a necessary first step in the development of communicative competence.

However, Allen's (1987:5) main point is that a good and committed hard-working teacher makes Type A activity meaningful by making it contextual by basing it "...on worthwhile tasks and oriented towards discourse". This implies that Type A should not only be centred around language structure and vocabulary but also on developing the students' communicative

competence by introducing student-to-student interactional pattern.

According to Lightbown and Spada (1993:73) a Type A focus emphasizes practising grammatical structures without context and that inhibits students' linguistic ability during natural conversation because "learners receiving ...more traditional grammar-based approaches have not benefited from this instruction in a way that permits them to communicate their messages and intentions effectively in a second language" (Lightbown & Spada, 1993:83). Emphasis on grammar that is taught out of context does not mean that students really know how to use the rules. This is also argued by Stern in Turnbull (1999:548-549) who points out that language teaching that is "focused unidimensionally on grammar" is not as learning facilitative as it is thought. For instance, Stern (1992) mentions that focus on language features alone impedes students' communicative ability and he cites a story of a Scottish teacher who did not teach grammar in context, with an understanding that repetitive writing or saying of items facilitates their understanding. One student in this teacher's class could not use 'went' appropriately. The teacher then told the boy to write "'He has gone out" fifty times. He could not wait for the boy and he therefore went out:

On his return he found the impositions on his desk – 'He has gone out' duly written fifty times. However, the boy had added at the bottom of the page: 'I have done the work and I have went home' (Stern, 1992:326).

This student has not been given enough time to use 'went' accurately in context (Lightbown & Spada, 1993:91). Turnbull (1999:561) supports Lightbown and Spada as he also stresses the danger of language teaching and learning process that is centred "exclusively on forms". (See Lightbown & Spada, 1993:122.)

A Type B focus is centred on discourse features of language and it also has teacher-led teaching techniques. But, unlike Type A focus, it emphasizes

both form- and content-oriented practice. It aims at providing practice in the functional aspect of language. Students are provided with opportunities to use language to the level of discourse. Teachers and students give particular attention to fluency and error avoidance. This activity is based on authentic discourse together with grammatical competence, even though they are teacher-centred. However, this can be contextualized as in a Type A focus, in order to make a meaningful activity, so that the teacher can easily identify problems to be attended to with special emphasis.

The functional-analytic approach shows the importance of a multidimensional curriculum in language teaching. Turnbull's (1999:558) multidimensional project-based teaching in French second language reveals:

...while the students were expressing their opinions on different fashion trends, the teacher asked the students to focus deliberately on the appropriate verbs for this communicative and experiential task during the same episode.

Such a teacher wants his students to consciously focus on form and meaning for them to be able to make and receive a text with ease and Turnbull (1999:558) refers to it as "a dual focus on form and meaning...". This emphasis enhances grammatical and discourse competencies at the same time (see Stern, 1992:144).

A Type C focus is mainly about spontaneous use of language. The teacher normally uses experiential teaching techniques which emphasize message-oriented practice (see Allen, 1987:4; Stern, 1992:301). Students learn the second language through tasks or solving problems as these replicate real-life language use. There is no tight teacher-control over the topics and turn allocation. Evidently, fluency and meaning are given priority over error avoidance.

According to Allen, Types A and C seem to be the most common in language

classes. We seem to concentrate too much on grammar and formal features of the second language and spontaneous expression, without a goal. We completely forget that our learners need discourse ability. Thus, we should also focus on type B in order for our students to fully attain discourse competence. Type B also manifests Type A and then enhances Type C.

Experiential language teaching implements Types A and B in a relaxed language classroom. Turnbull (1999:561) takes this curriculum to create an opportunity

...in which a focus on form can be authentically integrated with a motivating and interesting communicative experiential focus. The results reinforce the near-consensus in the field that SL learning is more effective when the curriculum centres on meaningful content....

In this way Type C prioritises meaning over form, but if it comes after Types A and B respectively, there will not be a need for or too much attention to form. This is the stage where the teacher concentrates on all the components of communicative competence and all the seven standards of textuality.

In conclusion, the teacher can maximize learner initiative through a careful examination and implementation of Allen's (1987) variable focus curriculum and involve students in tasks completion to attain competence through which there can be learner-learner interaction in language classrooms.

### **2.8.2 Interlanguage and its role in second language teaching-learning process**

The implementation of communicative orientation is in line with an *interlanguage* system. Ellis' (1997:140) study of interlanguage presents it as "...the systematic knowledge of an L2 that is independent of both the target language and the learner's L1". Selinker's (1972:214) study of second



language learning also shows that there is a difference between a native speaker's and a second language learner's language. He points out that:

This set of utterances for *most* learners of a second language is not identical to the hypothesized corresponding set of utterances which would have been produced by a native speaker of the TL had he attempted to express the same meaning as the learner. Since we can observe that these two sets of utterances are not identical... one would be completely justified in hypothesizing, perhaps even compelled to hypothesize, the existence of a separate linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner's attempted production of a TL norm. This linguistic system we will call 'interlanguage' (IL).

Selinker is supported by Ellis (1997:33) as he discusses interlanguage as "a unique system" which is influenced by the second language learner's native language (see Eubank, Selinker & Smith, 1995:2; Chimbanga, 1998:61; Freeman & Long, 1991:60; Richards *et al.*, 1992:186). Ellis further states that "it is also influenced from the inside. For example, the omission, overgeneralization, and transfer errors..." (see Lightbown & Spada, 1993:122-123; Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1997:18; Firth & Wagner, 1997:292).

Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1997:18) state that interlanguage can be developed into the target language competence through constant exposure to the second language. In this way, teachers should not neglect their responsibility to organize communicative activities. They should not rely on the misconception that students cannot attain the target language proficiency, which Tarone and Liu (1996:118) refer to as "interlanguage development."

However, Nickel (1998:2) maintains that non-native language teachers have a rule system of their own as they also do not have target language mother-tongue competence. The teacher's interlanguage is more developed than

that of the second language learners. They sometimes form part of the small number of which Nickel (1998:1) say "less than 5% of FL-learners are estimated to reach native-speaker competence." Greyling and Rantsoai's (2000:291) study of classroom discourse reveals that language teachers can develop their students' interlanguage by introducing fluency-based teaching for:

...fluency activity... would allow the learners to put their interlanguage (or emergent rule system) on display, and this would allow the teacher to specify the learners' actual needs, and provide indications of the kind of comprehensible and performance-enhancing input that was needed.

What is implied in the above extract is that through roleplay, dramatization, and group work, teachers can tell which component of communicative competence students lack. We should also bear in mind that students' interlanguage, in most cases, displays none of the components of communicative competence due to the kind of questions and answers recurrent in the IRF discourse pattern.

Mizuno's (1999:2) study of interlanguage provides us with:

...a great deal of information regarding the nature of errors in the course of *interlanguage* process, and helped to clarify the causes, results, and processes of particular errors, as well as the conditions causing the errors. To put it in another way, it shed light on the stages at which certain errors occur and disappear as well as giving specific information about the nature of errors made, plotted against the learner's level of proficiency, and the cause of particular errors in the developmental process of *interlanguage*.

Therefore, it is always important for language teachers to create opportunities for learner-learner interaction whenever they want to know more about the needs of their second language learners. According to Mizuno, the interlanguage system makes it easy for the teacher to identify the students' linguistic problems and success. After the display of their interlanguage the teacher is able to provide the students with necessary comprehensible input. It is needless to mention further advantages of students' interlanguage in learner-learner interaction in the classroom. It is through maximum learner initiative that the teacher can develop his students' interlanguages (see Ellis, 1997:19).

Selinker (1972:215), Richards *et al.* (1992:186), Ellis (1997:29), Harmer (1998:62), and Firth and Wagner (1997:292) mention that students' interlanguage system can be developed into the target language competence through overcoming fossilization. According to Ellis (1997:29):

Many will continue to show non-target language variability in at least some grammatical features. It is for this reason that we can talk of **fossilization**; many learners stop developing while still short of target-language competence. Also, learners may succeed in reaching target-language norms in some types of language use (for example, planned discourse) but not in others (for example, unplanned discourse).

Selinker's (1972:215) view of fossilization shows that second or non-native speakers normally take incorrect forms of the target language to be the correct ones. Richards *et al.* (1992:145-146) perceive fossilized errors as those emanating from pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and grammar (see Boulima, 1999:89; Felix, 1995:140; Nickel, 1998:1-2; Lightbown & Spada, 1993:122). Felix (1995:140) emphasizes the fact that second language

learners cannot reach the same level of communicative competence as native speakers of the target language. Nickel (1998:3), however, mentions that "some learners fossilize much less than others and then there is, of course, also the possibility for very good teachers to postpone or bypass some effects of fossilization" (see Mizuno, 1999:2).

Thus, we learn that it is not wise for us to rely on fossilization instead of teaching. If there are students who can attain native speaker's competence in the second language, what is left for us as teachers, is to work hard in order to develop our students' interlanguage.

Fossilization can only be controlled by giving students opportunities to use the target language so that some of the fossilized errors can be eradicated as early as possible. The example of a student who could not use "went" appropriately is a typical example of a fossilized error.

Errors in second language learning process can be a result of the students' native language transfer. Richards *et al.* (1992:386) define transfer as:

the carrying over of a learned behaviour from one situation to another. **Positive transfer** is learning in one situation which helps or facilitates learning in another later situation. **Negative transfer** is learning in one situation which interferes with learning in another later situation.

In the context of language learning, transfer is called *language transfer*. The following students in excerpt (12) below transfer from Sesotho to English:

(12)

156. S<sub>25</sub>: How do you feel - what do you feel when you see a bad injury

person... as a nurse?

157. S<sub>23</sub>: I feel busy. But nothing I can do. What I can do is only to help that patient quickly so that (inaudible.)

(Taken from the researcher's present corpus of data.)

In turn 156 S<sub>25</sub> uses 'injury' as it would be used in a Sesotho utterance, while in English the student should use an adjective "injured" instead of a noun. In turn 157, the student (S<sub>23</sub>) also translates "But nothing I can do" from the native language to English. Ellis (1997:19) states that:

...speakers of Bantu languages in Southern Africa frequently use the preposition 'at' to refer to the direction as well as location, producing error such as: We went at Johannesburg last weekend.

A more detailed illustration of transfer errors will be discussed in Chapter Four of this study.

Another source of errors in target language learning should be seen as *overgeneralization* (over-extension or over-regularization). Richards *et al.*'s perception of overgeneralization is:

a process common in both first- and second-language learning, in which a learner extends the use of a grammatical rule of linguistic item beyond its accepted uses, generally by making words or structures follow a more regular pattern. For example, a child may use *ball* to refer to all round objects or use *mans* instead of *men* for the plural of *man*.

What these researchers mean in this extract is that students' errors are a result of applying a single rule where it is not applicable (Lightbown & Spada,

1993:124; Cf. Selinker. 1972:217-218). The researcher's present corpus of data has a number of overgeneralization instances. One instance is identified in excerpt (13) below:

(13)

194. S<sub>31</sub>: Eh Mr Thabo, how did you became a politician?  
195. S<sub>32</sub>: Yes, I became a politician. I was encouraged by my father when I was still young.  
196. Ss: (Laugh)  
197. S<sub>31</sub>: Eh - if you win these coming elections, what major changes would you like to see within the country?  
198. S<sub>32</sub>: In this country?  
200. Ss: (Laugh)  
201. S<sub>32</sub>: I want to see each and every young children in this country to get a free education.

(Taken from the researcher's present corpus of data.)

S<sub>31</sub> in turn 194 use 'did' and 'became' at the same time unaware that they cannot be used together. He or she believes that an utterance that denotes the past should display all the past forms of the infinitives. S<sub>32</sub> also overgeneralizes the use of an adjective 'every' and thinks it should be used with the plural noun 'children' (see turn 201). These instances enable the teacher to identify these particular students' need because it has been displayed in their interlanguage. Ellis (1997:15) rightly supports this because "...it is useful for teachers to know what errors learners make" so that they immediately attend to them.

These three sources of errors, fossilization, transfer, and overgeneralization are always common in homogeneous second language classrooms. They can be corrected if students are given opportunities to use the language

among themselves so that the teacher can identify and give them the necessary and corrective input.

### 2.8.3 First and second language acquisition/learning

Teachers and students can only develop the latter's interlanguage if they can differentiate between language acquisition and learning. According to Krashen (1981:1):

Language *acquisition* is very similar to the process children use in acquiring first and second languages. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication- in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding...

Krashen and Terrell (1985:26) clearly define acquisition as the way in which students "use language for communication" (see Krashen, 1983:18). It is taken as a natural process in which speakers attain an ability to speak the language. It can therefore be referred to as a "subconscious process" (Krashen & Terrell, 1985:26) through which children find themselves able to use the language fluently (see Lightbown & Spada, 1993:71-72); Freeman & Freeman, 1998:19-20; Richards *et al.*, 1992:197).

On the other hand, *learning* is at odds with acquisition as it emphasizes the formal structure of language (Krashen, 1981:2). Krashen and Terrell (1985:26) see learning as "knowing about" a language that students are trying to learn (Ellis, 1997:4; Cf. Lightbown & Spada, 1993:72; Krashen, 1981:1). The difference between acquisition and learning will therefore enhance our understanding of what first and second languages mean. Richards *et al.*'s (1992:140) definition of a first language presents it as:

...(generally) a person's mother tongue or the language acquired first. In multilingual communities, however, where a child may gradually shift from the main use of another (e.g. because of the influence of a school language), first language may refer to the language the child feels most comfortable using. Often this term is used synonymously with NATIVE LANGUAGE.

Lightbown and Spada (1993:121) and Kilfoil and Van der Walt (1997:2) also echo the above definition of the first language acquisition and other synonyms of the first language. They refer to it as the language a child is first exposed to. It can be used synonymously with *mother tongue* and *native language*, as mentioned above.

The above discussion serves as an introduction to the major concern of this study, maximizing learner initiative in English second language classes. Before giving a detailed discussion of first and second language acquisition, we also need to know what the second language is. According to Cook (1991:5) the second language is "a language acquired by a person in addition to his mother tongue" (see Richards *et al.*, 1992:143; Ellis, 1997:3) while Johnson (1995:3) perceives it thus:

Acquiring that language is the ultimate instructional goal of a second language education. Yet how teachers and students use language to communicate in second language classes mediates between teaching, learning, and second language acquisition.

Johnson's point is that language classroom interaction plays a very important role in second language acquisition. The main reason why we learn the second language is to communicate comfortably (see Hoey, 1991:82). Nunan (1991:240) persuades us to prioritise acquisition over learning



because the second language learned rules are not used by the students to produce the discourse/text. Instead, they are only used to correct the utterances before they can be said (see Richards *et al.*, 1992:235; Nunan, 1991:240; Krashen & Terrell, 1985:18). The second language can be used synonymously with *target language* or *non-native language*.

The definition of the second language, then, facilitates our understanding of the second language acquisition and how it can be attained in the classroom situation. Ellis (1997:3) argues that second language acquisition: can be explained as learning an additional language, in addition to one's native language, either at school or not. He refers to the study of this as SLA.

Interestingly, Ellis conscientizes teachers that second language can also be acquired. Furthermore, Krashen and Terrell (1985:19) mentions that "we acquire when we focus on what is being said, rather than how it is said. We acquire when language is used for communicating real ideas." Thus, the kind of discourse pattern in the traditional IRF pattern does not replicate a first language acquisition environment. Students are not provided with opportunities to use language as it is used in real-life interaction. Students cannot initiate discourse in the classroom interaction without being allocated a turn by the teacher. There is also a very strict topic control in the classroom interaction (Ellis, 1992:39). All the limitations of display questions and teacher-dominated classroom interaction are seen as drawbacks from second language acquisition by Ellis (1992:39).

Ellis (1992:43) fears that "...display questions are less likely to contribute to an acquisition-rich environment than are referential questions." He prefers referential questions because they:

...allow the learner more opportunity to take part in her own learning. Second, referential questions are more compatible with a focus on meaning exchange (as opposed to form), which

has been hypothesised to be necessary for acquisition to take place. ...Third, referential questions are more likely to result in extended learner responses.

This extract indicates how communicative and acquisition facilitative the use of referential questions can be. This is emphasised by Greyling and Rantsoai (2000:287) when they sensitize language teachers to the shortcomings of the teacher-centred IRF discourse cycle. They commend:

...that traditional instruction does not replicate natural acquisition; rather, this kind of instruction is dominated by a teacher who takes two out of three turns-at-talk and minimises learner initiative and may be labelled – *discourse initiative*.

Greyling and Rantsoai's call is that language classroom discourse pattern should facilitate the second language learners' ability. That is, their language should enable them to initiate and maintain discourse. Consequently their discourse cycle should display all the standards of textuality and components of communicative competence discussed earlier in this study. In short language learning should be communicative.

The researcher's present corpus of data has examples of teachers who minimize and maximize discourse initiative in English second language classes. This is observed in the pre-counselling (pre-intervention) phase. Witness excerpts (14) and (15) below:

(14)

1. T: You can sit here. You can sit there. To me there are two eh  
(writes on the board) main issues ... in ... that topic Eh?
2. Ss: Yes, Sir.
3. T: You see is "changes". Right?

4. Ss: Yes, Sir.
5. T: Is "changes that had taken place in my area in the last few years". Bolaoane (inaudible) changes. And what else? And how these changes had...
6. Ss: (In unison) ... had affected the lives=
7. T: =affected the ...
8. Ss: ... the lives of the people.
9. T: ... of the people. Right. Yes. So ^ We focus on these two what? Main issues. We focus on the changes. Focus on the ...eh... on how the lives of the people have been...
10. Ss: ...affected.
11. T: Affected by those?
12. Ss: Changes.
13. T: Changes. Alright?
14. Ss: Yes, Sir.
15. T: Okay ^ So ^ Eh (writes on the board) right? Changes... Now ^ Am I going to write that whole thing there?

(Taken from the researcher's present corpus of data.)

This lesson is on composition writing, on the topic "Changes that had taken place in my area in the last few years and how these changes had affected the lives of the people." There is traditional IRF pattern of interaction from turn 1 to turn 15. The teacher controls the topic (essay topic) and so far uses only display questions in this interaction. Students answer in one word, short phrases or incomplete sentences, and theirs is to respond to the teacher's initiation (see turns 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, and 14). This kind of discourse is initiative minimizing as students only answer in single utterances while the teacher sometimes uses full sentences (see turns 1, 3, 5, 9 and 15). He only allocates a turn to a particular student once, in turn 5. The students steal the turns and continue answering in unison. We cannot tell whether all these other turns are really theirs.

