

A STUDY OF HOW FIRST LANGUAGE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH ORGANISE THEIR CLASSROOMS AND THEIR TEACHING TO PROMOTE THE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN SELECTED RACIALLY MIXED SCHOOLS.

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ABSTRACT

By gleaning information derived from two classrooms that I observed, I attempted in this study, to examine the nature of the interaction between teachers of English as a first language, and the second language learners in their classrooms.

I used the theoretical model developed by Cummins (1981), whereby Cummins has categorised curriculums for second language learners into two groups : (a) the transmission model; and

(b) the interactive model. It is the interactive model which is said to be compatible with recent theories of second language acquisition and therefore by implication, supportive of second language development. The transmission model, on the other hand, is thought to be inimical to language development.

I am of the view that the methodology used in all-African classrooms may be reflecting a type of adaptation to the changed composition of learners that is inclined towards the teaching of low order thinking abilities such as factual recall and rote learning. In classrooms where the second language learners are in the minority, there exists a danger that the African pupils may be marginalised.

In order for teachers to provide meaningful instruction to second language learners, teachers who can speak English ^(to me) only, will have to learn the organisational skills that are known to enhance teachers' proficiency as mediators of the curriculum, particularly in the context of English as medium instruction for second language students.

The transmission model is said to be deeply entrenched in our school system. In order to promote language development, teachers will have to develop approaches that shift toward interactive learning. Interactive learning involves more learner participation and the bridging of pupils' real life experiences with the academic content of subjects.

The study reflects personal opinion and interpretations of a research project at two schools and may not necessarily be applicable to other situations.

Chapter 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY AND A SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

1.1 Introduction

The present study is being conducted in two schools that fall under the administration of the education department referred to as Ex-Administration : House of Delegates. Before 1990, all schools controlled by this Department catered exclusively for pupils classified as "Indians". Since 1990 state schools were allowed by the government to adopt a policy of opening up schools to other race groups, under certain conditions. The policy of controlled enrolment on a non-racial basis was still in effect at the time this research was being carried out. Initially, the numbers of Black pupils in previously all-Indian schools were low, but over the years there has been substantial growth. Bot (1990: vi) gives a clear picture of the admission policies that were applied between 1990-1994.

- (i) the character of the school shall not be prejudiced;
- (ii) the medium of instruction is one of the two official languages;
- (iii) the pupil shall be easily **assimilated** into the relevant class (taking into account age and educational level);
- (iv) no additional staff or increased expenditure will result.

The norm was clearly, that Black pupils should constitute a minority who can easily be assimilated into the school's traditional practices. Typically, the number of pupils seeking application was so large that African pupils had to write tests in order to qualify for the limited number of places available. Those schools that were under-utilised had little choice but to accept a larger intake of African pupils so as to retain their staff.

If we were to examine in detail the phenomenon of African students attending ex-House of Delegates schools, evidence of low achievement and high drop-out rates would permeate our information.

Many explanations for the high failure rate have been offered by teachers within the House of Delegates education department. There has, however, been little or no research on the school experiences of African pupils in Indian schools. The studies that are available refer to African school experiences in departments specifically designated for Africans or relate to their experiences in private schools, and more recently integration practices within state schools designated for White pupils.

This study examines dimensions of classroom processes as they relate to the mixing of Indian pupils who speak English as their first language, with African pupils who speak English as their second language. The two teachers who participated in this study were specifically trained to teach English in monolingual English mother-tongue classrooms. This study asks how do teachers within schools based on a specific set of assumptions about the nature of learning (both subject content and language) teach African pupils whose home language is not English? In particular, are the approaches used by the monolingual teachers supported by the literature and research on teaching English as a second language? Essentially, the issues relate to whether second language learners of English can be taught meaningfully in the same way as first language speakers, or are certain modifications necessary in order to accommodate second language learning?

The primary education (Class 1 to Standard 5) that Indian and African pupils go through is different in terms of, among other things, language policy. African school children begin their schooling in the mother tongue which remains the medium of instruction to the end of the fourth year of schooling (standard 2). English and Afrikaans are studied as subjects from the second year. During the fifth year of schooling there is a shift in the medium of instruction – which usually is English (King and van den Berg: 1992:15). Indian children, on the other hand, are taught through the medium of English from the first day of schooling. Furthermore, English is the

language of the home and the community in the case of Indian pupils. Proficiency levels for Indian pupils in the medium language (English), is described as satisfactory. On the other hand, if one looks at research findings in respect of African pupils' proficiency in English, one realises that there are serious problems associated with the language policy that is in force. Unterhalter et. al. (1991: 120) cite Macdonald as stating that "the sudden shift in medium of instruction in Standard three caught most pupils unprepared."

The disjuncture between the level of competence expected in the second language in standard two and the adoption of this second language as the medium of instruction in standard three places too great a burden on pupils. Unterhalter (ibid.) notes that at the end of the primary school phase most students are barely able to speak English. He cites Macdonald (1990:23) as observing that the transition to English instruction in standard three as being "deeply disabling".

The model of bilingual education that black schools use, at least in the primary school phase, is referred to as the transitional bilingual education model (TBE). In the TBE model, second language learners are taught in their home language until their English is good enough for them to participate in a mainstream or English-medium classroom (Baker:1988:82). A question that is asked about this model in South Africa is: "Is it the concept, that is, the TBE model, or the implementation of the TBE model that is suspect?"

The language policy applied in black schools is of interest in the present study for the reason that virtually all the African pupils in "Indian" schools come from one of the primary schools of education departments designated for Africans. The situation then, is that each year, hundreds of non-English speakers enter "Indian" schools. Both the new arrivals and their teachers face formidable challenges. Until they learn English, these students will be unable to take full advantage of the educational and social opportunities that the school offers. Their teachers will have a difficult time teaching them the skills and information that must be taught in school while at the same time helping them learn English. It is frequently assumed that students who are described

as "limited in English proficiency" (LEP) will pick up the English they need in a year or two just by being in an environment in which it is spoken.

During interviews with principals and teachers, many African parents reveal that they share this belief that English can be picked up more easily by learners interacting in an English-speaking environment, such as the one provided by "Indian" schools. The parents complain that in African schools on the other hand, the pervasiveness of the vernacular languages inside and out of the classroom, presents their children with considerable difficulties in acquiring a fluent command of the second language. Many researchers, including Wong-Fillmore support the belief just expressed. Wong-Fillmore (in Gass and Madden:1985:17) claims that the classroom can be an ideal place to learn English if it allows learners "to be in close and continuous contact with teachers and classmates who speak the target language well enough to help in its learning". "Indian" schools, therefore, potentially at least, do offer African pupils the opportunity for regular exposure to English. The practice of putting limited-English speaking or second language learning students with first language or native speakers of a target language is generally known as "immersion". In this model students are expected to acquire English as they deal with content like other students. Underlying the immersion approach is the assumption that the more the second language learners are exposed to English, the faster and better they will develop proficiency in the language (Hernandez:1989:79). Many students have done well under these circumstances, that is, by just being in an English-speaking environment; but others have experienced considerable difficulty in doing so.

1.2 The Purpose Of The Study

Research and practice in second language pedagogy suggest that interaction plays an important role in helping students become better language learners. Many researchers believe that classroom interaction is valuable because it allows students to control the interaction, so as to make the language input serve their communicative needs. When pupils actively participate in classroom conversations it is then that the teacher's input becomes meaningful as the teacher and students endeavour to make

themselves understood and to understand each other. It is a collaborative process of give and take in which each participant works to send and receive comprehensible messages (see for example Snow:1972).

The purpose of this study then, is to examine the degree to which these "interactive" characteristics are present in the lessons of the two teachers who are responsible for the language development of ESL learners within their classrooms. In the school system in which the study is undertaken two settings are possible: one, in which the classroom consists entirely of ESL learners and two, in which the classroom consists of a mix of ESL and first language learners. Both L1 and L2 learners however, follow the same English as First Language syllabus. In addition, the study looks at how students make use of classroom opportunities to increase levels of participation in lessons particularly with a view to ensuring that the pupils have understood the teacher's messages, and that the teacher has understood the messages that the pupils are expressing in the classroom. Because comprehension is essential to the learning of content, the teacher must ensure that his messages are being understood. The teacher's approach to classroom methodology is an indication of his resourcefulness in making language comprehensible.

1.3 LITERATURE STUDY

1.3.1 The Immersion Model

In examining the literature on second language learning, the immersion learning environments will be of immediate interest to me since this thesis is about how first language teachers of English promote language development in an immersion environment. ✓

In understanding the potential of the immersion model, I will also have to keep in mind that there has been opposition to certain types of immersion programmes on the grounds that they provide little assistance to minority students to acquire academic competence in the language of instruction (Cohen and McNeely, in Fradd and Tikunoff:1987:76). The term "minority language" will be used in this thesis in the

sense that English is the acknowledged national language in South Africa and its prestige transcends that of the various indigenous languages. Nevertheless the term "minority language" is used guardedly since Africans have recently been enfranchised and therefore potentially African languages and cultures can rise in status. Moreover, Africans are the majority in the country overall, but, in the two schools I studied, African pupils are a minority.

Those who support immersion types of schooling for second language learners, according to Cummins and McNeely (*loc. cit.*), argue that if minority students are deficient in English, they need as much exposure to English as possible. Students' academic difficulties are attributed to insufficient exposure to English in the home and environment.

Essentially, Cummins and McNeely (*loc. cit.*) argue that other factors over and above the model of bilingual education programme are to be accounted for when considering the success or failure of minority language students within educational systems.

Cummins and McNeely (*ibid.*) propose a theoretical framework incorporating sets of constructs that operate at three levels to explain schooling outcomes (i.e. success or failure) for students aspiring through education, to attain fluency in a second language:

- (a) the societal context of intergroup power relations;
- (b) the context of the school as an institution reflecting the values and priorities of the dominant societal group in its interactions with minority communities; and,
- (c) the context of classroom interactions between teachers and minority students.