In another classroom, the other teacher is also teaching composition writing, but there is a variety of topics for the students to choose from. This is the first step to maximizing students' discourse initiative. These students write a composition in groups and then select representatives to read their essays for the rest of the class. Excerpt (15) is a continuation of Group A's work.

(15)

18. S<sub>1</sub>: (Continues) Both the parents decided to let bygones with bygones and considered that the couple should marry with a very white wedding. Oh, the couple seem to be in seventh heaven! I cannot imagine how they looked on their wedding day. The bride was like red-green angel in her white gown, just like the snow. Her irresistible diamond ring that glittered on her finger was really opulent. Really it was everything was made for them. On their life later, every time he gazed at her he felt the feeling that (inaudible). On top of that she respected her parents - in - law (inaudible) They too admired her. At the end they were blessed with two children, which was the boy and the girl whom they showed their parental love to.

19. Ss: (Clap)

20. T: (Inaudible) Now ^ Let us hear comments because (inaudible) Now ^ Comments? What is the style (.) that they have used of writing? Who tells us the story? The narrator? The writer? So they opted for the point of view of the writer, telling us things from the writer's point of view. Now their style of of writing? Let's hear people's views on it.

21. S<sub>2</sub>: Is the simple.

22. T: It's the simple style of writing. That's one comment. What else

22. T: It's the simple style of writing. That's one comment. What else do you have to say about it? Clear to understand. Easy to follow. And I noted a point where they did a description. Describe things here and there and narrate others. Remember when I was saying you read the two, narration and description. And somewhere you are going to describe the beauty of the bride and the wedding gowns and so on. (Inaudible) narrated things (inaudible) what happened. But somewhere along the line they're putting a description of how they looked. Any more comments? Okay ^ What we could do is to photocopy (inaudible) time to go and rewrite neatly. To photocopy so that each one of us gets a copy of - from a certain group so that we eh have personal (inaudible) in our files. The next group! That is group H - G. That is group E - Group E. Oh, before group E. moves forward, any more question?

(Taken from the researcher's present corpus of data.)

Groupwork encourages students to use English, especially when they know that they are going to present and be scrutinized. The variety of topics that are given to students without prior discussion has an element of information gap. Students' comments, too, replicate real-life interaction as all the students are expected to participate in different ways. There is a maximum learner initiative in this classroom. The maximization of learner initiative helps the teacher to unconsciously (naturally) enhance the students' acquisition (see turns 21 and 22). While the teacher invites comments from the class, S<sub>2</sub> and other students will be able to use the expression in turn 21 correctly because it is used in real-life communication.

The teacher uses learner-learner interaction and the interaction between her and the students is that of equals-at-talk. This classroom discourse answers

Gass *et al.* (1998:305) as they argue that there is a "...relationship between input, interaction, and SLA." The teacher identifies her students' linguistic needs and then provides them with comprehensible input (turns 21 and 22). We cannot deny Nunan's (1991:240) observation that "if second language acquisition operated in exactly the same way as the first language acquisition, then all second language learners, given sufficient time, should develop lingual competence in the language."

Therefore, teachers' questions can provide opportunities for language learners to use language for real-life interaction. For example, the use of referential questions in the second language classroom results in an acquisition-rich environment, especially in places where there are few native speakers. Students are given time and tasks that call for their thinking and expression in the second language. According to Ellis (1992:43) the use of display questions does not allow students more language use opportunities.

Every child acquires his mother tongue in situations where language is used for communication. No parent makes a list of display questions to ask a child in order for him to check whether he really knows the language. Instead the questions are information seeking.

Therefore, a shift from the teacher-centred to the learner-centred classroom is likely to facilitate the second language acquisition. This is because students will be involved in their learning and they will learn from one another. The teacher will be able to identify their need and immediately enrich their environment with a subconscious corrective feedback as it happens in excerpt (15) turns 21 and 22.

### 2.8.4 Learner autonomy and how it can promote maximum initiative in language classes

Nunan (1989:177) states that in order for a learning context to be labelled learner-centred, the students' individual needs should be considered. This means language learning should have learning outcomes. Several researchers agree with Nunan that there will be no learning if we do not allow students to have a say in the teaching-learning process (see Littlejohn, 1985:253; Tudor, 1996:14; Cooper & McIntyre, 1996:158; Horwitz, 1997:525; Cotterall, 1998:172; Barkhuizen, 1998b:87).

Littlejohn (1985:253) draws our attention to the following approaches, which are usually considered to be common in the learner-centredness:

1. learner-centred in terms of syllabus design (i.e. *what* the learners will learn);
2. learner-centred in terms of classroom activities (i.e. *how* the learners will learn).
3. Learner-centred in terms of *who decides what* and *how* to learn.

He points out that the two approaches are the most common in language teaching-learning process. However, it is important to note that students are different and so it is wrong for us to assume that they should always do the same activities at the same speed (Littlejohn, 1985:255). He further warns us:

...that we should not expect every student to learn in the same way, at the same rate, or to have the same interests and abilities as everyone else. We have, in fact, ample evidence that learners do differ greatly: our end-of-course tests produce different marks for different learners. The logical conclusion to draw from this is that we should take the existence of variations

in learners' abilities and interests much more seriously and not expect all learners to conform to one approach to language study. We should, in other words, provide learner choice.

Littlejohn implies that the IRF discourse cycle leaves some students outside the teaching-learning process. This does not facilitate language learning as learning will only be fostered through introducing learner autonomy. According to Nunan and Lamb (1996:156) autonomy should be taken to mean "...the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned in his learning and the implementation of those decisions." This definition is in line with Littlejohn's concern that complete learner-centredness should display the third approach. That is, students should be given opportunities to decide or choose what is going to be studied and how they should do it.

Students should be included in the decision-making about topics and how they should be taught. In this view "...learners can show great motivation and enthusiasm, and a less dominant teacher in the classroom allows the learners to become more involved in their learning" (Littlejohn, 1985:257) (see Cotterall, 1998:172; Barkhuizen, 1998a:85; Good & Brophy, 1997:227). Brophy (1998:131) also stresses the need for learner autonomy in classrooms and calls on teachers to:

Offer ...students alternative ways to meet requirements. For example, allow them to select topics for book reports, composition assignments, and research projects, and perhaps also to select from alternative ways of reporting to you or the class as a whole (work with a partner to present a biography as an interview of the person about his or her life...).

The notion of learner autonomy is in a similar vein with maximum learner initiative. This is because autonomous students are free to decide what and



how they should be taught. This means the teacher is no longer in control and so learner- and discourse initiative is now maximum. This is mainly because language use in the classroom replicates real-life interaction as there are no more closed questions. The same researcher illustrates this explanation further in the following extract as he advises the teachers that:

Students tend to prefer activities that allow them to respond actively – to interact with you or with one another, manipulate materials, or do something else other than just listen or read. Routine recitation, boardwork, or seatwork activities provide only limited potential for active response. Students should get frequent opportunities to go beyond the simple question-answer formats of these routine activities in order to do projects, experiments, discussions, role play, simulations... creative applications (Brophy, 1998:134).

What the above extract means to the teacher is that traditional IRF pattern of interaction in most cases relies on question-answer format. There is no room for students to do anything that is not teacher-centred. For instance, there is little or no room for projects, experiments, role-plays and creative applications, which all need a more advanced use of language. Cotterall (1998:173) stresses the importance of learner autonomy for “learners need to be able to learn on their own because they do not always have access to the kind or amount of individual instruction they need in order to become proficient in the language.”

If the students are expected to perform well at tertiary level, they should be introduced to autonomy at high school level. Campbell and Krysewska cited in Tudor (1996:14-15) list advantages of learner autonomy. One of them is that teachers’ creation of opportunities for learners to express “their own ideas, opinions, experiences, and areas of expertise” enhances students’ communicative ability.

A critical examination of all these pieces of information about learner autonomy reveals that language teachers should work together with students for their development of the second language (Horwitz *et al.*, 1997:525). For example, most of the students in the researcher's present study prefer group work to the whole class learning or the teacher standing in front of the whole class. While asked to give reasons for their choice, one group writes:

(16)

because I feel more free to quarrel with my colleagues. Also  
because it is easy to understand certain questions when  
explained to me by a student.

Another group says:

(17)

In group we can have different commands and by doing so  
English becomes easy to us.

With comments like these, we can tell that if students were allowed to have a say in their education, there would be less teacher-centred classrooms. Students would say much more about how they perceive they can learn better. Students are aware that the teacher-led lessons minimize their initiative (see Hanson, 1998:32). When asked what they think their teacher can do to help them most in their second language learning, some students respond:

(18)

By giving us exercises to do. Again by letting everyone to speak

in her lesson.

A suggestion like (18) above reveals students' desire to talk and participate actively in language lessons. This is exactly what Barkhuizen (1998b:102) means:

...if we, as teachers, are aware of where our learners are coming from (how they approach language learning, what they feel about their language learning experiences, and how they act upon these feelings), we will be able to facilitate desired learning outcomes in the classrooms.

Barkhuizen's point is that classroom learning is supposed to be conducive to the students' language use. Thus, language learning will be natural and enjoyable, as teachers will also meet the learners' linguistic needs.

### **2.8.5 Motivation manifested in second language learning**

Good and Brophy (1997:209) start their discussion on classroom motivation with the saying, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink." Sellar, quoted in *The Times Educational Supplement* (1999:44) states that "for every person wishing to teach there are thirty not wanting to be taught." Noels, Clément and Pelletier (1999:23) also demonstrate the role of motivation in second language in the following quotation, "In view of the difficulties of learning a second language (L2), sustaining student motivation is a key ingredient for teaching a L2 successfully." (See Ellis, 1994:508.) The discussion of motivation that follows immediately indicates the teacher's role in the language teaching-learning process.

What is motivation? In the learning situation motivation resides with the learners. Good and Brophy (1997:209) define it as "...willingness to engage in classroom activities and their reasons for doing so" (see Richards *et al.*, 1992:238; Natal College of Education, 1997:73; Johnson & Johnson,

1991:38; Harmer 1998:8; Ellis, 1997:75; Dulay *et al.*, 1982:47; Brophy, 1998:12).

Elkind and Sweet (1998:45) and Petty (1993:32) insist that there cannot be any learning if students are not motivated (cf. Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1997:6). Petty's (1993:32) emphasis on the importance of motivation in classroom learning is exemplified by a story of a schoolboy (Terry). He could not understand anything in elementary arithmetic till he left school. His mathematics teacher, Sandra, met him two years later playing darts. What greatly amazed her was the fact that Terry did not have a problem with numbers. He could calculate numbers like  $501-(17-11+[2 \times 10])$  in his head." She was so surprised that she asked him how he managed and he told her it was because he wanted to play for the darts team, "So I had to learn it, didn't I?"

Terry's story implies that teachers should maximize learner initiative in classrooms, especially language classrooms so that they can learn with ease and eagerness. They, like Terry, should see and know why they need to learn a second language (see Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995:20). For example, Terry only learned arithmetic in order to play darts. Therefore it is up to the language teacher to be aware of his classroom discourse and how it either motivates or demotivates student participation and enthusiasm (cf. Harmer, 1998:8).

Ur (1996:275) gives characteristics of a motivated student below for the teacher to see whether he has done his duty or not. Motivated students bear the following characteristics:

1. **Positive task orientation.** The learner is willing to tackle tasks and challenges, and has confidence in his or her success.
2. **Ego-involvement.** The learner finds it important to succeed in learning

in order to maintain and promote his or her own (positive) self-image.

3. **Need for achievement.** The learner has a need to achieve, to overcome difficulties and succeed in what he or she sets out to do.
4. **High aspirations.** The learner is ambitious, goes for demanding challenges, high proficiency, top grades.
5. **Goal orientation.** The learner is very aware of the goals of learning, or of specific learning activities, and directs his or her efforts towards achieving them.
6. **Perseverance.** The learner consistently invests a high level of effort in learning, and is not discouraged by setbacks or apparent lack of progress.
7. **Tolerance of ambiguity.** The learner is not disturbed or frustrated by situations involving a temporary lack of understanding or confusion; he or she can live with these patiently, in the confidence that understanding will come later.

These characteristics suggest that students have different motives for learning the second language. So, this has given emergence to different conceptions of motivation. However, for this study only four kinds of motivation will be discussed. They are: instrumental, integrative, intrinsic, and extrinsic motivations. According to a number of researchers instrumental motivation is an incentive or need to learn the second language for purposes like: passing an examination, getting a well paid job or a prerequisite of being admitted for higher education (see Richards *et al.*, 1992:238; Ellis, 1997:75; Tudor, 1996:45; Harmer, 1998:8; Noels *et al.*, 1999:24). It shows how important the second language is. Rivers (1983:149), like other researchers, states that second language learners in developing countries, like Lesotho, learn the target language because:

...the future good of all students depends on a certain number becoming thoroughly proficient in the use of another tongue and being able to move freely within another culture. In such

situations instrumental motivation can provide a strong drive for language mastery.

So Petty's story is a typical example of instrumental motivation. He learned arithmetic so that he could use it in darts. Every student desires to pass examinations and further his studies in order to get a well-paid job. This confirms Foster's (1998:86) study as it reveals that "many students wrote that their desire to acquire English was a form of instrumental motivation, as they believed that acquisition of the language would lead to better jobs...". This motivates and maximizes learner initiative in learning the language. These students work hard so that they can communicate competently. They are similar to the ones in the researcher's present corpus of data, who when asked why they learn English at school, respond:

(19)

Because we want to reach our ambitions and so that we can communicate with people from other countries, as it is an international language.

while the other group wrote:

(20)

In order to pass COSC, to communicate with people of other cultures internationally.

These responses replicate the students' instrumental motivation to learn English as a second language (see Sung & Padilla, 1998:206). But the question is, are they really provided with opportunities to use the language? Does the kind of discourse in the traditional teacher-fronted classroom

learning cater for all of them? Ellis's (1997:75) study in second language learning stresses the importance of "...the attitudes and affective states that influence the degree of effort that learners make to learn an L<sub>2</sub>." In other words, learners should actively participate in classroom activities. This point is echoed by Hanson (1998:32) in the argument below:

Motivation can be increased by providing a safe, comfortable, caring atmosphere in which the students feel they belong and have some power. If one thinks about motivation, teachers need to share, compromise, and allow students to express their opinions about the working relationship. If the teacher controls every move, the motivation of the class will probably decrease.

As Hanson points out, the traditional IRF interactional pattern in which the teacher is authoritative does not motivate students' learning. Students' autonomy motivates students and facilitates learning because they enjoy to choose "...what to do and when and how to do it" (Good & Brophy, 1997:227).

Another type of motivation is integrative. Ellis (1997:75) explains this as:

Some learners may choose to learn a particular L<sub>2</sub> because they are interested in the people and culture represented by the target group. For example, it is this integrative orientation that underlies the motivation that many English speaking Canadians have for learning French.

Then, if the second language learners are shown that the target language is a passport to other cultures and societies, just like Terry above, they will work hard in order to be part of the target society or culture. This is the same as Terry and the darts team. He wanted to be part of it and so he learned arithmetic with all his effort. If arithmetic were a second language, we would say Terry learned it "out of an affective interest or attraction to the TL

community, ...to be assimilated into this community" (Tudor, 1996:45). See excerpt (19) above for further illustration.

Noels *et al.* (1999:23) are convinced that students who are driven by integrative motivation usually "...demonstrate great motivational effort in learning and thus achieve greater L2 competence than individuals with an instrumental orientation." Students whose classroom interaction results in minimum or no discourse will always remain unmotivated. However, students who participate actively in their learning are the only ones to benefit and therefore display greater motivation (cf. Harmer, 1998:8) and participation.

Another tenet of motivation is intrinsic motivation. It "...involves sparking the interest of young people and creating a desire in them to learn" (Hanson, 1998:28; see Noels *et al.*, 1999:24; Ur, 1996:276; Brophy, 1998:7). Hanson's experience as a teacher taught him that teachers can motivate students intrinsically despite other researchers' belief that this motivation has got nothing to do with the teacher. It can be attained if teachers "...teach a relevant, exciting curriculum and relate it to the students' lives... Some examples of intrinsic motivation are keeping students interested and providing feedback to them" (Hanson, 1998:29). With strategies like this one, we cannot deny that maximum learner initiative in language classrooms maintains second language learners' motivation (see Hanson, 1998:29; Ellis, 1997:76). Another step that Hanson (1998:29) takes to increase students' motivation is explaining the activities or tasks to students in order to enhance their participation. Students like to be part of the classroom activities and this makes them put more effort into their learning. For instance, when asked what they think a teacher can do to help them most when learning English, one group of students says:

(21)

Take us to the library and read novels then after reading tell the whole class what we read.



(Taken from the researcher's present corpus of study.)

This information is important as the teacher can get informative feedback from the students' output (presentations). Thus, excerpt (21) confirms Hanson's (1998:30) opinion that:

Allowing students to voice their opinions will create a setting where they feel they belong. When I take into consideration their thought, I seriously listen to them. Sometimes, I change a lesson plan or add to it. They seem to appreciate this environment, and I believe they are motivated to work harder.

Hanson's main point is that there should be learner autonomy in the classroom. Noels *et al.* (1999:26) agree with this point as they argue that intrinsically motivated students are always interested and aiming to perform well in the subject. However, they point out that students who study under the totally teacher-centred context "and who believe that they are not given useful feedback about their progress may lose their sense of self-determination and competence in the learning process." This is shown by students' response to the question, "What can a teacher do which would help you most when learning English?" They answer:

(22)

She must stop making us write composition which she does not mark. She must give topics for debate frequently.

(From the researcher's present corpus of data.)

A decision like the one in (22) above implies how demotivating a delayed feedback can be in language learning. These students do not know why they write compositions because they are not marked (see Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995:19). Every piece of work given to students is supposed to be goal oriented. Debating will help them develop their competence. From their output the teacher will identify areas that need immediate corrective

feedback. Even though it is claimed that the teacher has nothing to do with intrinsic motivation, he can plan his lessons in a way that will enhance it.

According to Noels *et al.* (1999:24) students who are intrinsically motivated are those whose "...behaviours... are performed not because of inherent interest in the activity but in order to arrive at some instrumental end, such that the source of regulation is external to the activity per se" (see Hanson, 1998:28; Ur, 1996:277; Good & Brophy, 1997:223).