All of the above constructs are determinants of students' success or failure in schools. Hernandez (1989:35) refers to constructs (a) and (b) above as the "culture-education interrelationship". According to Hernandez (*ibid.*) the influence of social and cultural factors on education has been investigated in recent years, particularly as it relates to:

- (a) variations in the educational achievements of students with similar linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. (In other words, why do some students with home – school language discontinuity do so well at school while others with the same language background do so badly?)
- (b) the conditions under which students from different groups experience success or failure in school settings. Hernandez (ibid.) like Cummins and McNeely (loc. cit.) see societal factors as those forces from the world outside the school that affect areas such as school priorities, student self-concept, teacher perceptions, and educational reform.

School factors focus on internal dynamics and include teacher expectations and behaviour, curriculum, school organization, counselling, assessment, and similar elements. In these models societal and school contexts are represented as highly complex, interrelated, and interactive entities. (Hernandez:loc. cit.) The interaction of culture and school settings is an important concept for educators dealing with the dynamics of various ethnic groups in social interaction. As McGroaty(1986), cited by Hernandez(1989:35) notes:

Attempts to understand the relationship of socio-cultural factors to the educational process must take into account specific school and societal contexts. In the search for explanations of differential academic outcomes and educational experiences, it is necessary to look beyond single factors such as language, class, racism, or cultural conflict.

Hernandez (1989:38) points out that currently, there is what he calls "the contextual interaction explanation". According to this explanation, educational achievement is a function of the interaction between two cultural orientations – the cultural values of the larger society and those of the ethnic minority group. The behaviours, beliefs, and perceptions of individuals within specific minority groups are influenced by the social, economic, and political circumstances they experience. Over time, the changes in beliefs and behaviours that result from cross cultural interaction may enhance or impede achievement (Hernandez: ibid.). For example, a group's experiences with discriminatory occupational patterns can enhance or devalue the importance of

education depending on how the group responds. According to Hernandez (ibid.) the focus on interaction provides a more holistic, comprehensive and dynamic view than do other explanations of differential academic achievement. Within this framework, solutions to educational problems require changes in the larger society as well as in the schools, ethnic groups, and communities.

At the societal level, dealing with differential achievement patterns requires the elimination of discrimination and prejudice and greater appreciation for cultural diversity (Hernandez:ibid.).

At the local level, significant improvement in educational outcomes for minority-group students depends on school reform, which include changes in teacher attitudes toward minority students; adaptations in curriculum and instruction; use of culturally unbiased testing procedures, and the adaptation by language minority students and groups to the institutions of the larger society. In the final analysis, remarks Hernandez, explanations of differences in academic achievement patterns among cultural groups are not easily separated from socio-cultural considerations. Hernandez gives language as an example. He claims:

"The performance of students with limited English proficiency is influenced by learner variables such as economic status, language attitudes, and school orientation." (Hernandez:1989:38).

Classroom processes are also important. In other words, as Cummins and McNeely (in Fradd and Tikunoff:1987) have already explained, the mere fact that the student has a native language that is not the same as the school language does not explain the observed variability in school performance within and across different language groups. This theoretical perspective is interesting from the point of view of the political changes that occurred in South Africa recently. In other words, it is not unrealistic to expect that the African majority population to learn English easily, provided that there are also opportunities for increased interaction among the various language groups. According to the *contextual interaction explanation* of language learning, changes in

the larger society trigger off a sequence of other changes that provide conditions that may be conducive to the learning of a second language.

While it is valuable to keep sight of the interrelated sets of factors I have outlined above, for the purposes of this study I wish to frame my concerns within the third set of variables that impact upon the second language learners' success or failure within schools, which in the framework provided by Cummins and McNeely (*loc. cit.*), relate to the context of classroom interactions. The processes that occur in a school as a whole and in individual classrooms can and do influence educational outcomes significantly (Good and Brophy, 1986 cited by Hernandez:1989). Knowledge of classroom processes holds considerable promise for helping teachers to be more effective. This study looks at what kinds of classrooms work well for language learning, and more specifically the opportunities teachers make available to students during classroom events to practise the second language.

Wong-Fillmore (in Gass and Madden:1985:21) found that language-learning outcomes could be attributed in part to the way language classrooms were organised for instruction and in part to the way teachers presented the materials they were teaching during lessons. She also found the composition (*i. e.* the number of L2 learners in relation to L1) was a factor which influenced the extent to which a given organisational structure promoted language learning across the classes. The literature that will be reviewed in the next section will attempt to give one a better understanding of the process by which children learn a second language in school.

1.3.2 Differences Between First And Second Language Learning

According to Titone (in Alatis et al:1981:73) it is more accurate to say that first language and second language learning are partially similar. Titone (*ibid.*) summarizes the most obvious differences between the two processes as follows:

1. L1 acquisition is spontaneous and rarely planned, whereas L2 learning is to a large extent intentional and planned.

2. L1 acquisition is conditioned by primary reinforcers (the need to communicate wants and desires, the need to establish an affective relationship with one's parents, etc.). L2 learning, on the other hand, is often conditioned by weaker reinforcers such as a nod of approval, passing a test or an examination, etc.
3. Unlike the infant who progresses from no knowledge through definite identifiable stages, the L2 learner already knows his native language. This can, of course, be an asset since the learner can easily transfer some of his knowledge to the learning of L2. However, in those areas where L1 and L2 contrast, his previous knowledge can become a source of interference.
4. The L2 learner already has the ability to discriminate sounds and structures, while the infant starts "from scratch".
5. The L2 learner already has certain perceptions and attitudes vis-a-vis the second language culture which may influence the learning process.