Good and Brophy's (1997:224) perception of extrinsic motivation is that teachers use among others money, prizes, consumables, special attention, personalized interaction and opportunities to go places or do things with the teacher. When students realize that the teacher gives verbal or material rewards no more, extrinsically motivated language learners lose interest in learning the target language (Noels *et al.*, 1998:25). These researchers have found out that "because the reason for learning the language is regulated by contingencies outside the individual, the student's effort and involvement in language learning would be expected to decrease once this reason is removed." Similarly, Hanson (1998:28) does not encourage the use of extrinsic rewards in the classroom because students learn in order to be awarded rewards. There is no longer a "desire to do well" (Hanson, 1998:28). Brophy (1998:106) is also of the same view that "these strategies do not attempt to increase the value that students place on the task itself. Instead they link successful completion of the task to delivery of consequences that students already value."

In the language teaching-learning process, students will only work for the sake of grades and rewards instead of aiming at communicative ability. This is the kind of motivation to be avoided in language classrooms. It discourages learning language for communicative purposes.

In conclusion, the teacher should work hard to include the students in the

decision making. That is, what and how they should learn should be decided by them in collaboration with the teacher. Harmer (1998:8) therefore recommends that the second language teacher's duty is to arouse students interest by making them participate actively in classroom activities (see Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995:18; Natal College of Education, 1997:79).

### **2.8.6 Aims of learning English as a second language manifested in language classes**

After a detailed examination of the IRF interaction in classrooms as well as the roles played by students and teachers in maximizing learner initiative, it is deemed appropriate to discuss the aims of second language learning to tell whether they are compatible with what actually happens in traditional language classrooms. According to Askes (1985:1-2) the aims of learning English can or should be seen as the following:

- (1) To develop the listening skills of the pupil so that he will be able to understand English when it is spoken at a normal speech tempo by the first language speaker.
- (2) To teach the pupil to speak fluently and spontaneously, so that he will be able to use English in his social and working life with increased confidence and ability.
- (3) To encourage an interest in English literature and to cultivate a love of English books, so that the pupil will begin to read spontaneously in order to expand his knowledge, for recreation or in the interests of career.
- (4) To equip the people to be able to comprehend English readily, without first having to translate what has been read.
- (5) To train the pupil to express his thoughts logically and concisely in written form.
- (6) To make the pupil familiar with the basic principles of language structure and in so doing provide him with an aid that will facilitate the

correct use of the language.

- (7) To prepare the pupil for complete citizenship in our multi-lingual country through meaningful communication across the language barrier. Understanding the language of another population group as perhaps one of the most effective ways of promoting mutual understanding and accomplishing good relationships.
- (8) To emphasise the key role occupied by English in this country and to make the pupil aware of the decided advantages to be derived from complete control of this language.

Askes' overall concern is the students' communicative ability in the target language. From the list of aims above, it is evident that they can be attained with motivation. The language teachers' responsibility is to create opportunities for all students to use language communicatively so that they can realize how important these aims and their attainment are. An understanding of these aims calls for maximum learner initiative in language classes. In short, classroom interaction is expected to replicate real-life interaction, which in most cases is barred by teacher-dominance.

#### **2.8.6.1 Characteristics of classroom discourse and mundane conversation**

Teachers can maximize learner initiative by differentiating between classroom and mundane conversations. But it does not mean that these two discourses are completely different. What makes them similar is the number of people engaged in the interaction. Interaction takes place between two or more people. People do not speak at the same time. That is, they take turns. People do not just take the floor. There is always a system and "...overlapping utterances are not highly valued, and access to the floor is obtained in systematic ways" (Mehan, 1985:125). When asked a question, one of the interlocutors is expected to answer, not to ask another question.

There are distinct differences between classroom and mundane conversation. Mehan (1985:126) draws our attention to the fact that in mundane conversation any speaker has got a right to the floor at any time. Any speaker has a right to initiate. Any speaker is free to take the floor if the current speaker's turn comes to an end or "at any possible juncture, the current speaker can select the next speaker, the next speaker self-select, or the current speaker can continue speaking" (Mehan, 1985:126). This pattern of interaction does not occur in the IRF discourse pattern. The teacher is the only one who has the authority to allocate turns. For example:

(23)

11. T: The – the first (.) you do – you consider the good choice of topic. In other words we choose a topic that we are familiar with. And then what other things? Eh Mohobane.
12. S<sub>2</sub>: Choice of subject matter.
13. T: Choice of subject matter. Choice of subject matter. Did we say we choose things which are outside our experience or what?

(From the researcher's present corpus of data.)

In excerpt (23) turn 11, no other student except S<sub>2</sub> (Mohobane) is supposed to answer the teacher's question. At the end of Mohobane's turn (turn 12) the teacher takes the turn back. He is the only one to allocate it to another student. See turns 17 and 19 in excerpt (24) below:

(24)

17. T: Mm hm. Topic on which we – on which we can have a good imagination of – or something that we have experience on. Lerato.
18. S<sub>4</sub>: And we should ...know what language is used to (inaudible).
19. T: Mm hm. Now ^ We must be very clear that we are going to be technical. The language that we use also has to be eh technical. So that we don't beat about the bush when we try to express our ideas clearly. 'Mateboho.

Excerpt (24) illustrates that second language learners seldom or never select the next speaker. While the teacher takes the turn back at its end, he does it for the purposes of evaluation. This is one of the most distinguished differences between classroom and mundane conversation. Questions that are asked in language classroom are used as checks, to see whether students have the desired answers (see turns 17 to 19 in excerpt (24)).

Since there cannot be a thorough teaching of discourse, Hoey's (1992:66) suggestion is that:

It is normally a prime objective of the language teacher to encourage the learner to develop natural conversation skills in the target language. If a teacher knows what natural conversation involves, he or she will be in a better position to assess whether their learners are succeeding in developing the conversational skills that they need in order to be effective speakers of the target language.

Students who are exposed to natural language use in the classroom are likely to acquire proficiency in the second language. The teacher who knows what mundane discourse entails can facilitate that use in his students' language learning. This can be better achieved through maximum learner initiative. It is vital for the teacher to have a thorough knowledge of the following properties in the target language spoken discourse. In naturally occurring dialogue:

- (1) *the speaker distinguishes frozen pairs from free pairs;*
- (2) *the person who replies does not always do what the other person wants;*
- (3) *the speakers may not stick to simple pairs;*
- (4) *topics are typically extended over a number of exchanges;*
- (5) *speakers combine exchanges in ways that make the dialogue complex and flexible;*
- (6) *a speaker may disrupt the exchange by challenging some aspect of the previous speaker's utterance (Burton, 1980);*
- (7) *a speaker has a great deal of choice as to what he or she does next;*
- (8) *people usually have something to say.*

(From Hoey, 1991:67-82.)

In his conclusion, Hoey (1991:82) comments that communicative language teaching should focus on communicative skills. That is, communicative language learning leads to the accomplishment of all the properties above.

The traditional teacher then has to ask himself, "Does the traditional IRF discourse cycle have all the properties above?" If it does not, it is because of discourse environment. Maximum learner initiative is inhibited by the teacher's dominance and the kind of questions recurrent, that is, known-information questions. These properties of mundane conversation, which do not occur in most of the IRF interactional patterns, also show the shortcomings of the teacher-centred classrooms.

### **2.8.7 The use of prescribed textbooks and authentic materials in language teaching-learning process**

Swan's (1991:35) study of the effectiveness of prescribed textbooks in language classes informs us that "in the end, it is not what the textbook does that matters, in itself – it is what the learners do."

Swan implies that teachers who confine themselves and their students to textbooks deny the latter chances to develop their linguistic ability. Blyth (1997:53) also has the same view of textbooks, that they offer nothing communicative or competence developing, except drills. This can have a negative impact on novice teachers (Blyth, 1997:53) as well as those who believe that "...the wise and virtuous people who produced the textbook knew what was good for us" (Swan, 1991:33). Teachers who totally believe in textbooks tend to forget their responsibility of providing students with opportunities to use the target language communicatively (see Harmer, 1998:17). It is at this juncture that Swan (1991:33) makes us realize that no textbook is hundred per cent perfect for any particular class. This is illustrated by one of the teachers who has been interviewed by the researcher in the following excerpt:

(25)

123. R: Okay ^ Alright ^ How many prescribed texts do you have for



your subject?

124. T: Two.

125. R: Two?

126. T: Yes.

127. R: Do you use them along with other texts or not?

128. T: You mean, other texts do you mean those that are not prescribed?

129. R: Yes.

130. T: Yes, I do. Because I do get some exerci – say I – I am doing a certain topic from the prescribed textbook. Now ^ perhaps I – I don't have enough exercises from that book on that topic, then I get it elsewhere, from other books. Then I use some other books. Even in the scheme book I do indicate "any other suitable texts."

131. R: Mm hm. Okay.

132. T: Alright.

133. R: When they finish their course, that is, before they can write final examinations, what should your learners be able to do in English?

134. T: Uhm (.) The learners eh at the end of the academic year should be able to – to write fluently on paper. Eh ... write in both long essay and the situational composition. They should be able to eh write. They should be able to comm- and their language. That is, they should be able to eh to – to guard against some common errors that may grip in as they write and maybe you find the – this spoil – spoils their what? Their written language. They should guard against that. Eh spelling errors ... eh ... errors pertaining to – to tense and so on and so forth.

Sometimes textbooks cause problems as in most cases the teachers do not choose for themselves. They only take what is available (see Crookes, 1997:69). Crookes' (1997:69) criticism of textbooks is based on the fact that

teachers are sometimes "...subject to the time pressures that lead to text following". In other words, they believe that language teaching means going through the whole book with the students. Thus, textbooks are "...shaping their teaching practices and even their beliefs about language learning (Blyth, 1997:53-54). In this sense the textbook has "...turned into a wall, with the teacher and her knowledge on one side and the students on the other" (Swan, 1991:32).

On the contrary, Harmer (1998:111) suggests the teacher is free to skip some of the pages if they are not relevant to what he is doing. He should then substitute the neglected lesson with his own. Furthermore, he (1998:112) insists:

However good the material is, most experienced teachers do not go through it word by word. Instead they use the best bits, add to some exercises and adapt others. ...and occasionally they may omit the textbook lesson completely.

This means language teaching is not supposed to be textbook-bound. If learning is communicative, the following point by Tudor (1996:231) should always be borne in mind:

For example, learner-centred teaching by no means excludes the use of existing *textbooks*, but it will encourage the use of a variety of other materials deriving from the learners' occupational concerns or from their affective/cultural interests.

Tudor implies that the second language teacher has to work hard in order to turn the language classroom into an acquisition-rich environment. He should not bank on drills which always follow the passages in the textbooks (cf. Natal College of Education, 1997:94). A shift from the audiolingual method to the communicative approach demands a good choice of teaching-learning

materials.

Drills taken from textbooks often make it impossible for the students to apply language learned in the classroom to everyday language use. They do not develop the students' communicative ability. Freeman and Freeman (1998:12) attribute drills to the audiolingual method. Their criticism of drills is illustrated by the following joke:

A student who studied four years of Spanish using audiolingual materials took a trip to Mexico. Upon her return, she was asked how she did speaking Spanish. Her reply was, "Not very well. I kept waiting to speak Spanish, but no one ever gave me the first line in a dialogue."

Language teachers can avoid situations like the one above by using authentic language materials (Larsen-Freeman, 1986:135). Teaching-learning materials should "...have the qualities of natural speech or writing" (Richards *et al.*, 1992:27). These are materials which have been "...taken from newspapers, magazines, etc., and tapes of natural speech taken from ordinary radio or television programmes, etc., ..." (Richards *et al.*, 1992:27; cf. Kotze, 1999a:26).

The implication in the above discussion is that language classrooms should not rely totally on drills. There should be an atmosphere of real-life communication through the use of authentic materials. In this way students will communicate and learn at the same time.

#### **2.8.8 Outcomes-based education (OBE) manifested in language classrooms**

It is vital to define outcome(s) at the very beginning of this section as an introduction to the discussion of outcomes-based learning in language

classrooms. Pretorius (1999:279) defines an outcome:

...as a demonstration of learning which occurs at the end of a learning experience. It is a visible, observable demonstration, that is, something that the learner can do as a result of the entire range of learning experiences and capabilities that underlie it.

See (Clarke, 1997; Du Toit, 1999; Van Rooyen & Lategan, 1998; Oliver, 1998; Kotze, 1999b).

The South African non-racial democratic government found it worthy to redesign the national curriculum in a way that would benefit the whole rainbow nation (cf. Faasen & Metcalfe, 1997:9). That is why the media, especially newspapers, excitedly referred to it as a "radical shift from the parrot-fashion learning of the past, and a move away from the promotion of pupils based on a single examination or test", "teaching for the real world", "radical new education plan", and "education moves into the 21 century" (*The Star*, 1 June, 2000; cf. Clarke, 1997:6; Wits EPU, 1997). It is also worthy to define curriculum before discussing it at length. Richards *et al.* (1992:94) define curriculum as:

An educational programme which states:

- (a) the educational purpose of the programme (the **ends**)
- (b) the content, teaching procedures and learning experiences which will be necessary to achieve this purpose (the **means**)
- (c) some means for assessing whether or not the educational ends have been achieved (the **assessment**).

So the South African Government decided on Curriculum 2005 (C2005). In the foreword in Curriculum 2005 by the Department of Education, Manganyi (1997) states:

The curriculum is at the heart of the education process. In the past it has perpetuated race, class, gender and ethnic divisions and has emphasised separateness, rather than common citizenship and nationhood. It was therefore imperative that the curriculum be restructured to reflect the values and principles of our new democratic society.

Manganyi's view of the previous curriculum is that South African citizens had a different or discriminative curriculum. There were no clear outcomes. Therefore the Department of Education realized that the old curriculum did not prepare the learners for life outside the classrooms. They were not able to apply what they had learned in real-life situations (Olivier, 1998:68). In other words their education was unproductive.

Curriculum 2005 got its name from the period of its actual implementation. Faasen and Metcalfe (1997:8) put it:

The implementation of the curriculum is a gradual process. It will have been implemented in all grades by 2003, after which it will be evaluated for a further two years. 2005 will therefore be the culmination of an evolutionary process.

Instead of proving itself as the redeemer of the disadvantaged in the country, Curriculum 2005 was never gladly accepted "...by some educationists, opposition political parties and the South African Democratic Teachers' Union" (*The Star*, June 1, 2000). One grade 3 teacher also states:

'I feel the minister should discontinue Curriculum 2005. "I have found that the standards of maths and numeracy have gone down, and in the following years we're going to be sitting with

illiterate children" (*The Teacher*, 2000:4).

What this teacher says, indicates that he or she had a little understanding of the curriculum. Teachers need to be informed so that they can understand and accept the change.

Curriculum 2005 had eight learning areas, namely: (i) Language, literacy and communication, (ii) Mathematical literacy, (ii) Mathematical Sciences, (iii) Natural Sciences, (iv) Technology, (v) Human and Social Sciences, (vi) Economic and Management Sciences, (vii) Arts and Culture, and (viii) Life Orientation (Department of Education, 1997; Clarke, 1997; Faasen & Metcalfe, 1997).

This new curriculum gave rise to outcomes-based education/learning, which according to Olivier (1998:72):

...implies that the curriculum design process starts with the intended learning outcome, followed by the knowledge, skills and processes that must be mastered in order to achieve the intended outcome (cf. Van Rooyen & Lategan, 1998:2).

It has already been mentioned that it was not easy to implement Curriculum 2005. Therefore the present minister, Kadar Asmal, appointed a Review Committee headed by Chisholm. Her perception of Curriculum 2005 failure reads:

"My view is that with every set of curriculum reviews and changes, new issues, problems and contradictions emerge. As soon as something is addressed, new problems will crop up."

This curriculum has to be phased out as it was not clear to all the people who were supposed to implement it. The Review Committee has found that

"...many are confused about the design and implementation of Curriculum 2005. It is clear from all the available evidence that although Curriculum 2005 has generated a new debate on teaching and learning, teachers have a rather shallow understanding of the principles of Curriculum 2005" (Report of Curriculum 2005 Review Committee, May 2000:2).

In addition, the Committee has found out that the curriculum documents have "...the complex and confusing terminology" (Report of C2005 Review Committee, May 2000:2). It has too many learning areas. There is no content in the curriculum and this makes it difficult for teachers to progress. "The curriculum policy and the assessment policy are not in line with each other" (*The Teacher*, August 2000:8). There has not been enough training for the teachers as "...district trainers often did not understand Curriculum 2005 and consequently did not use the principles of Curriculum 2005 in their own methodology of training" (Report of the Review Committee, May 2000:2).

Another finding is that learning materials were often not easy to get and understand due to the weaknesses mentioned above, and "the absence of basic resources, such as books, exercise books, duplicating machines in many schools exacerbates the problem" (Report of Curriculum 2005 Review Committee, May 2000:3). People who were supposed to develop or help the teachers, the officials, did not offer any help. Instead they criticized the teachers' work. In fact there were no knowledgeable people as well as proper resources (Report of Curriculum 2005 Review Committee, May 2000:3; cf. *The Teacher*, August 2000, September, 2000). The last weakness of the curriculum is that it has not been given enough time. Its implementation was immediate and improper.

All these weaknesses led to the emergence of Curriculum 21 (C21). This one will differ from Curriculum 2005 in various respects. It will not have as many learning areas as the previous one had. Instead of eight, it will only have four. All the points that were taken for granted are going to be given proper

attention. For example:

- Teacher orientation and training.
- Learning support materials, especially textbooks.
- National, provincial and district level support (From Report of Curriculum 2005 Review Committee, May 2000:4).

Even though Curriculum 2005 was reviewed, OBE was not. Fortunately the principles of OBE have not been revised, and so they "...should be maintained" (The Teacher Resource, August 2000:27; cf. Asmal, 2000:1). Language, literacy and communication is the only learning area that is going to be discussed in this particular study, that is, its specific outcomes. Language, including sign languages, is vital to human life because it helps man develop socially and academically. According to the Department of Education (1997:13) and Van Tonder (1999:1) language and language learning makes it easy for man to:

- Make meaning
- Negotiate meaning and understanding
- Access education, information and literacies
- Think and express their thoughts and emotions logically, critically and creatively
- Respond with empathy to the thoughts and emotions of others
- Interact and participate socially, economically, culturally and spiritually
- Understand the relationship between language and power and influence relationships through this understanding
- Develop and reflect critically on values and attitudes
- Communicate in different contexts by using a range of registers, varieties and means
- Use standard forms of language where appropriate.



The above list of outcomes is referred to as critical outcomes. Olivier (1998:17) states that their aim is "...to direct educational activities towards development of the learners within a social and economic environment." They differ from specific outcomes in that the latter "...describe in detail the knowledge, skills and values that contribute to achieving the essential learning outcomes" (The common curriculum, 1999:37). The specific outcomes of this particular learning area (Language, literacy and communication) are:

Outcome 1: Show a critical awareness of language usage.

Outcome 2: Engage with aesthetic, affective, cultural and social values in texts.

Outcome 3: Access, process, use and present information.

Outcome 4: Use appropriate communication skills, conventions, and structures for specific purposes and situations.

Outcome 5: Explore and use a variety of strategies to learn.

Outcome 6: Demonstrate an understanding of discourse structure in texts.

(From SAQA, 1998.)

A detailed examination of critical and specific outcomes makes it possible for the teacher to judge the compatibility between OBE and the IRF discourse cycle. Teacher-centred classrooms in most cases aim at Outcome 1. All the other outcomes: 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are not replicated in the IRF discourse pattern. There is no communicative language use, variety of materials and acquisition-rich environment in traditional language classrooms. There is even no autonomy or motivation and consequently no learning at all.

Excerpt (26) below typifies Outcome 1.

(26)

319. T: Ae. Ae. I'm not talking about that. What I mean is you must be careful with your prepositions. Okay? Do not say "In different level." You say, "At different levels." The preposition 'in' is wrong if you're talking about levels. Okay?

Another example which shows incompatibility between OBE and traditional language classes is illustrated in the following excerpt:

(27)

163. R: When they finish their course, that is, before they can write final examinations, what should your learners be able to do in English?
164. T: Well, you know, eh they should have mastered ... the four concepts eh the four principles of the syllabus.
165. R: Mm hm.
166. T: Eh that is free composition.
167. R: Mm hm.
168. T: Situational composition.
169. R: Mm hm =
170. T: Comprehension and summary.
171. R: Mm hm Eh (.) is it because you think they can eh (.) use these even after or outside the classroom?
172. T: Uh ... well, you know, unfortunately, you know, if I had my way =
173. R: = Mm hm =
174. T: = the kind of English that we – we do in Form 5 =
175. R: Mm hm =
176. T: =is really – the examination that we sit for =
177. R: = Mm hm =

178. T: = has no – doesn't really test anything, you know, so that uhm  
(.) they – it doesn't really eh emphasize on com –  
communicational abilities – conversational abilities. It's really  
how to pass an examination. (Inaudible) understand. So ^  
Honestly I'm afraid that, you know, I'm teaching something that I  
don't believe in.

There are exceptional cases in which teachers aim at communicative ability.  
For instance:

(28)

106. R: Okay fine. When they finish their course, that is, before they can  
write final examinations, what should your learners be able to do  
in English?
107. T: Basically communicate.
108. R: Mm hm.
109. T: Use English practically.
110. R: Mm hm.
111. T: In everyday life.
112. R: Mm hm.
113. T: Uhm... but I must not (laughs) but uhm ... yes, be able to – to –  
to – it's actually used as a medium of instruction in eh further  
institutes of learning. So they should be conversant with the type  
of English – eh different sorts of English that they probably opt  
for different careers, maybe Medicine and so on. Okay ^ they  
will get into details later on but for n – for the basics they should  
start from here (.) at - from this high school level. Mm.

This teacher aims at Outcome 4. She wants her students to use language  
communicatively. In fact she aims at all the six outcomes. Her teaching is at

odds with that of the teacher in excerpt (26). These two cases are further illustrated by Olivier (1998:39) as he differentiates between traditional learning and outcomes-based learning, where the learner is always the centre:

| Traditional learning   | The outcomes-based learning   |
|--|---|
| a. Rote learning.  | a. Critical thinking, reasoning.  |
| b. Syllabus is content driven and broken down into subjects. | b. Learning is process and outcome driven, connected to real-life situations. |
| c. Textbook/worksheet bound.                                 | c. Learner- and outcome-centred.  |
| d. Teacher-centred.  | d. Teacher is facilitator.  |
| e. Syllabus is rigid and non-negotiable.                     | e. Learning programmes are seen as guides.                                    |
| f. Emphasis on what the teacher hopes to achieve.            | f. Emphasis on outcomes - what learner achieves.                              |
| g. Curriculum development not open to public.                | g. Wider community involvement is encouraged.                                 |

Table 2.4 (Taken from Oliver, 1998:39)

## 2.9 CONCLUSION

The Natal College of Education (1997:79) mentions that OBE "...describe[s] what we want the learner to be able to do at the end of the learning process." Thus, we should not aim at completing a certain textbook before the

beginning of examinations. Language learners should be taught in a way that will enable them to use language in every context, that is, language learning should be based on outcomes, not syllabus completion. We should all have the same aim as the teacher in excerpt (28) above. The traditional IRF interactional pattern is not at all compatible with OBE. Communicative language teaching, if well implemented, can change the learning situation and turn it into language acquisition for life.

## Chapter 3

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### METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher has reviewed the literature for a theoretical orientation of the limitations of teacher-centred instruction and advantages of communicative language teaching and maximum learner initiative in language classrooms. What follows in this chapter is the methodology of the classroom research (CR) which was used to obtain data to apply to the theories examined in the literature review in Chapter 2.

#### 3.2 RESEARCH SETTING AND DATA COLLECTION

As noted in Chapter 1 of this study, the researcher collected lingual data in seven Form E classrooms in four high schools in Lesotho in 1999. All these schools are in the district of Maseru, the capital town of Lesotho. These schools were selected on the basis of final examination results.

The researcher had intended to visit two classrooms in each school. Her supervisor had written her a letter that requested permission from school principals, heads of English Departments and language teachers to allow her to collect data from their schools (cf. Hopkins, 1993:221). However, the schools "...were under no obligation whatsoever to grant the researcher permission" (Ralenala, 1997:266). That is why she eventually visited seven classrooms instead of eight. It happened that one of the teachers could not fit the researcher into her teaching schedule. Only one teacher in that school allowed the researcher to have his "lessons recorded and analysed" (Ralenala, 1997:266). All the classes were going to sit for COSC final examinations at the

end of the year. As indicated in Chapter 1, English is their second language, a medium of instruction and also a subject that many of the students fail.

It was necessary to collect pre- and post-counselling data so that they could be compared. In other words, collecting pre-counselling and post-counselling lessons enables one to make a comparative study. There are samples of classroom discourse. That is, there are seven pre-counselling and seven post-counselling lessons from all the classrooms visited by the researcher. There are retrievable audio-recordings of these lessons. This retrievability "...gives us a participant's perspective which is useful" (Van Lier, 1988:5) (see Kinginger, 1997; Seliger & Shohamy, 1989; Hopkins, 1993; Greyling, 1995 and 1998c; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). Piantanida and Garman (1999:131) also see the use of audio-recordings as one way to "...create a description that corresponds as closely as possible to ...observable reality of 'the class'." In other words they point out that it is easier to observe "...the nature of interactions among students and instructor; who talks; who remains silent...". So the researcher will be able to tell whether the picture of classroom discourse presented by either a teacher or students is really what happens in class. There were five 80-minute and two 40-minute lessons. These lessons were recorded in the absence of the researcher as she feared that her presence would have a negative impact on teachers as well as students. For instance, Wallace (1998:104) states:

Most teachers have first come across classroom observation in the context of the assessment of our teaching practice during teacher training. We therefore tend to equate being observed with being assessed. This may be one of the reasons why as teachers we are resistant to the presence of others in our classrooms... Even experienced and competent teachers may feel that they are not teaching to their potential. ...Being observed is an unusual event, and makes teaching under observation an even more stressful experience than usual.

In other words, teachers do not feel relaxed when teaching in the presence of a stranger or an intruder. The classroom atmosphere changes due to this presence. That is why even after the letter from the researcher's supervisor, the researcher worked hard to convince the teachers that she was not going to assess them. She was only going to record their lessons for identification of the pattern of classroom discourse between them and their students. Thus, lessons that could be recorded in the researcher's presence would not reveal real or normal classroom life (see Ralenala, 1997:266; Richards & Lockhart, 1994:11; Seliger & Shohamy, 1989:162; Scott, 1997:166; Bell, 1993:109). This is confirmed by Bailey's experience as a researcher. She states:

When she entered the laboratory, the young man interrupted his own lecture with the comments, 'Uh-oh, here comes the spy.' Of course, the physics students were somewhat puzzled by this remark. As the teacher went on with the lesson, Bailey began taking notes, but the instructor said 'Uh-oh, you are making me nervous' (Allwright & Bailey, 1991:70-1).

The researcher's absence during the lessons thus supports Van Lier's (1988:2) concern that classroom data is supposed to be natural or real. That is, it should replicate the actual classroom atmosphere (Greyling, 1998b:9). Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner & Steinmetz (1991:2). McNiff, Lomax and Steinmetz (1996:103-4), Walker (1985:53), and Richards and Lockhart (1994:11) have a number of advantages of audio-recordings. They purport that, among others, the researcher and other researchers have access to the original data whenever it is deemed necessary (cf. Greyling, 1998b:13).

There were structured interviews (see Scott, 1997:165; McNiff, 1988:77; Wallace, 1998:146; McNiff *et al.*, 1996:101; Bell, 1993:91) between teachers and the researcher after every individual pre-counselling lesson. There were also questionnaires to be completed by the students. A questionnaire sample appears in the appendix of this study. All the original questionnaires are lodged with the researcher. This was done for the purposes of validating the



original data, which in this case refers to the pre-counselling lessons (Ely *et al.*, 1991:97; Greyling, 1998b:11; Van Lier, 1988:13). Seliger and Shohamy (1989:122) are also of the same opinion that "the use of variety of methods of data collection also facilitates validation and triangulation" (see Payne, 1997:108; Hilleson, 1996:251; Harrison, 1996:300).

The use of qualitative research methods in this study has been influenced by Krathwohl's (1998:228) recommendation, that qualitative research:

...keeps us close to the persons in the situation and helps us to learn what lies behind qualitative numbers. Indeed, qualitative researchers typically view those they observe or interview as collaborators from whom they learn rather than as subjects to be held at arm's length and studied.

In short, teachers and students are not supposed to be taken "...as subjects and sources of data" (Widdowson, 1993:263). Instead, they should be given opportunities to air their opinions as they play a very important role in qualitative research (see Sherman, 1990:6). This, again, is emphasised by Widdowson (1993:262) in his finding "that the role of practitioner does not preclude that of theorist, and that the professional status of teachers as mediators depends on the justification of an appropriate expertise of their own." Evidently, action research is mainly aimed at appraising the quality of the context in which it is carried out. This is proved by O'Hanlon (1996:75) in her statement that "Action Research Network... has been set up to develop improvements in teaching and learning in schools..." (cf. McNiff, 1988; Hopkins, 1993). If teachers and students are not involved, there will be no desired change because as researchers we have to understand their problems and suggestions before we can suggest anything. For example, one of the teachers interviewed by the researcher revealed that he does not give his students enough time to think about answers to his questions. Witness excerpt (29) below:

(29)

69. R: Okay ^ U-h-m how long do you wait for your class to respond to your question? You said they do answer. So how long do you wait for them to respond?
70. T: Sometimes when I see they're started it takes something like three seconds.
71. R: Mm hm.
72. T: Mm. I make them wait for - to think for three seconds.
73. R: Mm hm.
74. T: And then if I see that the - still they cannot answer =
75. R: = Mm hm =
76. T: That's when I start, you know, asking other questions that will make them see the point.

(Taken from the researcher's present corpus of data).

It is only after a detailed study of this teacher's transcribed lesson and the interview between him and the researcher that the latter could see recurrent patterns of his questioning behaviour which was shown to him as they cycled through the transcriptions with the researcher (see Seliger & Shohamy, 1989:122-123). He was therefore counselled. It should be clear that the main purpose of the research, improvement of teaching, could not leave out any teacher because "The teacher's involvement was critical not only to generate a participant's view of the classroom events, but also to establish an awareness of those aspects of her teaching style that she desired to modify" (Greyling & Rantsoai, 2000:286-287).

### 3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

All the audio-taped lessons were transcribed on a turn-by-turn basis. This was to enable the researcher to identify the recurrent pattern(s) of instruction

(Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). For example, in one lesson the researcher identified an excessive use of closed questions. For instance:

(30)

- |      |     |   |                            |
|------|-----|---|----------------------------|
| 232. | T:  | Fine. You must have primary schools, isn't it?    | (Initiation)               |
| 233. | Ss: | Yes, Sir.   | (Response)                 |
| 234. | T:  | You must have secondary schools. Right?           | (Initiation)               |
| 235. | Ss: | Yes, Sir.   | (Response)                 |
| 236. | T:  | You must have... (writes on the board.)           | (Initiation)               |
| 237. | Ss: | High schools.                                     | (Response)                 |
| 238. | T:  | ...high schools. Okay ^ Right ^ Eh (.)            |                            |
|      |     | So here (writes on the board)                     | (Feedback)                 |
|      |     | we have pre-schools. What?                        | (Initiation)               |
| 239. | Ss: | Plus primary schools.                             | (Response)                 |
| 240. | T:  | (Continues writing on the board) primary schools. |                            |
|      |     | What?   | (Feedback<br>& Initiation) |
| 241. | Ss: | Secondary schools.                                | (Response)                 |
| 242. | T:  | (Writes the response on the board.) What?         | (Feedback<br>& Initiation) |
| 243. | Ss: | Secondary schools.                                | (Response)                 |
| 244. | T:  | (Writes the response on the board.) What?         | (Initiation)               |

(Taken from the researcher's present corpus of data.)

Excerpt (30) has 13 turns. Out of these 13 turns the teacher has seven and all of them are closed questions which are only answered in two or three words by the students. See turns 233, 235, 237, 239, 241, and 243. The researcher identifies minimum learner initiative in this excerpt and throughout the whole lesson. Then the teacher and the researcher together went through the whole

lesson and identified instances of minimum learner initiative that resulted from overwhelming use of closed questions.

Data were analysed on the basis of Bowers' (1987) teacher counselling model. This model was applied in the analysis because it "...assigns a critical role to the teacher-learner discourse as the evidence to be considered in the teacher-counselling process" (Greyling & Rantsoai, 2000:286). Bowers' model has three major phases. They are: the pre-counselling, the intervention, and the post-counselling phases. Bowers' (1987:138) model was chosen for this study because the researcher thought "...individual teachers, whatever their professional preparation, benefit from the advice of those who can see them in action and recommend paths for development" (see Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995:27). This model is presented in the framework below:

### **HORACE: A GUIDE TO TEACHER COUNSELLING**

HEAR and OBSERVE

RECORD and ANALYSE

CONSIDER and only then EVALUATE

Hear-Observe-Record-Analyse-Consider-Evaluate:

**HORACE**

HORACE represents "HEAR and OBSERVE" (H & O), "RECORD and ANALYSE" (R & A), and "CONSIDER and only then EVALUATE" (C & E). In this study Hear and Observe were applied in the first two phases of the model, that is, the pre-counselling and the intervention. This "...was aimed at modifying and improving the specific discourse style of the teacher" (Greyling & Rantsoai, 2000:286).

The researcher audiotaped and transcribed lessons in all the classrooms mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. She did an "...exhaustive analysis of all not merely minute excerpts of data" (Greyling, 1998b:13). She then

interviewed the teachers and distributed questionnaires to students to answer in groups. This promoted discourse initiative as students discussed questions and answers in their respective groups. These structured interviews and students' questionnaires were used in order to validate the original data (see Van Lier, 1988; Greyling, 1998b; McNiff, 1988; Wallace, 1998; Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Wiersma, 1995; Davis & Henz, 1998).

The researcher together with individual teachers analysed the rich corpus of data (lessons, interviews and students' responses in the questionnaires) and identified recurrent and rare patterns of classroom discourse (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989:122-123). An individual teacher became "...a participant and co-analyst of the data..." (Freeman, 1996:371). The researcher then intervened and made the teachers aware of the limitations of minimum learner initiative in language class. She even made them aware of different ways in which they could maximize learner initiative and this will be discussed at length in Chapter 4 of this research essay. The researcher and the teachers finally agreed that maximum learner initiative is crucial in language learning. They therefore decided to implement the notion of learner-learner interaction and communicative language teaching.

RECORD and ANALYSE were also implemented in the post-intervention phase. The language teachers' lessons were learner-centred. The researcher monitored the implementation of these lessons. They were audiotaped, transcribed and analysed just like the pre-counselling ones. They all displayed desired changes. The students evinced increased discourse initiative. All the aspects of maximum learner initiative were identified. One example of this is demonstrated in excerpt (13) in Chapter 2. There is learner-learner interaction and students answer referential questions.

After a detailed analysis of the post-counselling lessons, the teachers and the researcher evaluated the effectiveness of the intervention phase. This was

done by looking at all the improvements identified in the lessons. For instance, in one school a student asked the researcher what she was going to do with the data, that is, why she was collecting them. She honestly told them that it was going to be used to improve language teaching and learning in Lesotho. The student told the researcher that it was already too late for his class as they were about to sit for their COSC examinations. They would have benefitted if the research had been carried earlier that year. However, he was happy to see that the research could bring about a change in his school for the junior students. The teachers also expressed their gratitude as they were not aware that they could identify their students' individual linguistic needs through maximizing learner initiative. This was the last phase of Bowers' (1987) counselling model, CONSIDER and only then EVALUATE.

# Chapter 4

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## FINDINGS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

All the three phases of Bowers' (1987) counselling model are dealt with in this chapter. There is a detailed analysis of the pre-intervention (pre-counselling), intervention, and post-intervention phases of this study. The pre-counselling phase focuses on data set 1 as an example of the evidence that some teachers created few or no opportunities for learner initiative. This is done by analysing seven audio-recordings of classroom interaction, recorded interviews between the teachers and the researcher as well as the questionnaires that have been filled in by the students. This will be followed by the intervention (counselling) phase in which the researcher made suggestions to teachers so that they could maximize learner initiative. In the post-counselling phase there is an implementation of the researcher's suggestions. The discourse was collected to show that the classroom interaction in classrooms which were previously teacher-centred subsequently evinced a more learner-centred approach.

### 4.2 PRE-INTERVENTION

Learners should not be seen as jars to be filled, but rather as lamps to be fuelled, to provide light (Olivier, 2000:1).

This quotation implies that second language teaching is expected to empower students to use language communicatively. Thus, teachers should not minimize learner initiative in classroom discourse. This extract discourages the employment of the traditional pattern of instruction which dominated in most of the classrooms visited. Classroom discourse in most classrooms "... consists of an *initiation* by the teacher, followed by a *response* from the pupil, followed by *feedback*, to the pupil's response from the teacher ..." (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992:3) as it is evinced in the excerpts below.