Titone (ibid.) goes on to say that despite the differences stated above, L1 and L2 learners share some learning characteristics. In both cases, motivation is the starting point of the learning process. Moreover, learning strategies are operational in both L1 and L2 learning contexts.

1.3.3 Factors That Impact Upon Second Language Learning

Motivation, language aptitude and the amount of time spent in learning are perhaps the three most significant factors that characterize L2 learning (Titone: in Alatis et. al :1981: 74). Titone (ibid.) summarizes the important variables as follows:

1. **Integrative vs instrumental motivation:** Some studies have shown that students are most successful when they study a second language because they admire the culture and wish to become part of the society in which the language is used (integrative motivation). Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, is the study of the second language for some utilitarian purpose (e. g. getting a job)
2. **Contact with the target language community and culture:** Students seem to develop a greater desire to learn a second language if actual contact (e. g. attending schools in the target language community) with the second language culture is made.
3. **Socio-economic factors:** Perhaps because of greater parental support and encouragement, it seems that a positive attitude toward the second language correlates positively with socio-economic status.
4. **The classroom situation:** The context and conditions of learning are clearly important variables.
5. **Teacher-student relationship:** The teacher's expectations of his students can definitely influence student success. ✖
6. **The presentation of materials:** Clearly, the materials and activities in the classroom should be designed in such a way as to stimulate both interest and learning.

According to Titone (ibid.) an understanding of second language learning is important so that the teaching process can reflect the language learning process. For example, Carroll (1963) cited by Titone (ibid.) has shown that the more time spent actively involved in the learning process can influence success in learning a second language. Educationists have seen certain implications in this, and have an empirical basis to provide second language learners with immersion curricula (Titone ibid.). In immersion programmes, students who speak one language receive all or most of their instruction in the second language. It is important to note that the second language students in these immersion programmes are taught by bilingual teachers who are able to accept responses from the pupils in their first language. In classrooms where L1 and L2 learners are mixed, the classroom context provides L2 learners with extensive opportunity to develop their second language skills through genuine communication with speakers of the target language. (Spolsky:1989:97). Moreover, the learner who gets involved in communication with speakers of the target language will have a greater chance of acquiring another language successfully (Schumann 1975 cited by Spolsky:1989:97).

1.3.4 Should Second Language Learners Be Taught Separately From First Language Learners?

Until quite recently approaches to English as a second language have been strongly influenced by methods developed to teach English as a foreign language to older learners. According to Arora (in Arora and Duncan:1986:101) "past methods" placed much emphasis on drills, exercises and remedial programmes that focus on language in abstraction. Arora(ibid.) adds that the "prescriptive nature" of such methods and the demands they made on teachers' time fostered the belief that ESL work could be tackled only by specialist ESL teachers working with small groups of children. According to Arora (ibid.) another important disadvantage of the ESL approach is that it required second language pupils to be taught away from those English speakers who provide the most powerful models of native-like English usage i.e. their peer group.

Several educationists motivated the assumption that peer group interaction is an important principle in any learning situation, and claimed that its particular strengths in a classroom with ESL learners cannot be overemphasised (Arora: *ibid.*). Under the influence of this assumption, the separation of second language learners from the mainstream classroom was not easily justified on educational grounds. According to Arora (*ibid.*) the experience of separate education was such that it led to ESL learners' curriculum and their language learning being impoverished. It was argued that the best arrangement is usually one where the ESL learners are not cut off from the social and educational life of a "normal" school, which in this context refers to a school in which first and second language learners interact together in classrooms and experience the same curriculum.

These assumptions about language learning were strengthened by new insights on how people learn a second language. A set of hypotheses (collectively known as the Input Hypothesis) about second language learning were made by Stephen Krashen (1977;1981;1982;1985) cited by Brown (1987:187). Essentially, the Input Hypothesis described ESL methodology based on foreign language teaching as ineffectual in developing learners' command of the language and argued that "informal" or "natural" learning leads to "real" language proficiency (Brown:1987:188). This means that learners "pick up" a language when they are exposed to the language. A condition for learning however, is that learners understand most of the language that is directed at them, which in Krashen's terms refers to "comprehensible input" (Brown: *ibid.*). Larsen- Freeman and Long(1991:140) assert that the claims made by Krashen in his Input Hypothesis were appealing, but over time a number of qualifications to Krashen's theories by other researchers became necessary. On the other hand, according to Larsen- Freeman and Long (*ibid.*) evidence exists which is supportive of the "comprehensible input" construct, particularly with regard to:

1. foreigner talk;
2. the superiority of immersion over Foreign/Second Language programmes;
3. non-acquisition without comprehensible input.

The immersion programmes refer to those in Canada (Swain:1981; Genesee:1983 cited by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991;141). Immersion programmes are generally credited with being able to provide large amounts of comprehensible input and a salient feature of these programmes is to teach both subject matter and the second language simultaneously. According to Cummins and McNeely (in Fradd and Tikunoff:1987:85) most second language theorists currently endorse some form of the comprehensible input hypothesis, which essentially states that "acquisition of a second language depends not just on exposure to the language but on access to second language input that is modified in various ways to make it comprehensible". Cummins and McNeely (ibid.) believe that when this central principle of second language acquisition is ignored in classroom instruction, learning is likely to be by rote and supported only by extrinsic motivation. (Krashen, 1981; Long, 1983; Schacter, 1983; Wong-Fillmore, 1983 cited by Cummins and McNeely:ibid.).

In the next section I wish to examine further the role of input in second language acquisition, but this will be done within the broader framework of the characteristics of optimal language learning environments. I have already made reference to the hypothesis proposed by Cummins and McNeely (in Fradd and Tikunoff:loc. cit.) and reinforced by Hernandez(1989) that the development of English language skills by limited-English-proficient students in the regular classroom can be enhanced if teachers pay attention to their own language use, the classroom environment, and how they correct errors and provide contextual support to help convey meaning. The processes that occur in individual classrooms do influence educational outcomes significantly (Hernandez:1989:67). If teachers are to develop instructionally sound strategies for enhancing student performance, then an important question will be: "What do we know about learning English by speakers of other languages?" The related question is: "What educational theory should underline intervention programmes?" The next section deals more closely with these issues.

1.3.5 Optimal Language Learning Environments

The picture of language learning which emerges from the study of the literature is that of a complex process which systematically develops under the influence of a set of factors. Burt and Dulay (in Alatis et. al:1981:177) maintain that language learning is a "two-way street". According to them, learners, and all the mental and physical faculties they are endowed with, comprise one dimension. The environment, including the teacher, the classroom and the surrounding community, is the other. During the seventies, according to Burt and Dulay(ibid.), the focus in second language research, was mostly on the learner: on learning strategies and styles, on attitudes and motivation, on cognitive and neurological mechanisms. More recently, researchers are paying just about the same attention to the environment surrounding the learner. Burt and Dulay (ibid.) say that describing the kind of speech learners hear (i. e. input) – "motherese", "teacher talk", and "foreigner talk" – for example, is nowadays a widely discussed topic. The reason for this shift of focus is that it is generally agreed that human beings are endowed with a natural capacity for processing language (Klein:1986:39). Language acquisition is guided or determined by innate mechanisms – variously referred to as "language acquisition device", "language processor", etc. (Little et. al:1989). It is claimed that this innate mechanism needs only to be activated during the language acquisition process (Little et. al: ibid.). According to Klein (ibid.) the functioning of the language processor is contingent upon (a) certain biological determinants (b) the knowledge available to the speaker at any one time. His views are of significance to those associated with the teaching of language to limited-English-proficient students. According to Klein(ibid.) communication depends heavily on a combination of contextual (implicit) and linguistically explicit information. He claims that only the latter derives directly from the linguistic knowledge at our disposal, that is, our knowledge of grammar, vocabulary etc. ; the former information derives from our other knowledge (i. e. knowledge of the world).

According to Klein (1986:41) in spontaneous second language acquisition there is a gradual shift in the balance of the two kinds of information: in the earlier varieties of the language, great weight is placed on contextual knowledge, since the linguistic

knowledge of the learner can only take a small part of the linguistic load; later, according to Klein (ibid.) the learner will become less dependent on his non-linguistic knowledge. Klein (ibid.) believes that this holds true not only for language production but also for comprehension.

Klein is suggesting then, that a learner is apt to "understand" utterances in the target language even if he or she has no knowledge of many of the words used, or of the syntactic and other rules involved – provided he or she can rely on his non-linguistic, contextual knowledge. Klein works from the assumption that learners do not pay equal attention to, nor do they try to process, everything they hear or read. In other words, not everything available in the environment – even language directed at the learner – will trigger learning (Burt and Dulay in Alatis et. al:1991:177). However, since language acquisition, according to this view, involves learning in and through social interaction, the learner is obliged to bring to bear all the knowledge available to him (including contextual knowledge) in order to understand what others say and to produce his own utterances. As the need for communication becomes stronger and the opportunities more frequent, the learner is stimulated to speed up the process of language acquisition (Klein :1986:46). Opportunities for real-life communication or approximations to real-life communication are thought to speed up the acquisition process. Klein (ibid.) believes that it is possible to influence the acquisition process, even though not all the factors are amenable to control. As was explained earlier, researchers are placing emphasis on factors in the linguistic environment. This is not surprising, given the fact, that the factor easiest to control is access, from the point of view of the input, as well as of opportunity to communicate. (Klein:ibid.) Klein maintains that the language processor or language acquisition device is "preset in a certain manner, leaving no room for manipulation" (p. 53). The most that can be done regarding the biological endowment factor is to attempt to understand the way in which it operates, so that the processor's workings can be taken into account by organising language instruction in ways that would not "run counter to the principles of language processing" (Klein:1986:54).