(31)

87. T: Yes. How – how – how many words you know. How many words. How many words and they're many. Do you know? How many, I don't know. Even if I know (inaudible) but I believe it's a lot of words. But of course we know more in our mother eh language. Alright ^ Now ^ Uhm... So ^ The question now is can you explain the meaning of '*almost*'. What does it mean? Tell me, if I say, you know, "*I almost died*". Did I die? (Initiation)
88. Ss: No. (Response)
89. T: What happened to me? I almost died. (Initiation)
90. Ss: (Inaudible) nearly. (Response)
91. T: Nearly what? You are saying ... (Initiation)
92. Ss: ... about ... about to die. (Response)
93. T: Yes. It means that, you know, eh I didn't die. But eh I was only on the point of dying. Now ^ if I say to you, "I can almost – I can almost eh ... I can almost hear eh my mother calling me." What am I saying. I can almost hear my – my mother's voice calling me. Am I hearing the voice? (Initiation)



94. Ss: No. (Response)
95. T: What is happening to me (inaudible) I can almost hear  
my mother's voice calling me? (Initiation)
96. Ss: You are afraid. (Laugh) You imagine. (Response)
97. T: Here's you know your – your imagination. It's  
imagination. You – you're (writes on the board) thinking.  
She has used the good word. She said, "imagination". It  
means that you –you think. You think. You can hear  
your mother of course. But don't eh (inaudible). But  
what is the answer there now (.) if it says (almost? You  
could almost hear them growing. Now ^ We have  
agreed that I almost died. I – I almost died. I almost  
hear my mother's voice. It doesn't mean that you actually  
hear it or you actually died. What do you think it means  
here? You could almost hear them. (Feedback and Initiation)

In turn 87 the teacher evaluates the previous response from the students. See "Yes. How-how-how many words you know. How many words. How many words and they are many." He also initiates as he asks the students to explain the word 'almost'. He does not give students enough wait-time to think about the answer to his first question. Instead, he asks two questions after the initial one. For example, "What does it mean?" Tell me, if I say, you know, "I almost died". Did I die? It is difficult for the students to answer the questions because they do not understand the teacher's real purpose (White & Lightbown, 1984:231). In this single turn the teacher demonstrates a number of limitations of the traditional IRF discourse pattern. His turns are longer than the students' (see turns 88, 90, 92, 94 and 96). He does not give students time to explain the word in question. In short, he does not give enough wait-time. He asks all the questions that lead the students to the right answer that he already knows. In this way he does not give room for information gap and informativity. Turns 89, 91, 93, 95 and 97 typify a

re-initiation act. The teacher re-initiates because students cannot provide the correct answer, namely the synonym of the word 'almost'.

In turn 88, the students respond to the teacher's last question in turn 87, "Did I die?" They answer in a group. We do not know whether all the students are involved. The teacher asks another question basing himself on the students' response in turn 88. The pattern TST predominates the whole excerpt. There is an extended form of interaction (cf. Mehan, 1985) in the excerpt (see turns 87 to 97). Another example of extended sequence of interaction is shown in excerpt (32) below.

(32)

10. T: (Walks around the classroom as students are individually working on the task.) Now you just read and I don't want, I mean, you to remember eh anything about the letter, that is, you – you read. (Inaudible), I mean, how many are you? (Initiation)  
(Long pause)
11. T: Okay ^ Eh (.) let us, I mean, stop. Let's stop (inaudible). Let's stop. I'm sure it's going to, I mean, serve, I mean, our purpose. Alright ^ Eh you have read, I mean, the letter (inaudible). What do you think about this letter? Do you think the letter is formal or informal? Is the letter formal or informal? (Inaudible). Yes. (Initiation)
12. S<sub>1</sub>: Formal letter. (Response)
13. T: Pardon. (Initiation)

14. S<sub>1</sub>: Formal letter. (Response)
15. T: Is it a formal letter? Do you think it is a formal letter?  
Yes, (inaudible). (Initiation)
16. S<sub>2</sub>: (Inaudible) (Response)
17. T: It is not a formal letter? Why – why do you say it is not a  
formal letter? (Initiation)

Turn 11 serves as an initiation. The students are expected to tell whether the letter they have just read is formal or informal. S<sub>1</sub>'s response in turn 12 is that the letter is formal. The teacher re-initiates and this time it is not clear whether it is because he has not heard what S<sub>1</sub> has said or whether he expresses his disapproval. Turn 15 is also a re-initiation which, in this case, shows that the response in turn 14, "formal letter" is incorrect. It also illustrates that "upon the occurrence of dispreferred responses or non-responses by pupils, the teacher may **re-initiate** and **provide clues** in facilitating student responses" (Greyling, 1995:36; cf. Mehan, 1985:122; White & Lightbown, 1984:235; Boulima, 1999:114). This indicates that the teacher will re-initiate questions and provide clues until he obtains a preferred response. Thus, he dominates the classroom discourse.

Excerpt (33) below illustrates the three-part sequence (IRF) in traditional teacher-dominated language classrooms.

(33)

21. T: Then it should be choosing something that is exciting if  
it's a story. Something that is exciting. (Inaudible). (Feedback  
and  
Initiation)
22. S<sub>6</sub>: We should consider variation of paragraph structure. (Response)

23. T: We should also consider variation of paragraph structure.  
Rethabile. (Feedback and Initiation)
24. S<sub>7</sub>: And the punctuation must be exciting. (Response)
25. T: Punctuation also should be exciting. You know eh what we mean by saying punctuation must be exciting. Is it an ordinary punctuation which now eh we punctuate ... we-we-we only indicate pauses? Is it punctuation like that you are talking about? (Initiation)
26. Ss: (In unison) No. (Response)
27. T: On top of that we must have some meaningful punctuation. Serutla. (Feedback and Initiation)
28. S<sub>8</sub>: We must have some suspense. (Response)
29. T: There must be ... suspense. (Feedback)

This excerpt typifies the traditional IRF discourse cycle of teacher-dominated talk. All the answers given by students respond to the teacher's elicitation in turn 9 earlier in the lesson. It is not clear whether the whole class as well as those who are answering really understand their response. He says:

(34)

9. T: Maybe (inaudible) we said in story telling (inaudible).  
Yes, what things are there? (Initiation)

Thus turn 21 in (33) above is a reaction to the student's response. The statement "Then it should be choosing something that is exciting if it's a story. Something that is exciting" is a repetition of the student's response in the previous turn. It shows that the response is preferred. It therefore functions as feedback and used instead of words like "Good", "Right", "Excellent", and others (see Chapter 2). In turn 22, S<sub>6</sub> responds to the teacher's initiation in turn 21. Again the teacher shows that the answer is correct by repeating it, "We should

also consider variation of paragraph structure". He evaluates the response, takes the turn back from S<sub>6</sub> and then allocates it to Rethabile (S<sub>7</sub>). According to Allwright and Bailey (1991:124), this allocation which is directed to S<sub>7</sub> and other students, for example, Serutla (S<sub>8</sub>) and S<sub>6</sub> in the excerpt shows that "teachers may call upon a particular learner to talk – a 'direct nomination' or 'personal solicit'. Alternatively, teachers may throw the turn open to the whole class – a 'general solicit'." Turn 26, in which students answered in unison, indicates that the teacher's question in turn 25 had not been directed to any particular student. So turn 26 is referred to as a general solicit. Turn 27 is the teacher's evaluation of S<sub>7</sub>'s response, "And the punctuation must be exciting". It also functions as an initiation of the turn allocated to S<sub>8</sub> in turn 28. S<sub>8</sub>'s response is reacted to in turn 29 by the teacher's repetition of the response to show that the response is accepted. This illustrates that accuracy-based teaching is characterised by known-information questions and teachers' feedback to the students' responses.

Evidently, "we encounter single-utterance learner responses ..." (Greyling, 1995:24) in all of these excerpts, that is (31), (32), and (33). The questions are of the same kind. They are all known-information questions. The most striking point about all these corpuses of discourse is that they all display minimum learner initiative or no discourse initiative. They also exemplify that "in the classroom, the teacher has the right to speak whenever he wants to; but the pupils do not have such a right" (Boulima, 1999:142; cf Greyling, 1995:25; Greyling & Rantsoai, 2000:290). In this case, the teachers take two out of three turns-at-talk. This initiative-minimizing turn allocation in language classes is confirmed by the interview between one of the teachers and the researcher. He was asked about the proportion of turns-at-talk taken by learners in the classroom. See excerpt (35).

(35)

83. R: You haven't.

84. T: I haven't. I haven't.

85. R: Eh if you some - Okay ^ Fine ^ I shouldn't read the second part because it doesn't apply. What proportion of the turns – at-talk do learners take in the classroom interaction?
86. T: Of the lesson?
87. R: Yes.
88. T: Uhm half.
89. R: Half?
90. T: Yes, half the class, I mean, half the period. You mean, of the 40 minutes how much time?
91. R: Not of the 40 minutes. What I mean is uhm (.) you ask a question. Right?
92. T: Yah.
93. R: They answer.
94. T: Yah.
95. R: You comment.
96. T: Yah.
97. R: I-is it like that always?
98. T: Eh ... well ^ Then, you know, if it becomes eh ... if there are more people, I mean, who want to – to – to, you know, to have a go or an attempt I give them, you know. I'll give four or five students to – to – to try and give me their own answers.
99. R: To give their own answers?
100. T: Yah, before I comment.
101. R: But it still goes like that. Initiation, response and comment.
102. T: Yah.
103. R: In other words they take one.

104. T: Yes. Sometimes I ask them, you know, to comment before I comment. So somebody – I ask a question and then somebody – and then I'll say, "Any comments from the class?" (Inaudible)

The teacher, in excerpt (35) above, confirms that he takes two turns and his students take only one. This system is illustrated by students' answers to the following questions in their questionnaire.

(36)

Who asks most of the questions in class – teacher or students?

and

(37)

Does your teacher correct you during oral exercises? What does he or she correct?

A critical analysis of the student's answers to these questions shows that the teachers always take two turns and minimize learner initiative. Minimum learner initiative demotivates students. They cannot learn if there is no motivation in them. The fact that the teacher controls every move in the language shows that students have little or nothing to do. Brophy (1998:12-13) supports the need for motivation in learning as he purports:

Motivation to learn refers primarily to the quality of students' cognitive engagement in a learning activity, not the intensity of the physical effort they devote to it or the time they spend on it. For most tasks, there is a curvilinear relationship between motivational intensity and degree of success achieved. That is, performance is

highest when motivation is at an optimal level rather than either below or above this optimal level.

Local allocation of turns in language classes inhibits the involvement of students. Brophy's point in this extract is that learning takes place only when students are fully involved in the classroom activities. And this does not usually happen in most language classrooms due to the teachers' domination and control over the students. That is why the students in the present study suggest ways in which teachers can promote their language learning. They suggest that "by giving us exercises to do. Again by letting everyone to speak in her lesson" the teacher can help them learn and enjoy the language classes. The questionnaire suggests that the teacher can help students most when learning English by creating an informal learning situation. Excerpt (38) below demonstrates this point.

(38)

Teach the language a little bit informally.

Taken on its surface level this suggestion means that the students do not enjoy language learning that is structural and teacher-centred. They long for learning that accommodates acquisition and in which they are all going to participate. At much deeper level the suggestion implies that according to the students, language teaching should not exclude "... language functions or language notions or situations in which learners are likely to find themselves" (Gass, 1997:152). Stern (1992:312) also has the same opinion that language structure alone does not enhance communicative ability, "Therefore, an analytic strategy must offer opportunities for practice and repetition". That is, all the components of Allen's (1987) trifocal syllabus deserve the same amount of emphasis in language



teaching. Unfortunately, most of the teachers put special emphasis on grammar and other formal features of the language.

It is important for language teachers to teach language in a way that motivates learners because, "highly motivated students and learners seem able to take in more information at a faster rate than do less motivated students" (Gass, 1997:10) It has already been stressed that motivation in language learning derives from interesting activities in which the learners fully participate. This is how maximum learner initiative can be attained.

There was one exceptional pre-counselling lesson in which the teacher maximized learner initiative in the lesson on composition writing. All the students actively participated in the lesson. This is shown by excerpt (39) below:

(39)

3. T: Now I would like you to notice that in different books you notice different styles of writing. That is what we want to see. How can it differ? What type of different styles can we use in (inaudible) topic as (inaudible) what type of topic allows you to make a debate, have a discussion, tell a story, to narrate or describe an event. Okay? So ^ We will note as we hear the presentation, whether the stories are so different. What can we copy? What can we throw away and so on and so on? So as you get to your groups, for the first time (inaudible) I expect you to finish up your work (inaudible) before. (Inaudible) write the essay right now. I expect you to finish up your work,

choose a presenter, come and present and then (inaudible). Get into groups.

4. Ss: (Form groups and discuss their tasks.)
5. T: Let's quickly have one group to start reading of their secretary – their essay.
6. Ss: (Mumble)
7. T: And just try to read (inaudible) very slowly so that we can hear everything.

#### GROUP A

8. S<sub>1</sub>: (Inaudible)
9. T: Can you (inaudible) title, Sir.
10. Ss: (To the representative) stand up.
11. T: What is their title?
12. Ss: (Inaudible)
13. T: Yes?
14. S<sub>1</sub>: (Reads) Oh my goodness, What a disgusting thing that happened!
15. T: (To the class) You are not quiet. You are not quiet.
16. S<sub>1</sub>: (Continues) He promised her marriage and his parents did not approve of it, and so did hers. They advised her to leave him, but she was not intended to do – to do it. Even though they were madly in love, there came a point where they were about to be out of their heads because their parents agreed when they wanted to marry. He had forced parents to go to the girl's home. But unfortunately they ended up in a (inaudible). They were so (inaudible) that they came to the conclusion that they will just go without their permission, if they continued with their

refusal. Not even after long, they both (inaudible) from their families and left for dilapidated house not very far from their village. Both families were scared out of their wits and began to move from place to place including the police, to investigate and make an announcement to the public to help. It went over their heads when they found that they were living together somewhere. Due to that – to that, they had to unite and make an arrangement – arrangements for both the parents to unite and agree on which date they will (inaudible) for their couple and solve the matter. They did all the arrangements as fast as possible and the party was held. After the meeting they celebrated together jubilantly.

17. Ss: (Clap)

18. S<sub>1</sub>: (Continues) Both the parents decided to let bygones with bygones and consider that the couple should marry with a very white wedding. Oh, the couple seem to be in seventh heaven! I cannot imagine how they looked on their wedding day. The bride was like red-green angel in her white gown, just like the snow. Her irresistible diamond ring that glittered on her finger was really opulent. Really it was everything was made for them. On their life later, every time he gazed at her he felt the feeling that (inaudible). -On top of that she respected her parents-in-law (inaudible). They too admired her. At the end they were blessed with two children, which was the boy and the girl whom they showed their parental love to.

19. Ss: (Clap)

20. T: (Inaudible) Now ^ Let us hear comments because (inaudible) Now ^ Comments? What is the style (.) that they have used of writing? Who tells us the story? The narrator? The writer? So they opted for the point of view of the writer, telling us things from the writer's point of view. Now their style of of writing? Let's hear people's views on it.

The classroom interactional pattern in this excerpt differs from the traditional IRF discourse cycle in various respects. The teacher initiates student-student interaction in turn 3 when she tells students to work in groups. She also invites comments from the students in turn 20. There is information-gap in this lesson. The teacher does not know what the students are going to say in their comments. This is rare in other pre-counselling lessons as the interaction is strictly between the teacher and students. She does not confine herself and the students to the traditional discourse which minimize learner initiative (see turns 3 and 4). Thus, she does not dominate the interaction.

Excerpt (39) has all the qualities of communicative language teaching (see Chapter 2).

Predominant among them is that:

A communicatively-oriented lesson is one which provides an atmosphere in which genuine and meaningful communication can take place comfortably; one which recognizes the teaching of *communicative competence* as its primary goal (Boulima, 1999:190).

This extract illustrates the importance of learning language for use in natural conversation. The emphasis is on students' active participation. The use of groupwork in this way means that there will be natural communication. There are

information gap techniques as the students and the teacher do not know what is going on in the other groups.

This lesson is consistent with fluency-based teaching. The teacher "... aims at developing pupils' ability to communicate a message with ease ..." (Boulima, 1999:196). Contrary to the traditional IRF discourse pattern, where the teachers control "... the **turn-taking system**, allocating turns and **dominating** both the discourse and the learning topics" (Greyling & Rantsoai, 2000:289) the students are in charge of their learning. During group discussions the students self-select. Their discourse is not one-word or short phrase responses which are typical of the excessive use of display questions.

It is crucial to mention that this teacher's use of groupwork in her lesson shows that she pays particular attention to all the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Excerpt (40) below demonstrates this observation:

(40)

11. R: Do you integrate the four language skills?
12. T: Yes, I do try.
13. R: How?
14. T: You mean, the language – lis – the listening, speaking, writing?
15. R: Mm hm.
16. T: The activities that I come up with ...
17. R: Mm hm.
18. T: ... most of the time would require eh ... sometimes listening eh mixed up with writing.
19. R: Mm hm.

20. T: Eh reading and afterwards writing and at times discussion – there is speaking, at the same time writing.

This excerpt together with the classroom interaction implies that this teacher creates language-learning opportunities for her class. She does this by creating groupwork activities so that there can be learner-learner interaction. See turns 3 and 4 in excerpt (39) above. S<sub>1</sub>, in turns 14, 16 and 18, reads what Group A has discussed and written. There is an information-gap between S<sub>1</sub> and other students, especially those who are not in his group. There is a lot of natural language practice in this class due to the scarcity of closed questions which reign in the traditional IRF pattern of interaction and accuracy-based teaching. See turns 54 and 55 in excerpt (41) below. This shows that she knows and considers the properties of natural conversation (see Chapter 2 of this study).

Excerpt (41) below validates the teacher's use of fluency-based teaching. She asks questions to which she does not know the answers. This encourages natural language use.

(41)

54. R: Okay fine. Do you feel confident enough to ask your class a question to which you don't know an answer?
55. T: Yes, I do. Because there are times when I want to give them an idea of (inaudible) meaning research.
56. R: Mm hm.
57. T: When at times I tell them, "Let's all try to find an answer to this question" I find it more challenging that way at times. Not always of course.