In this regard, Burt and Dulay (in Alatis: 1981:178) maintain that one of the major findings of a number of researchers is that a "natural language environment is necessary for optimal language acquisition". This relates to the principle that language learning can be accelerated by increasing the access to linguistic input (Klein:1986:54). The task of second language teaching then, is to find out how the language processor should be assisted and "put under pressure" (Klein:ibid.). Several researchers (for example, John Carroll, cited by Burt and Dulay: loc. cit) have demonstrated the benefits of natural exposure. According to Burt and Dulay (ibid. 178) a natural environment exists wherever the focus of the speakers is on the content of the communication rather than on the language itself. They explain further:

"An ordinary conversation between two people is natural, and so are natural verbal exchanges at a store, a bank or a party. The participants in these exchanges care about giving and receiving information or opinions, and although they use language structures, they do so with virtually no conscious awareness of the structures used."

Likewise, reading for information or entertainment, or film or television viewing are also natural uses of language.

There are many classrooms in Canada and elsewhere where the learning of content and the learning of a second language are both programme goals (Swain, in Phillipson et. al:1991:234). According to Swain (ibid.) the major assumption about content teaching that is current in second language theory and pedagogical practices today is that because content teaching is considered communicative language teaching par excellence, that through content teaching, second language teaching will be enhanced. These educational practices are referred to as "immersion programmes" and it is believed that these programmes have the value of natural language environments for language acquisition. In other words, this type of an environment provides the participants with "natural exposure" to the language (Burt and Dulay in Alatis et. al:1991:179).

Carroll(1967) cited by Burt and Dulay (loc. cit.) found that students who had experienced learning academic subjects in English improved steadily over time, while those who only studied English in a formal language classroom situation did not improve as steadily. Lambert and Tucker(1972) cited by Burt and Dulay (loc. cit.) found that immersion programmes were highly successful in Canada as well. Burt and Dulay (op. cit) claim that in immersion programmes, the language is used as a vehicle to focus on subject matter content, and as such these programmes provide a natural language environment. The fact that the second language learners who were observed in this study are also participants in an education programme which combines language learning with content learning makes understanding of the dynamics of immersion programmes important and necessary.

The assumption underlying immersion programmes is that the language used is authentic; in other words, it represents functionally motivated speech. (Swain: in Phillipson et. al.: 1991:234). The growing use of immersion programmes is testimony to the value that educationists attach to Krashen's (1981:1) Input Hypothesis, which Krashen himself summarised as follows: "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 also said that error correction and explicit teaching of rules are not relevant to language acquisition. Long(1983) in Larsen–Freeman and Long(1991:312) after reviewing eleven studies on the effect of instruction showed that Krashen's views on the effect of instruction needed qualification. Long's studies revealed that a combination of natural exposure and classroom instruction provides the best facilitating effect on the rate of second language learning. Moreover, although the fundamental principles of the Input Hypothesis have been accepted, the theory as a whole has undergone radical reconceptualisation in the last two decades . I shall be examining further aspects of the role of input in SL acquisition in the next section.

1.3.6 The Interactional Dimension

A limitation to the comprehensible input construct, according to one body of research, is that the L2 learner may reveal structural features in his use of language that is similar to pidgin languages. In the pidginization process simplified grammatical forms are used (see Schumann, 1976, 1978, 1982 ; Bickerton, 1981, 1982 ; cited by Brown 1987;192). Therefore second language learners have to do a great deal of "work" in order to overcome this apparently universal pidginization tendency and adopt second language forms exclusively. The dangers of pidginization was further evidence of the value of adding formal instruction to informal exposure (Brown: *ibid.*). In the case of the second language learners represented in this study the development of a pidgin-like command of English would be counterproductive since the goal of these learners is to develop proficiency in a second language that will enable them to participate fully in a society in which English is the dominant language. Clearly then, it needs to be recognized that the study of the spoken language involves phonology (the sounds of the language), syntax (the grammar of the language, or how words are put together to make sentences), and semantics (the meanings of words or sentences in the language). The study of language is also concerned with pragmatics: how language is used (Garton and Pratt:1989:61).

A study of discourse patterns in the classroom should be able to reveal whether the teacher's or peers' use of language serves as an adequate model for the benefit of second language learning. An interesting feature to look out for during monitoring of interactions in the classroom is whether L2 learners use the model provided by the teacher and peers who speak the target language, or whether they prefer the model of English provided by peers from their own ethnic group. Investigations of this aspect of language development fall outside the scope of this study. However, such observations can help teachers identify learner behaviours they wish to target for modification. There are many dangers when learners are left to their own devices in picking up a second language by way of natural exposure.

Of direct bearing to this thesis is what can effective mainstream teachers do to accommodate their instructional style to students with limited proficiency in the second language. In attempting to answer this question, I wish to draw on the insights of a group of researchers who subscribe to what is currently known as the interactionist approach. Researchers who seem to favour an interactionist view of acquiring a new language are: Long (1981, 1985); Taylor(1983); Hatch (1978, 1983); Pica, Young and Doughty(1987); Pica(1987) and Rivers (1987){cited by Louw:1992:2. 3}. According to its supporters the acquisition of a second language can be attributed to the interaction between the learner's innate abilities and his linguistic environment. This view complements Krashen's (1981) Input Hypothesis, but emphasizes a general view that language learning is fostered by contexts which are rich in opportunities for interaction in and with the target language. The term "interaction" is used both in a social and psychological sense (Little et. al :1989:2). I shall consider here the role of social interaction.