The use of referential questions in this class also maximizes learner initiative and improves the students' discourse. It would then be helpful for teachers like the

one in excerpt (42) below to develop their questioning style as will be suggested in the subsequent phase of Bowers' counselling model.

(42)

70. R: Thank you. Do you feel confident enough to ask your class a question to which you don't know an answer?
71. T: (Laughs) Eh that I think it's one of eh ... very, very ... it's a difficult question. But, you know, I don't know how a teacher can ask a question that he himself doesn't know the answer to it.
72. R: Okay.
73. T: Uh (.) because eh ... well, I think it's rather embarrassing. I mean, if the stude – I don't know the answer and the students give the answer. How do I know it is correct?

It has been repeatedly stated that known-information questions which prevail in most language classrooms restrict learner initiative restrictive.

In view of this lesson, excerpt (39); other pre-counselling lessons, interviews between the teachers and the researcher, information provided by students in the questionnaire, it was concluded that there was no learner initiative in most of the classrooms the researcher visited. It is from the above corpuses of data that the researcher identified the teachers' problems and areas that demanded counselling, (Bowers, 1987:142). Without these she would not be able to give pieces of advice to the teachers (Bowers, 1987:140).

This then led to Bowers' (1987) intervention phase in which the teachers were sensitized to the repercussions of restricting learner initiative in language teaching-learning.

#### 4.3 INTERVENTION PHASE (Bowers' Model, 1987)

... students need to be *Engaged*, if possible, so that they can get the maximum out of the learning experience (Harmer, 1998:26).

Harmer's point in the above extract is that there cannot be any learning process if students are not involved in their learning. He further illustrates this point in his reminder that:

Most people can remember lessons at school which were uninvolved and where they 'switched off' from what was being taught them. Frequently, this was because they were bored, because they were not emotionally engaged with what was going on (p. 25).

The quotation, together with the opening one, sensitizes teachers to the dangers of teacher-centred classrooms. There is little or no learning process in such classrooms. They are initiative and discourse minimizing.

A detailed analysis of 14 audio-recordings – seven pre-counselling lessons and seven interviews between teachers and the researcher, as well as a wealth of information in the questionnaires filled in by students necessitated intervention (counselling). It was imperative that the researcher made the teachers aware of a number of shortcomings in their language classes and how they affected the learning environment. (See Bowers, 1987:143.)



First, teachers were sensitized to their dominance which minimized learner initiative in language classes. All the above corpuses of data revealed that classroom discourse was teacher-controlled and therefore accuracy-based. In particular, the classroom discourse showed that the teachers initiated and evaluated. Students only responded when they stole turns, when they were allocated turns or when there was a general solicit. This is demonstrated in turns 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14 in excerpt (14) in Chapter 2 of this study.

Excerpt (43) emphasizes that teachers initiated and evaluated. In other words they dominated classroom interaction and minimized learner initiative.

(43)

45. T: Yes. Why were certain years called – eh known as 'thistle years'? So ^ The answer you give eh... can't be that long because there's only one mark. Instead uh ... you can get away – where is it? Where – where you can, get away with eh one word answer. But otherwise, do you find a reason to write eh four, five, six words (inaudible) get it wrong? (Inaudible.) This paper, especially number one, is set in such a way that ehm ... you can easily give one-word answers. So ^ From your answer sheet, what is number one – the answer? "Why?" "Why?" One needs the reason. You know? And the reason must be there in black and white. Yours is just to quote it. Yes. One. Yes, please. (Initiation)
46. S<sub>6</sub>: Thistles were yielded (inaudible). (Response)
47. T: Hallo! (Initiation)
48. S<sub>6</sub>: Thistles were yielded much (inaudible). (Response)

49. T: Thistles? (Initiation)
50. S<sub>6</sub>: Thistles were yielded much (inaudible). (Response)
51. T: Y (.) Yes. Why were certain years – why were certain years – why were certain years known as 'thistle years'? Why were certain years? Yes. Why would a year be called a 'year of hunger', for example? Why would the – why would – why would one year be called the – the – the – the – the 'gun year' for example? Yes, please. (Initiation)
52. S<sub>7</sub>: (Inaudible.) (Response)
53. T: They were taller than usual. So ^ That year was called a 'thistle year'. Hallo! Hallo! They can't hear. (Inaudible) shout. (Feedback and Initiation)
54. S<sub>8</sub>: Because the thistles were growing everywhere. (Response)
55. T: She says it's because thistles were growing everywhere. Anybody else, please, to save time. Yes. (Feedback and Initiation)
56. S<sub>9</sub>: Because of mass production – because of mass production eh (inaudible). (Response)
57. T: No. There answer must come from there. (Feedback)
58. S<sub>9</sub>: Yes. (Response)
59. T: Yes, the answer must come from there. The answer must come from paragraph number one. So ^ Let us read together. Okay ^ Please, tell me to stop (inaudible) where – where the answer is. (Reads) The appearance – the appearance of the plain – the appearance of the plain was different in what was called a 'thistle year' (stops). The plain – the appearance was different. Okay ^ So ^ Why was it different? Why was it different? Let's continue. (Reads) The giant thistles, comma, which co – which usually grew in isolated patches, comma, suddenly

- sprang up everywhere, and for a season – and for a season covered most of the land (stops reading). It is there. (Initiation)
60. Ss: (Inaudible.) (Response)
61. T: The appearance is different. One which did this, comma, suddenly did that. So what is the answer? (Feedback)
- (Initiation)
62. Ss: (Inaudible.) (Response)
63. T: Yes. That they sprang up everywhere. Thistles sprang up everywhere. Yes. Thistles sprang up everywhere. (Writes on the board) "thistles sprang", if you want even if there is no "up everywhere". Alright ^ Number (b). Number (b)? Please somebody read number two (.) eh part (b). Yes. Yes, please. Number two (b). One (b). (Feedback)
- (Initiation)

The exchange in excerpt (43) is strictly between the teacher and individual students. He initiated and re-initiated till he got the preferred answer in turn 62. See turns 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59 and 61. Therefore teachers were made aware that the traditional IRF three-part and extended sequences of interaction prevailed in their classrooms. This even resulted in lengthy initiations and one-word or very short phrases and sentences as happens in turns 45, 46, 48, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61 and 62 in excerpt (43) above. This minimizes learner initiative. Students should be the ones to be given more opportunities to use language in class so that their interlanguage can be developed. Teachers were then sensitized to the need "... to accept the active rather than the passive role of the learner in the classroom language learning process, with all the assumed implications of a power shift in the classroom" (Courtney, 1996:234; cf. Devrell, 1998:30).

What Courtney and Devrell imply in their emphasis on power shift in classroom learning is that students should be actively involved in the teaching-learning process. They should be in control of their own learning. Researchers like Feeny (1998:31) have observed that "at secondary school, proof of a topic's educational worth still takes the form of listening, taking notes, and then writing up". This confirms the teachers' active and students' passive roles. The teachers were cautioned against their absolute authority in class and they were then advised to welcome the challenge of learner empowerment in language classes (Feeny, 1998:31).

It was pointed out to the teachers that the traditional IRF pattern of interaction restricts language practice opportunities and learner initiative in a number of ways. Almost all the teachers agreed that there were minimum practice opportunities in their classrooms. This occurred after they were shown that they had the longest turns which either came in the form of questions, imperatives, or statements. But the students answered in short declarative statements only. See excerpt (23) in Chapter 2 of this study. They never initiated or evaluated. All the initiations, evaluations, turn-allocation and topic control were in the teachers' control. So teachers were then shown how communicatively restrictive the traditional IRF discourse cycle was. For instance, their students cannot effectively communicate outside the classroom, let alone ask questions. The researcher pinpointed the importance of giving the students chances to ask questions in class because language is not used for making declarative statements only. It is used to request and give information, make imperative statements, give pieces of advice, express opinions and thoughts, ask questions (to mention just a few examples).

Therefore the teachers realized that their authority in language classrooms did not develop their students' oral skills. They agreed that "... generations raised on the one-correct-answer approach are hardly likely to be well equipped to expose ambiguity or obfuscation" (Feeny, 1998:31; see Elder & Richard, 1997:34-35).

This means the students' communicative ability is only confined to answering display questions. And this does not happen in real-life conversation. The researcher suggested that "... teachers must ask questions that will stimulate discourse in the classroom" (Mewborn & Huberty, 1999:226). What this implies is that known-information questions only make students memorize and recall the answers which cannot be applied in mundane conversation. They do not encourage reflective thinking as they do not give room for students to "... clarify and extend their thinking" (Mewborn & Huberty, 1999:226).

The researcher brought the importance of referential questions to the attention of teachers. They changed the pattern of discourse. Students' answers became longer and therefore enabled teachers to "... identify areas that need further review or where a misunderstanding has occurred" (Turoczy, 1997:22). Another important point is that open ended questions usually lead to:

Discussion that occurs as a result of stimulating questioning allows students to express their ideas and listen to the opinions of others. This exchange gives each student a chance to evaluate and, perhaps, accomplish the difficult process of reformulating thoughts and attitudes (Turoczy, 1997:22).

Turoczy's point is that effective teacher questioning engages the whole class in the learning process. It promotes maximum learner initiative as students listen to one another. Consequently, learning takes place with ease and students become motivated. She further states that "for an effective questioning to take place, you will need to establish ground rules that allow and encourage everyone to participate" (p. 22). Referential questions are crucial in language learning as they automatically command a longer wait time than display questions do. Then, teachers are forced to consider all the inevitable steps taken in answering questions, particularly, in the second language (see Chapter 2).

The teachers agreed that their questioning style excluded large numbers of students from the classroom interaction and learning. For example, in a class of 60, only 21 students were allocated speaking turns, which means two thirds of the class did not participate and learn in that lesson. This low participation rate was further demonstrated by the teacher's answers in excerpt (44) below.

(44)

17. R: Mm hm. Okay fine ^ Eh do all the pupils participate in class activities?
18. T: No. Not all.
19. R: No. Not all. What do you think is the reason?
20. T: Eh the reason, you know, is that eh we have some really very poor students.
21. R: Mm hm.
22. T: Who are uhm absolutely (inaudible) they don't understand what is happening or they are too shy.
23. R: Okay, fine. Uhm .. okay ^ That means this will be a sort of repetition. Do you think that there is a relaxed atmosphere during your lessons?
24. T: Uhm ... yes, there is.
25. R: There is? Okay fine.
26. T: There is. Yes. Partly I think to do with my own character. Yes.
27. R: Okay ^ So why don't you think that that can contribute to their eh maybe participation?

28. T: Eh ... the problem is I think they – they think that – that they are very poor in English and I think they are even too shy to – to attempt anything or to try.

The conversation between the teacher and the researcher shows that language learning in teacher-led interaction that is dominated by closed questions leads to low participation by the students. The importance of learner participation and output have been repeatedly stated in this study. It is only through students' output that the teachers can observe what students' linguistic or communicative needs are. According to MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément and Noels (1998:545) the traditional IRF discourse cycle bars students' "... spontaneous and sustained use of the L2 use ...". They emphasize that the main aim of language learning is to develop and maintain "willingness to communicate (WTC)" (p.545) in language learners. After discussing those aspects with the teachers, they accepted that most of the time they suppressed the students' willingness to communicate, by using direct nominations. This is revealed in excerpt (45) below.

(45)

135. T: I said what? What are they standing for?  
136. Ss: (Inaudible.)  
137. T: Those dots are not standing for (inaudible).  
138. Ss: (Laugh)  
139. S<sub>21</sub>: (Inaudible)  
140. T: Can you put your hands up. How many times do I need to talk about that?  
141. S<sub>21</sub>: (Inaudible)  
142. Ss: (Laugh)

143. T: This is a classroom situation, whether we like it not. You have a tendency of just commenting whatever you want to comment from where – from whatever direction. (Inaudible) Is that behaviour? Whether there's a visitor or there's no visitor it's there. You have it. You are abbreviating Post Office. They have to be there. Only on that abbreviation. Right? Otherwise you say PO without uh the – the abbreviation – the – the punctuation. (Inaudible) you haven't ... eh ... you haven't eh what is it? (Inaudible) can you stop talking? You haven't punctuated and you are marked wrong. Right? Thank you for considering it as an error. Any other questions? Any other questions? I am not going to go back to letters. Once you have done (inaudible) I am not going to go back (inaudible). Yes. (Initiation)

In turn 136 the students show their willingness to communicate by responding to "non-directed" (Boulima, 1999:144) teacher initiation. But the teacher immediately corrects "... the violation of the 'one-at-a-time' convention ..." in turns 140 and 143. This corresponds with MacIntyre *et al.*'s (1998:547) observation that:

... if a teacher poses a question to her or his students, several of them may feel confident enough to answer and have the desire to speak. Let us assume that students are asked to raise their hands before speaking. Even if only one among many actually verbalizes the answer, all of the students who raise their hand express WTC in the L2. In fact, we should consider the hand-raising a nonverbal communicative event.



The students, in excerpt (45) turn 136, indicate their willingness to communicate by responding in turn 136. It is similar to hand-raising. Therefore, bidding for the floor also means that many students cannot get the same amount of turn allocation, and this minimizes their initiative and chances to produce novel utterances which are fundamental to discourse.

The researcher warned the teachers against the use of leading questions because they are only meant for getting the single correct answer from students (Sachen, 1999:131). The researcher emphasized the importance of effective questioning. Teachers were advised to "**Distribute evenly.** Keep class members on their toes, and locate the slow learner by asking many questions and going all around the room" (Sachen, 1999:131). This style increases student attention and motivation as they know they can be nominated at any time.

The researcher pointed out the importance of wait time. It is important that teachers:

**Allow sufficient time.** Pause after each question. Allow the whole class to think before calling on someone. Don't rush responses. In particular, be careful to squelch "group" answers or arm waving, which pressures the individual class member who has been called on ... Don't appear to be pressing for an answer (Sachen, 1999:132).

All the teachers then realized that re-initiating shortly after a non-response or wrong answer does not allow students enough time to think about the correct answer. They all agreed that their impatience was brought about by the type of questions they asked – closed type questions. They therefore realized the importance of referential questions.

The researcher suggested the use of a communicative approach in language classes. She suggested the use of role play, pair- and groupwork, dialogues and interaction with teacher and students as equals-at-talk as well as a variety of seating arrangements that could maximize learner initiative (cf. Figure 2.3 in Chapter 2). It was really appreciated by the teachers as they realized its initiative maximizing qualities. These also varied the monotonous teacher-fronted classrooms as students talked to one another and among themselves. This pattern of discourse bears almost all the qualities of natural discourse that have been studied by Hoey (1992). One of the teachers informed the researcher that he sometimes changed the seating plan from regular rows to a semi-circle and that helped his students to speak with confidence.

The above suggestions also reduced the students' anxiety as they would no longer be corrected and made to feel ashamed in front of the whole class (see Foster, 1998:87). The teachers' attention was brought to the importance of evaluating content, rather than form. They were advised to identify all their students' linguistic problems and then provide corrective measures either at the end of the lesson or in another lesson if there are many errors.

The researcher suggested that along with the rush to cover the syllabus before COSC final examinations, teachers should also have learning outcomes. They should not ignore the importance of communicative competence as the majority of our students desperately need and lack it. This had been identified in students' answers to the following question:

(46)

Can you use English that you learn in class outside the classroom with an Englishman or anybody who is not a Mosotho for a longer time? Give reasons for your answer.

and many students answered in a similar vein to this student:

(47)

No! English we use in class is very limited, it does not enable us to use variety of phrases of English that are needed in conversation.

The pre-counselling lessons, interviews and questionnaires revealed that most of the teachers in this study overwhelmingly relied on prescribed textbooks. They were then sensitized to restrictions of sole reliance on prescribed texts. They agreed that most of the books they used provided language exercises which were mainly drills. The researcher suggested a variety of materials which would engage students and promote communicative language use and acquisition. The teachers understood that most of the drills and exercises in their subject textbooks only focused on Allen's (1987) structural analytic teaching and excluded functional and experiential teaching. Some of them did not have anything to turn to in order to shift from teacher- to learner-centred lessons, but the researcher showed them what she meant by communicative exercises and they used these in their post-counselling lessons.

This intervention phase was easy because the teacher had the transcriptions of the teachers' pre-counselling lessons and interviews as well as the students' questionnaires. This was meant to make it easy for the teachers to identify and understand the shortcomings the researcher referred to. This is echoed by Bowers (1987:143) as he states "the more responsible teachers are for identifying their own problems, the more receptive they will be to the solutions when they are suggested." In other words it would be hard for the researcher to

convince the teachers of minimum learner initiative in their classrooms (see Bowers, 1987:149). The intervention phase was followed by the last phase of the model, the post-counselling phase. The teachers and the researcher worked together in the implementation of the suggestions that were aimed at developing maximum learner-initiative in language classes. See (Bowers, 1987:152).

#### 4.4 POST-INTERVENTION PHASE (Bowers, 1987)

The researcher and the teacher then decided to prepare a lesson in which learner's use of *discourse initiative* would be required (Greyling & Rantsoai, 2000:291).

The counselling sessions (see Bowers, 1987:139) called for actual implementation of the researcher's suggestions. The teachers maximized learner initiative through group work, scenarios, role play and giving students opportunities to control topics. See excerpts (48), (49), (50), (51), (52), (53), (54), (55), (56), and (57). The teachers could not implement all the suggestions due to the available time. These they did by structuring lessons and leaving them in control of learners. They were no longer dominant. Learners' discourse also took a new form. It was no longer strictly between individual students and the teacher. There was learner-learner exchange in every post-counselling lesson. Thus, the researcher's intervention gave rise to a shift from teacher-led to student-centred interaction and learning. In other words, there was a replication of real-life communication in all the seven classrooms.

The following excerpt (48) resulted from the counselling phase. It is part of a lesson in which the teacher introduced creative language use in real-life situations.