The proponents of the interactionist view argue that comprehensible input is not simply the result of the speech adjustments made by native speakers but the product of interaction involving both the native speaker and the learner. In this interaction the native speaker makes certain formal and discourse adjustments to ensure understanding, while the learner employs certain communication strategies to overcome problems and to maximize existing resources (Ellis: in Gass and Madden:1985:82).

Ellis (ibid.) cites Scarcella and Higa(1981) as pointing out it may not be appropriate to talk of input facilitating SLA in terms of "simplification". In a cross-sectional study (cited by Ellis:ibid.) Scarcella and Hilga (1981) found that child learners received a simpler input than adolescent learners. They then asked why it was that child learners have been observed to learn more slowly than adolescent learners. They hypothesize that it is the negotiation that results from the adolescent learners' more active involvement that contributes to their faster development. This involvement is manifest in the strategies they use to obtain native speaker explanations for just those parts

they do not understand and the extra work they do in sustaining discourse (Ellis:loc.cit.)

Thus, if comprehensible input is a necessary condition for SLA, its provision needs to be understood in terms of mutuality of understanding between interactants rather than in terms of simplified input (Ellis: loc.cit.). This suggests that simply counting native-speaker adjustments will not provide a complete picture of how input is made comprehensible. It is for this reason that the focus needs to be placed on how communication is negotiated. (Ellis:loc. cit.). This can to some extent be achieved by examining selected interactional features, for, as Long(1983) cited by Ellis (loc. cit.) has pointed out, features such as confirmation checks involve taking into account the learner's contribution as well as the native speaker's.

Research is showing us the kinds of support that should be offered to second language learners by native speakers of the target language, language teachers, teachers of content subjects, and even other learners. One notes that from the point at which children learning their first language can contribute linguistically – however minimally – to dialogues with their care-givers, their contributions are constantly supported by what is sometimes called a "scaffolding" of adult input (Little et al:1989:3). This allows the child space to contribute, while at the same time framing and expanding his or her contributions, often in such a way as to offer models of combinations that the child can only achieve through interaction with an adult or with a child who is already a fluent speaker (Little et. al :ibid.). The research evidence suggests that the "scaffolding" necessary in relation to first language development is also characteristic of much second language speech that is directed towards learners. Such speech also tends to be adapted to the learner's specific needs and capacities, although the degree to which such "tuning" takes place appears to vary considerably according to the experience, personality and attitude of the speaker (Little et. al:ibid.).

The difficulties to be faced by the interaction model are numerous, especially with regard to the parallels between child-mother dialogue in first language acquisition and native speaker-learner in second language acquisition. The differences become clear

when comparisons are made between conversations at home and conversations in the classroom. In the home, the interactions are one to one. At school, a teacher is required to engage a class of around thirty children (Garton and Pratt:1989:106). It is not possible to say therefore, to what extent the patterns of negotiation that appear to promote SLA can be realised in the everyday interactions of the classroom.

1.3.7 Native – Non–Native Speakers' Interaction

Before going into instructional applications of the interactive approach, one needs to look at Long's summary of a number of studies of native–non–native speakers' interactions and what these studies tell us about the general conditions for second language development. Long(1983) cited by Spolsky(1989:189):

1. Relinquish topic control : Native speakers often attempt to pass control of conversational topics to the non-native speaker. Native speakers might modify their questions by adding a phrase inviting the non-native speaker to talk about something else, for example. Such questions are used especially when a native speaker is encouraging conversation.
2. Select salient topics : Despite their use of the above strategy, native speakers still tend to select most of the topics of conversation, for the non-native speaker is frequently of too limited second language proficiency to do anything else but to accept the native speaker's lead as best he or she can. Within the range of topics chosen, native speakers prefer to choose topics that refer to things that are immediately present or well known to the non-native speaker.
3. Treat topics briefly: Conversational topics are dealt with simply and briefly compared with those in native speaker–native speaker interaction. The purpose seems to be to decrease the non-native speaker's conversational burden.
4. Make new topics salient: Native speakers do a lot of work to mark clearly any new topic for the non-native speaker. A

- number of devices are used for this purpose, including the use of frames, such as "OK", "So", "Now" and "Well"; stressing key words; using a slow pace; pausing before topic words and using questions to indicate that the non-native speaker is expected to take a turn.
5. Check non-native speaker's comprehension: Native speakers attempt to prevent a communication breakdown by using regular comprehension checks such as "Right?", "OK?" or "Do you understand?"
 6. Accept unintentional topic-switch : Native speakers tend to accept the non-native speaker's choice of topic even if it is not an appropriate response to a question.
 7. Request clarification: Clarification requests are expressions used by a native speaker in order to elicit clarification of the non-native speaker's preceding utterance.
 8. Confirm own comprehension: Confirmation checks are expressions used by the native speaker immediately following an utterance by the non-native speaker which are designed to confirm that the utterance was understood or heard correctly.
 9. Tolerate ambiguity: Sometimes native speakers choose not to clear up something that is unclear in order to sustain conversation.
 10. Use slow pace: Native speakers tend to speak at a pace that is considered suitable for the non-native speaker's level of understanding.
 11. Stress key words.
 12. Pause before key words.
 13. Repeat own utterances. These include partial or complete, and exact or semantic repetition (paraphrase) of any of the speaker's utterances in order to either overcome or prevent a communication problem.
 14. Repeat other's utterances: Others-repetitions are defined in the same way as self-repetitions, except for the obvious difference regarding which speaker's utterances are involved.