(48)

5. T: (Inaudible) Alright ^ I have something for you (inaudible). What is it? (Inaudible) I don't know. You will soon find out yourself what it is. You have (writes on the board) friend A (continues writing) have friend (inaudible). Something like that. It may not necessarily be (inaudible). You might not be (inaudible).
6. Ss: (Laugh)
7. T: Okay? Yes. Uhm ... so if you want me to read this, I will read. Uhm this is A and this is B. So we are going to divide up into groups and work on this (inaudible). A will have its own work to do and B (inaudible) will have its own work to do. Then I will disappear a little bit and then come back to hear what you have. And I want to hear you, yeh? I want to?
8. Ss: Hear.
9. T: To hear.
10. Ss: To hear.
11. T: Yes, to hear. Okay ^ So ^ A, I want to read. (Reads) You are preparing for a final exam. (stops). That is group A. (Continues reading) which will be given tomorrow. And it is evening at home. And your friend calls to maybe offer – calls you to invite you over for a party (stops reading). Your friend says, "Hey, come here please". What will you do?
12. Ss: (Inaudible)
13. T: I don't know. I don't know.
14. Ss: (Laugh)

15. T: Should you keep studying and ignore your friend? I don't know.
16. Ss: Yes, (inaudible).
17. T: I don't know. That is your decision. You need a break? That is for you to decide. Maybe you need a break. Forget books for a while and do something (inaudible). Yes. Because you say ... what? Only work without play makes Jack or Tom or whoever he is a dull boy. Okay ^ You know that this friend loves you – ae ... loves to (inaudible).
18. Ss: (Laugh)
- T: And may keep you there for hours. (Laughs) So that is for you to decide. That is A, yeh?
19. Ss: Yes, Sir.
20. T: Ehe. Now ^ B, B – **now you must decide who are in group A and who are in group B. You must decide.** You must decide quickly. I'm not going to do it for you, you know.
21. Ss: (Group themselves) A. B. B.
22. T: Alright ^ Don't be excited. You are over-excited. You're over-excited. B ^ Now ^ B, heh?

Excerpt (48) replicates "... a power shift in the classroom" (Courtney, 1996:324). The teacher no longer acted as the sole possessor of information that could be transmitted to the passive students. But the students were the ones actively involved in the lesson. Excerpt (49) below represents a picture of what actually happened in class.

(49)

30. T: Good. You are responsible for everything. Unless you don't want to (inaudible). So ^ (Inaudible) two only. Yesterday we had four. Make sure ... make sure that uh (.) the group is not dominated ... by the males (.) or by the females. Yes?

The teacher only structured the lesson and left the larger part of it to the students to carry out. In this way he shifted from the traditional IRF pattern. His initiation was meant to promote learner-learner authentic language use. That is, students no longer gave answers to known-information questions. They were then given an opportunity to communicate appropriately. The notion of group work therefore gave power to the students in a variety of respects. For instance, the teacher was no longer in control of turn-taking distribution (see turns 7 and 20 in excerpt (48)). All the students had an opportunity to use language in real communication as they discussed what to say in response to the teacher's initiation in turns 5, 7, 11, and 17. Thus, he maximized learner initiative.

The classroom atmosphere replicated in excerpts (48) and (49) is a relaxed one. Even their teacher observed that and then commented:

(50)

22. T: Alright ^ Don't be excited. You are over-excited. B.  
Now ^ B, heh?

Students worked among themselves as equals-at-talk. Nobody in their groups was going to evaluate their contributions as they all responded to a referential question. This lesson did not only empower students, but it also developed their discourse initiative. They no longer responded in one- or two-word answers. Excerpt (51) below shows this change.

(51)

46. S<sub>2</sub>: Uh ... once I – I – one I get a message I will say no because it's dark and I am afraid that I will be broken. So it will be (inaudible) because I will be unable to write as you know that I will be writing the exams tomorrow. And I will not leave the house without anyone because (inaudible) will take an opportunity. (Whispers) That's all.

The response in excerpt (51) illustrates what the students have discussed in response to the teacher's initiation. In this way:

... the small-group work ... allows for the expression of a wide range of ideas. Discussion implies an active participation and involvement of the learners with the teacher and each other in the classroom. Above all, the discussion allows learners to discover and state their personal opinions and not merely repeat what a text or a teacher has presented. Discussions in the small group give learners some control over their learning and enable them to do so in a cooperative manner (Van Wyk, 2000:28).



Van Wyk's point is that groupwork maximizes learner initiative. There is learner-learner interaction and learner-generated discourse as happens in excerpts (48) above and (52) below. Excerpt (52) has been taken from a different post-counselling lesson. Here, the teacher used this scenario to improve composition writing skills.

(52)

1. T: (Inaudible) Eh we are going to continue with our ... situational, I mean, composition, but today eh we are going to do, I mean some kind of oral work. We are going to divide ourselves, I mean, into groups. Eh you will be presented, I mean, with a situation. There a two situations in your respective, I mean, groups. I want you to f – to form groups of three. Just divide yourself into three. Three, three (inaudible). Come here please. Come here please.
2. Ss: (Form groups)
3. T: Okay ^ Eh ... please, you should bear in mind, I mean, what we said – what I've said, I mean, concerning the (.) situational, I mean, composition, more especially the appropriateness of the – the language. Remember the formal and informal eh language. Okay ^ We have one, two, three, four, five. Why five not six? (Inaudible) Oh! Three (inaudible). Alright ^ It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. One, two, three, four, (inaudible) and you choose a person who is going to, I mean, present this after you have (inaudible). From there ... okay ^ You can use, I

mean, the – a scrap of paper to jot down the – the points that – whatever points you want, I mean, to write down. Remember eh let's take, I mean, these 40 minutes concentrating on that. And after that, in your respective groups one person must come and present. Yes, (inaudible) use it as a rough paper. You can use it as a rough paper. Yes. You can discuss.

4. Ss: (Discuss their respective tasks.)
5. T: Please, be free to talk. Be free, I mean, to talk. Okay ^ There is only one group here, which is still behind. But it doesn't matter ... no, much. Don't worry. Don't worry there. Listen (.) what about, I mean, to say. Okay ^ You have been given, I mean, two tasks. Task A and B. So what we are going to do is that okay ^ Eh I'll start with the (.) A. One group from the – those who got, I mean, task A will come and present. And then it will be followed by, I mean, the B group. Is it clear?
6. Ss: Yes, Sir.
7. T: Alright ^ Now Eh for the Bs – those who are having, I mean, the task B role, I mean, B eh the As – their task reads like this: You're preparing for the final exam, which will be given tomorrow. It is evening and your friend calls you to invite you over for a while. What will you do? Should you keep studying? You need a break. You know that this friend loves to talk and may keep you there for hours (stops reading). So ^ After (.) each group has presented, I would ask you, I mean, to make a comment concerning, I mean, the presentation. You can say anything you – you like, I mean, to say concerning, I mean, the presentation. That is, you make comments

immediately after each group has, I mean, presented.  
Clear?

8. Ss: Yes, Sir.
9. T: Yah. Don't think that what you will say will not be, I mean, relevant. Say, I mean, your feelings concerning the presentation. Therefore I'll call, I mean, Group A. Anybody from Group A. (Inaudible.) Okay ^ (Inaudible) Okay?

#### GROUP ONE – ROLE A

10. S<sub>1</sub>: Sorry that I won't (inaudible) I won't be there (.) though I wanted to. As you know the examinations – the – the exam is – is knocking, I have to be ready for it (.) as you know that this paves my way to the future and I want to be successful. It is time to make our families proud of us. That is all.
11. Ss: (Clap)
12. T: Okay ^ Let me eh call upon eh the B Group. B Group, please. The B groups.
13. Ss: (Silent)
14. T: Oh! What is, I mean, your – your – I'm sorry. What is, I mean, your comment concerning, I mean, the presentation by the A group?
15. S<sub>2</sub>: (Inaudible.)
16. T: Pardon. Oh, Sorry. I wanted, I mean, the comments, I mean, your feelings concerning the A Group. What can you say about, I mean, their presentation? ... Yes.
17. S<sub>3</sub>: (Inaudible.)
18. T: R-raise up your voice. Yah.

19. S<sub>3</sub>: (Inaudible.)
20. T: You say the – the – the presentation was okay. Eh? It was okay. But, I mean, your – what are you worried about?
21. S<sub>3</sub>: (Inaudible.)
22. T: Mm hm. You say you – didn't, I mean, eh? They didn't give you the reason, I mean, why they did not go there?
23. S<sub>3</sub>: (Inaudible.)
24. T: Probably (inaudible) because they said, "I should have come." Mm hm. What else can you say about presentation – this presentation?

(Long pause.)

Once again, this teacher moved from the traditional IRF discourse pattern to a context where learners dominated the classroom talk, while the teacher was only a facilitator. Above all, the teacher had a specific learning outcome in this lesson (Outcome 4). He wanted his learners to be able to communicate appropriately in different contexts (see turn 3). In that way, he developed the students' communicative competence. He also developed all the standards of textuality which have been discussed at length in Chapter 2. Another striking point about this excerpt is that students had an opportunity to comment and ask questions. There was no room for these in the pre-counselling lessons.

In one of the classrooms the teacher changed the seating plan and all the students had direct eye contact. He also left his usual classfacing place to join the students against the wall. One student led the discussion as is evidenced in excerpt (53) below.

(53)

1. T: (Inaudible)
2. Ss: Good morning, Sir.
3. T: (Inaudible) Now ^ don't disturb us. Eh ... Nothing strange. I think we usually – sometimes we have a discussion where eh it's only that now we have to report shortly the – the points very, very shortly so that we don't destroy the discussions that we are going to have. Alright ^ Now ^ Eh here we go. We would like to start now. Who is going to read the question for us so that we ... 'Malintja, read loudly.
4. S<sub>1</sub>: (Reads) Uh number four. The pas – the passage is (inaudible) the material from line two to line 57. Your account which should be in continuous writing must not be longer than 160 words, including the 10 words given below. Begin the summary as follows: The drovers had to overcome the problems for (inaudible) ...
5. T: *Ntate*, you raise up your hand. You can talk. You can ask someone to (inaudible).
6. Ss: (Laugh)
7. S<sub>2</sub>: I – I can give you the first point. Uh they had to travel a long distance.
8. S<sub>1</sub>: Majoro.
9. S<sub>3</sub>: (Inaudible) There was a (inaudible).
10. S<sub>4</sub>: (Inaudible) Sure that it (inaudible).
11. S<sub>5</sub>: (Inaudible) so that the – the cattle don't run around (inaudible).

12. S<sub>1</sub>: *Abuti* Sekaleli.
13. S<sub>6</sub>: (Inaudible).
14. S<sub>1</sub>: Our first – I think when someone ... hey! I'm the (inaudible) we have to discuss it before (inaudible) other point.

A closer look at this excerpt and the rest of the lesson reveals learner-centredness. Students controlled the whole lesson. That is, they had control over the topic and turn allocation. See turns 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. The teacher only had three turns in the excerpt (see turns 1, 3, and 5). There is maximum learner initiative in this lesson and most importantly, the teacher and the students are equals-at-talk. For example, in turn 5 he refers to S<sub>2</sub> as "*Ntate*", a Sesotho form of address which shows respect to men. Again, he comes in only when he intervenes. He did that when students could not agree on a certain point. Excerpt (54) below presents a picture of his intervention.

(54)

54. S<sub>1</sub>: I think you have taken a long time (inaudible) solution.
55. T: Well ^ We will come back to that point. Maybe ... eh ehm we – we pass on to the others. We shall come back to that.

In turn 54 S<sub>1</sub> commented that the class had taken a long time on a single point without agreeing with one another. The teacher had also realized this and then advised the students to leave it as they would go back to it later. Just like in other lessons or excerpts in this section, the students' discourse reflects initiative and critical thinking. This lesson also maximized learner initiative and enabled students to use language functionally. For instance, they had to support their

answers in order to convince one another. Language was also used as it is used in real-life communication (see turn 54).

The pre-counselling lessons showed that teachers were the only ones to ask questions in class. Therefore, one of the teachers reversed the roles and decided to enhance the students' ability to use language in different contexts. He prepared a lesson in which students would ask and answer questions amongst themselves. See excerpt (55) below.

(55)

1. T: Okay ^ Eh good morning, students – good afternoon.
2. Ss: Good afternoon, Sir.
3. T: Before the remaining part of this class eh we are going to – to do ehm an exercise in a speaking skill, that is, speaking eh ... with clarity. Uh speaking eh with clear voice (.) uhm and also being ehm being able to – to – to take instructions and to follow instructions. I'm going to quickly ehm ask you to – to – to sit or to form groups of four or five. So ^ This is one ... group here. Our one group. This is another group here. Uh, sit eh come around together. Another group here. Yes, another group there. Let's save time. Another group. Alright ^ Right, there is a good there. There is a good group there. And what I want you to do – what I will like you to do very quickly in – in these groups is uhm ... uhm one person volunteers to be interviewed or asked questions by the others. One person. Yah. One person is going to be asked questions. (Inaudible) questions by – by the rest of you. Yes, (inaudible).
4. Ss: (Inaudible)

5. T: Okay.
6. Ss: (Discuss their respective tasks)
7. T: Sh – s – h. We are starting now.
8. Ss: (Speak among themselves).
9. T: Group one. (Inaudible) here. Where is group one? Okay ^  
This is group two. Okay ^ We start with Group two, it doesn't matter.
10. Ss: Group one. Group one first.

The teacher started the lesson by greeting the class. From there he structured the lesson by telling the students what they were going to do. Students had a larger say in this lesson. There was learner-learner interaction and that made it possible for all the 60 students to participate actively. This greatly helped the teacher for he was then able to identify his students' linguistic and communicative deficiencies. Excerpt (56) reveals this observation.

(56)

66. S<sub>5</sub>: (In a shaking voice) Here we have Mrs Lepolesa.
67. T: Okay ^ Please.
68. S<sub>5</sub>: Who wants to works as a (inaudible) and she is being examined here ... by the manager, Mrs Molaoli.
69. S<sub>6</sub>: What is it that makes you take this post?
70. S<sub>7</sub>: Eh (.) is because I did well in Accounting and Commerce. So I wanted to continue with them so that I can work at the bank.
71. S<sub>6</sub>: What are your qualification?
72. S<sub>7</sub>: Well ^ I ... completed my Std 10 in 1989 and I obtained first class and moved on to NUL – National University of Lesotho and where I got my degree. And I was employed at Lesotho



Bank for two years. From there I went to Uni – United Kingdom where I was going to do my Masters. In 1998 I completed my Masters.

73. S<sub>6</sub>: Do you have any experience to your work?
74. S<sub>7</sub>: As I have just said, I was employed at Lesotho Bank for two years.
75. T: Some more questions from the others.
76. S<sub>6</sub>: What were you – what were all your interests in the job?
77. S<sub>7</sub>: Uhm ... was to deal with money.
78. S<sub>8</sub>: So, are you competent with your work?
79. S<sub>7</sub>: Yah. Uhm – yes, ehm ... I like my work. I enjoy it very well.
80. S<sub>9</sub>: (In a low voice) What makes you to enjoy it?
81. S<sub>7</sub>: To work with people (.) to help them.
82. S<sub>9</sub>: In what way?
83. S<sub>7</sub>: Uh depositing their cheque and ... banking their money, helping them to ... to fill the cheque.
84. S<sub>10</sub>: Do you think it's best to deal with the community?
85. S<sub>7</sub>: Is best because ... (inaudible).

S<sub>5</sub>'s voice, in turn 66, shook. She was not used to speaking up in the classroom. Her expression could also be another reason why she was frightened (see turn 68). The whole excerpt is dominated by errors which mirror the students' communicative problems (see turns 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73; to mention just a few examples). For instance, the student, in turn 68, adds an 'S' to the infinitive 'work' after 'to'. -That is not grammatical. - In the same turn she refers to Mrs Molaoli as the Manager, instead of the Manageress. She even uses 'examined' instead of 'interviewed'. In turn 69 she also asks the question wrongly. Instead of "what is it that makes you to take this post?" She should have said, "why have you applied for this post?" So errors like these should be noted and corrected towards the end of the lesson after the activity. It would be wrong for the teacher

to correct them right then because that would impede the students' messages. Errors that could or should be corrected during the activity or lesson are those which result in communication breakdown. The teacher should become an interlocutor in order for her or him to correct students' errors in a way that will not inhibit active participation. Excerpt (56) is an opposite of excerpt (57) below.

(57)

GROUP ONE (Peasant farmer)

28. S<sub>3</sub>: (Inaudible)
29. T: You are talking to this audience.
30. S<sub>3</sub>: Oh!
31. T: There's a meeting.
32. S<sub>3</sub>: (Laughs)
33. T: Shall I quickly go through what you are to do? Here is a meeting whereby you are trying to convince us whether or not we should have this mine. Or you, having lived here for 50 years want to tell us what your views are on the idea of a mine (inaudible).
34. S<sub>3</sub>: Oh! Ladies and gents ...
35. S<sub>s</sub>: (Laugh)
36. S<sub>3</sub>: ... since you can see from the picture or the – the – the – the area – the area within – the area which the mining – the mine is to be constructed since we already have serious shortage of land and our fields are going to be affected there. So ^ As you have already seen, most of the people (inaudible) the village here are – actually depend on subsistence farming. So what do you think is going to happen?

37. Ss: (Laugh)
38. S<sub>3</sub>: And the ... eh (inaudible) we have our ancestors there within the planned area of construction. So it will be a very great sin to them just by digging (inaudible) their skeletons.
39. Ss: Hm mm.
40. S<sub>3</sub>: And also our houses actually are going to be affected because they are also placed within the planned area of construction. We have our rocks and boulders which we use for building houses of course (inaudible). It's true that the grazing lands will not be affected. But what is going to be affected is the material or equipment which we use for building the kraals. Thank you (laughs).
41. Ss: (Clap)
42. T: I wouldn't like to comment. Now ^ Can we have the headmaster please.

A critical analysis of excerpts (56) and (57) reveals the discrepancy between these classrooms' level of competence. Students in excerpt (55) handle the language with ease and confidence. Their discourse is also longer than that of the students in excerpt (56). We can therefore conclude that the teacher who teaches the students in excerpt (56) had to work harder.

The researcher evaluated the post-counselling lessons with the teachers (Bowers, 1987:151). All of them accepted that they could see the difference between the traditional IRF classroom interaction and the situation in which learner initiative was maximized. They all agreed that maximum attention on accuracy (see Foster, 1998; Race, 1998; Brumfit, 1984; Boulima, 1999) and known-information questions alone cannot develop students' communicative ability as "students may know the rules of language *usage*, but will be unable to

use the language" (Larsen-Freeman, 1986:123). Thus, they realized the liveliness and high participation rate in their post-counselling lessons. They became aware that teacher-centred classrooms usually produce students who "... become progressively more passive and bored as they work through texts, structures, grammatical items, drills and, of course tests. They seem to have gradually turned into mostly dead bodies with talking heads" (Legutke & Thomas, 1991:7).

The researcher's and the teacher's post-intervention lessons made it clear that constant correction of grammatical errors during oral activities sometimes threatens the students and stops others from participating. In this way teachers were aware that:

... communicative pressure (or the functional focus on form) does not appear to be as powerful a predictor of native-like L2 production. ... It seems contradictory to argue that more attention on form will increase accuracy in L2 production at the same time that less attention to form (more communicative pressure) will increase accuracy in L2 production. In turn, the notion of communicative pressure may be viewed as one of the various factors (e.g. emotional involvement in the task, motivation to learn) that increase or decrease the degree of attention to form (Salaberry & Lopez-Ortega, 1998:528).

Salaberry and Lopez-Ortega's point emphasize the importance of allowing students to be at the centre of their learning. Their argument is that students who use language communicatively automatically become grammatically competent (see Ellis, 1997:49; Swain, 1995:125-126; Chimbganda, 1998:74; Harmer, 1998:32, Gass, 1997:139). Maybe they say this because teachers can identify their students linguistic or grammatical errors and then provide immediate

corrective feedback that will eventually lead to competence. Teachers were therefore advised not to "... correct all the errors that are made by students without giving them a chance to appraise their own performance" (Van der Walt, Van der Walt & Dreyer, 1994:8). Demers and Bérubé (1995:108-111) also have the same view that students should be given opportunities to use language communicatively in class. They suggest that this will lead to a desired self-correction (cf. Van Lier, 1988:211) as the teacher's regular correction sometimes tampers with the student's message (cf Lyster & Ranta, 1997:57). In other words, teachers should correct serious errors only, the ones above the students' level of comprehension. From there students should be encouraged to self-correct (Ellis, 1997:17) under the guidance of the teacher.

All the post-counselling lessons had fluency-based teaching characteristics (see Greyling, 1995, 1999). This approach was aimed at maximizing learner initiative by:

- putting the learner in the driving seat;
- giving students ownership of their learning;
- changed roles of learners ... towards active participation ... in the process of learning (Race, 1998:7).

#### 4.5 CONCLUSION

Bowers' (1987) counselling model resulted in desired changes in all the seven classrooms. All the teachers found the counselling sessions constructive as they made them aware of certain shortcomings in their daily lessons. For instance, they were all pleased to be shown the repercussions of tight teacher-control in language classes. Their evaluation of post-intervention lessons replicated a shift from minimum- to maximum learner initiative. Thus, the evaluation was meant to inform the teachers of the desired changes in their lessons. It also

recommended a variety of ways in which they could maximize learner initiative and discourse in their language classes. For example teachers were advised to have less talk time so that students could actively participate. The use of information-gap activities, authentic materials, fluency-based teaching, tasks communicative language teaching as well as outcomes-based education were recommended. See (Bowers, 1987:152).

## Chapter 5

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### RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

A critical analysis of pre-counselling lessons, interviews between teachers and the researcher, and the questionnaires that had been filled in by the students reveals that second language classes are still dominated by the IRF interactional pattern. This pattern of classroom interaction was modified by the counselling sessions between the teachers and the researcher (see Chapter 4 – post-counselling phase). Most of the teachers concentrate on Allen's (1987) structural analytic teaching (type A focus). This traditional IRF discourse cycle therefore needs to be modified if teachers really teach the second language for communication. This observation is emphasised by excerpt (58) below:

(58)

35. R: Okay ^ what type of errors do you correct during oral exercises?
36. T: Eh well ^ The - the very first one is eh of course pronunciation.
37. R: Pronunciation.
38. T: Where, you know, a child really - where the pronunciation; is really weird, like somebody said, "Liutenant" for "Lieutenant". Then of

course that is one important eh term that (inaudible) to pronounce it.

39. R: Immediately?

40. T: Immediately, yes.

What this teacher implies is that he only concentrates on language usage. In other words, he is not aware that structural-analytic teaching on its own is not enough because:

...second language learners must be aware of the structural or grammatical features of the language, be able to relate those features to their functional usage, and have the ability to use both forms and functions appropriately within the context of meaningful communication with others... Hence, student-student interaction in second language classrooms can create opportunities for students to participate in less structured and more spontaneous language use, negotiate meaning, self-select when to participate, control the topic of discussion, and, most important, draw on their own prior knowledge and interactional competencies to actively communicate with others (Johnson, 1995:116).

What Johnson points out in this extract is the importance of allowing or giving students opportunities to use language spontaneously. This does not mean that students must be left to do everything. It implies even greater dedication on the part of the teacher. Therefore teachers need to consider the importance of maximum learner initiative as:

...student-student interaction generally creates opportunities for students to participate in meaning-focused communication, to perform a range of language functions, to participate in the negotiation of meaning, to engage in both planned and unplanned discourse, to attend to both language forms and functions, to



assume differing roles in that interaction, and, finally to initiate, control the topic of discussion, and self-select to participate (Johnson, 1995:128).

All the points in the above extract expose the shortcomings of the traditional IRF discourse cycle in second language classes. They show that second language learning takes place only when students are given opportunities to communicate with the teacher, and more especially among themselves. In other words, students who are rarely or not given opportunities to use the language through communication do not learn it. There is no acquisition in such lessons. Thulane (1997:3) therefore insists that:

...a classroom must be a place where students are able to talk with one another about ideas and have ideas make sense to them so that they can reconceptualise them into their own system of knowledge.

This then implies that the kind of teaching-learning process found in most language classrooms is the opposite of what is desirable in second language classrooms. Language teaching-learning is supposed to develop and promote communicative competence in second language learners so that they can perform excellently in examinations and social communication. Therefore, the researcher will make a list of her findings and send it to the authorities so that language teaching-learning process can be modified for the better.

Teachers should therefore adopt new, communicative language teaching styles. The corpuses of data collected by the researcher reveal that most language teachers teach language the way it was transmitted to them. This kind of teaching does not develop the students' communicative ability for the world outside their classrooms. This then shows that the teachers are to be developed and supported professionally so that they can teach the second language

communicatively. There should be teaching and non-teaching staff delegated by the Ministry of Education and higher learning institutions. This delegation should hold workshops and visit schools in order to advise and suggest ways in which language teaching can develop the students' communicative ability. In other words their competence in language teaching (pedagogic competence) will be developed. Thomas (1990:34) stresses this and suggests that:

Teachers, in order to impart this competence to learners, should themselves have language competence to a greater degree than that expected of their learners. They should be competent in the teaching of language; we may categorize this as 'pedagogic competence'. The ability to teach language in turn involves explicit knowledge of the language system and how it operates in communication; this we may call 'language awareness'.

Therefore language teachers should be well prepared for the important and delicate work that faces them. The authorities, for example, resource teachers, inspectors, and even the Ministry of Education should hold workshops and visit schools as said earlier. The reasons for these are to equip teachers with language development courses in order to develop their linguistic competence as well as pedagogic competence. The teachers need to be told or advised of what to look for in order to tell that their students can communicate competently. They should also be made aware of Communicative Language Teaching and how it can be implemented. For example, teachers need to be shown the importance of group- and pair work, role plays, and tasks. In addition to these, there will be a need to make teachers aware of the shortcomings in their classrooms' discourse pattern. After this they can tell whether they minimize or maximize learner initiative and discourse in their teaching.

Language teacher awareness is in line with the observation that “teachers are deemed to have gaps in their knowledge which need filling” (Knowles, Cole & Squire, 1999:378). This observation can be related to the way in which most language teachers teach. These teachers need to be made aware of the shortcomings of the traditional IRF discourse pattern in second language classes. Among others, giving feedback regularly after every response, can have a negative impact on other students. Foster (1998:87) found out that constant error correction has been seen to be “...inhibiting learning... where students were extremely shy and reluctant to speak English in the classroom for fear of making mistakes and being laughed at.” Of course, one should not disregard linguistic errors made by teachers. They can be exposed to their own errors through anonymous transcriptions of audio taped classroom and workshop discourse.

In other words, if one student is corrected by the teacher and laughed at by the classmates, the rest of the class will not participate because they do not want to be laughed at. This has been pointed out by many students in their questionnaire, that their classmates should not laugh at them when expressing themselves in class. In short, this inhibits other students' opportunities “...to practise communicative English” (Foster, 1998:87). If they can all be pre-occupied with communication of meaning there will be no time for them to laugh at others. This again stresses the importance of Communicative Language Teaching and maximum learner initiative.

Wallace (1998:207-242) in his article ‘**No teacher is an island**’ suggests ways in which the teaching profession can be developed. He points out that the fact that “...most teachers face their classes alone is ultimately a barrier to professional development” (p.207). What he means is that teachers are supposed to learn from their colleagues (see p.208). It is therefore recommended that teachers should seek the advice of the people who can help them change for the better. For instance, they can learn about how to treat a certain topic or section from

other teachers in the same school or from other schools. For example, while the researcher was collecting data, she realized that some teachers used textbooks which did not promote communicative language teaching-learning. She then referred them to one teacher in one school as she had very good communicative language teaching textbooks.

Teachers should be provided with counselling at any time they need it. In other words, inspectors should remedy or eradicate the language teachers' problems. So, it will be necessary for language teachers to consult or invite the resource teachers, language inspectors or even language teaching trainers from either Lesotho College of Education or the National University of Lesotho.

A critical evaluation of the corpuses of data lodged with the researcher reveals that teachers' competence has been unnecessarily ignored for a very long time. This is very dangerous because teachers are always students' role models, especially in contexts where classrooms serve as their major source of language.

There should be a radical change in the way language teachers are trained. They should first be familiarized with Communicative Language Teaching as well as the aims of second language teaching. As for now, one could tell that most second language teachers teach English as if they are teaching their native language. This then commands a shift in high school teaching and teacher training. In other words, future research should investigate second language teachers' competence. The teachers will be counselled so that the researcher can identify areas that need immediate attention, as it happened with classroom recordings, interviews and questionnaires in the present study. The researcher will record classroom discourse and interview teachers in order to identify recurrent patterns of behaviour during classroom interaction. Attention will fall specifically on teacher errors.

For her future research, the researcher will organize and conduct workshops for language teachers. She will record the linguistic data in the workshops. This will be another form of triangulation. There will be follow-ups so that the researcher can tell whether her suggestions are being implemented. This will also enable her to sensitise teachers to their classroom discourse and their own discourse.

## Summary

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The introductory chapters of this study explain minimum and maximum learner initiative and the forms in which they can be identified in the language teaching-learning process. In other words, second language learners' and teachers' positions in language classrooms are defined. In so doing the advantages and disadvantages of maximum and minimum learner initiative were shown. The repercussions of the traditional IRF pattern of interaction in English second language classes are discussed in detail.

Using Bowers (1987) as conceptual framework, the researcher proceeded to identify the most recurrent patterns of interaction in Form E classes in some of the high schools in Lesotho, with specific reference to lingual data. She audiotaped seven pre-counselling lessons and seven interviews between the teachers and her. She also gave a questionnaire to the students so that she could collect more data for validation and triangulation purposes. The transcription of the lingual data, in Bowers' (1987) pre-counselling phase, revealed that most of the teachers adhered to the traditional IRF discourse cycle in English second language classes.

The analysis of the lessons, interviews and questionnaires led to Bowers' (1987) counselling/intervention phase. It also made it easy for the teachers to identify their learner initiative-minimizing techniques in language classes. This meant a detailed discussion on maximizing and minimizing learner initiative and their effects in second language learning. The teacher's role in maximizing learner initiative was thus emphasised. The researcher, then, suggested various ways in which the teachers could maximize learner initiative. They were also advised to set learning outcomes so as to provide a guide for the implementation of these suggestions.

The intervention phase was followed by the post-counselling/intervention phase of Bowers' model. Each of the seven teachers had his or her post-counselling lesson recorded and transcribed. The main purpose was to make it easy for the researcher and the teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention phase. Evidently

all the teachers had maximized learner initiative through different techniques although they could not implement all the suggested techniques.

One cannot tell whether the teachers still adhered to the notion of maximizing learner initiative after the researcher's departure. The researcher therefore recommended, in this study, that second language teachers should receive regular counselling from the inspectors, their colleagues in their schools and from other schools, and lecturers from Lesotho College of Education and the National University of Lesotho. The need for teachers' communicative and pedagogic competences to be developed is also apparent from this study.

## Opsomming

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Die inleidende hoofstukke van hierdie studie verduidelik minimum en maksimum leerderinisiatief en die vorme waarin dit geïdentifiseer kan word in die onderrig-leerproses van die taal. Die posisie van tweedetaalleeders en van onderwysers in taalklasskamers word met ander woorde gedefinieer. In hierdie proses word die voordele en nadele van maksimum en minimum leerderinisiatief aangetoon. Die reperkussies van die tradisionele *IRF*-patroon van interaksie in Engels tweedetaalklasse word in fynere besonderhede bespreek.

Deur gebruik te maak van Bowers (1987) as konseptuele raamwerk, het die navorser voortgegaan met die identifikasie van die mees herhalende patrone van interaksie in Vorm E-klasse in sommige van die hoërskole in Lesotho met spesifieke verwysing na taaldata. Sy het vooraf sewe voorligtingslesse en sewe onderhoude tussen haar en die onderwysers op band opgeneem. Sy het die studente ook 'n vraelys laat invul met die oog daarop om meer data vir bekragtiging- en trianguleringsdoeleindes in te samel. Die transkripsie van die taaldata in Bowers se vooraf voorligtingsfase het aan die lig gebring dat die meeste van die onderwysers getrou gebly het aan die tradisionele *IRF*-diskoerssiklus in Engels tweedetaalklasse.

Die analise van die lesse, onderhoude en vraelyste het tot Bowers (1987) se voorligtings-/intervensiefase gelei. Dit het dit ook vir die onderwysers maklik gemaak om hulle leerderinisiatiefverkleiningstegnieke in taalklasse te identifiseer. Dit het 'n bespreking in fynere besonderhede oor die vergroting of verkleining van leerderinisiatief en die uitwerking daarvan op die onderrig van die tweede taal beteken. Die rol van die onderwyser om leerderinisiatief te vergroot, is dus beklemtoon. Vervolgens het die navorser verskeie wyses voorgestel waarvolgens die onderwysers leerderinisiatief kon vergroot. Hulle is ook aangeraai om leeruitkomst daar te stel met die oog daarop om 'n gids vir die implementering van hierdie voorstelle te voorsien.



Die intervensiefase is gevolg deur die na-voorligtings-/intervensiefase van Bowers se model. Elk van die sewe onderwysers het sy/haar na-voorligtingsles laat opneem en oorskryf. Die hoofdoel was om dit maklik te maak vir die navorser en die onderwysers om die effektiwiteit van die intervensiefase te evalueer. Klaarblyklik het al die onderwysers leerderinisiatief vergroot deur middel van verskillende tegnieke, alhoewel hulle nie al die voorgestelde tegnieke kon implementeer nie.

'n Mens kan nie sê of die onderwysers nog getrou gebly het aan die begrip van die vergroting van leerderinisiatief na die navorser se vertrek nie. Die navorser beveel dus in hierdie studie aan dat tweedetaalonderwysers gereelde voorligting van die inspekteurs, hulle kollegas in dieselfde skole en dié verbonde aan ander skole, asook van die dosente van die *Lesotho College of Education* en die *National University of Lesotho* behoort te ontvang. Die behoefte wat bestaan dat onderwysers oor kommunikatiewe en pedagogiese bekwaamhede moet beskik wat ontwikkel moet word, blyk ook duidelik uit hierdie studie.

## *Abstract*

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The aim of this study was to show the high school teacher's role in maximizing learners' initiative in English second language classes in Lesotho. The researcher examined literature for aspects which led to maximum learner initiative. The aim was to focus on methods and techniques of maximizing learner initiative. Seven audio-recordings of lingual data, from seven different classrooms, were analysed to see whether the teachers maximized learner initiative in language classes. In addition to these lessons the teachers were interviewed by the researcher. Students also completed a questionnaire. It became evident that most of the teachers minimized learner initiative. Bowers (1987) refers to this stage of the research as the pre-counselling phase.

After the analysis of the lessons, interviews and questionnaires the teachers were counselled. The teachers' attention was drawn to the impact of maximum learner initiative and IRF discourse in language teaching and learning. The researcher suggested a variety of ways in which learner initiative could be maximized. Bowers (1987) refers to this counselling as the intervention phase.

Seven lessons were recorded after the intervention phase. This was for the teachers to see whether the intervention had been effective. There was a change in teaching techniques. There were scenarios, open-ended questions and group discussions in language lessons. This stage is referred to by Bowers (1987) as the post-counselling phase. The researcher carried out all the stages, pre-counselling, intervention and post-counselling, in terms of Bowers' (1987) counselling model.

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# Appendix

## QUESTIONNAIRE

## QUESTIONNAIRE

The researcher is a registered Masters Degree student in the English Department at the University of the Orange Free State (UOFS). The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate the nature of communication amongst teachers and students in English Language classes at high school level in Lesotho. All the responses will be treated in confidence and will be used solely for academic purposes. Your co-operation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Answer **all** the questions in this questionnaire in groups and ask for explanation where you are not clear.

1. Why do you learn English at school?

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2. How many language lessons do you have per week? Do you think this is sufficient for learning to communicate in English?

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3. Circle the language skill(s) that are emphasised in your classes:

- (i) Listening.
- (ii) Speaking.
- (iii) Reading.
- (iv) Writing.

4. Do you all feel relaxed and free to participate during language lessons? Give reasons for your answer.

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5. Does your teacher correct you during oral exercises? What does he or she correct?

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6. How do you feel after being corrected in front of the whole class?

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7. Can you confidently express yourself orally in English in front of the whole class? Give reasons for your answer.

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8. (i) Who asks most of the questions in class - the teacher or students?

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- (ii) Are they questions which need short answers like "Yes" or "No", short phrases or complete sentences?

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9. Do you respond to your teacher's questions immediately?

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10. How long does your teacher wait for you to respond to his/her questions?

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11. How does your teacher encourage you to use English among yourselves?

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12. How often do you use the following in your language classes:

- (i) Role play .....
- (ii) Group work .....
- (iii) Dialogue .....

- (iv) Conversation with your teacher in a relaxed atmosphere without her/him asking you questions and telling you whether your answer is correct or not? .....
- .....

13. Can you use English that you learn in class outside the classroom with an Englishman or anybody who is not a Mosotho for a longer time? Give reasons for your answer.

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14. Which of these do you like best when learning English? Circle your answer(s):

- (i) Working alone.
- (ii) Pair work.
- (iii) Group work.
- (iv) The teacher standing in front of the whole class.

Give reasons for your choice.

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15. What makes you enjoy the language lessons?

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16. What can a teacher do which would help you most when learning English?

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17. What can your classmates do that would help you most when learning English?

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18. What are the good things and the bad things about learning English in the classroom?

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*Thank you for your co-operation*

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