15. **Expansions:** This happens when the native speaker expands a previous learner utterance by either supplying missing information or by adding new semantic information.

According to Long (1983) cited by Louw (1992:2. 14) modifications of one kind or another are discernible in any interaction involving a native speaker and a non-native speaker. Increasing the contact between non-English speaking and English speaking learners, should according to this theory enhance the acquisition of a second language.

As already mentioned, one way of increasing contact between non-English speakers and English speakers is to place the non-English speaking students in the same schools as English speaking students. Better still, will be to place L1 and L2 learners in the same classroom. However, a study done by Hirschler (1991) cited by Tabors and Snow in Genesee (1994:119) showed that it is not enough to merely place the two language groups together in the same schools or classrooms. When the two groups are left to their own devices, Hirschler observed that English-speaking students chose to confine their interactions with fellow English-speaking students. The second language learners preferred to do the same, that is, form associations chiefly with speakers of their first language. It occurred to Hirschler that adults (for example, teachers) must intervene and set up conditions that induce L1 and L2 learners to interact effectively with one another.

1.3.8 An Intervention Strategy To Promote English-non-English Students' Interaction

Recognising that native speakers, whether adults or children, are capable of modifying their speech to less able speakers, Hirschler designed an intervention strategy in which she trained five English speaking pupils in a variety of strategies for approaching and sustaining interaction with the non-English speakers in the classroom (loc. cit.). These strategies were

ones that Hirschler developed from a review of the literature on input which has shown to be most beneficial for second language learners. They are summarised as below:

INITIATION: Pupils are taught to approach L2 pupils, establish eye contact and ask the pupil to join him or her in an activity or task.

GENERAL LINGUISTIC ASPECTS: Pupils are taught to speak slowly with good enunciation to their L2 peers.

RE-INITIATION: Pupils were taught to repeat the initiation if it met with non-response from the L2 peer.

REQUEST CLARIFICATION: Pupils were taught to request clarification of a response by the second language learner if the response was not understood.

RECAST AND EXPANSION: Pupils were taught to repeat an utterance with slightly different wording when the second language learner indicated a lack of comprehension through non response, non-contingent response or other nonverbal signs.

In order to introduce these techniques, Hirschler and a helper used role playing to model the desired behaviours before the entire group of children and then individually with the five target children. All the strategies were understood by the children and elicited during the training sessions.

Interactional data collected pre- and post intervention indicated that rates of initiation to second language learners increased threefold for four of the five target language pupils. The above list, according to both Ellis (1985) and Long (1983) cited by Louw (1992:2.14) is only a small sample of all the facilitative features available to native speakers. They also claim that different features may aid language development at different times. For example, in Ellis' study (1985) cited by Louw (ibid.) of teacher-learner interactions, teacher self-repetitions were

more frequent at an early stage of development and teacher expansions at a later stage. Of the ones mentioned above, though, self-and other repetitions, expansions, confirmation checks, clarification requests and comprehension checks are some of the most frequently used interactional devices in Foreigner Talk (Long, 1983:cited by Louw:1992:2.14). The use of these devices may be of higher frequency in Foreigner Talk than in Teacher Talk, but the difference may be only in terms of degree, since as Long (1983) cited by Louw (ibid.) points out, modifications of one kind or another are discernible in any interaction involving a native speaker and a non-native speaker. This is also the case when the native speaker is a teacher of second language learners.

The construct, "foreigner talk" has been carefully explained by Spolsky (1989:178). According to him, the notion of the existence of a set of simplified registers addressed to language learners and other "imperfect speakers" was proposed by Ferguson (1964, 1971, 1975, 1981): these include "baby talk" (the variety of language spoken to babies and young children), "teacher talk" (spoken by teachers to their pupils), "foreigner talk" (spoken to people assumed not to understand the language. Spolsky (ibid.) refers to foreigner talk, teacher talk and so on, as the "simplifying condition" and as such these are forms of comprehensible input. According to Spolsky (1989:184) the formal instructional setting (potentially, at least) has advantage over informal language learning settings in that it is possible for the teacher to exercise control over presentation, adding topics step by step and practising skills in keeping with the learner's level of proficiency. Spolsky is making assumptions about teaching that are almost universally held. However, one needs to examine more closely in the next section what are the typical characteristics of teacher talk in second language classrooms.

1.3.9 Teacher Talk In Second Language Classrooms

A theoretical framework has been developed to show the relative absence in classroom discourse of moves towards restructuring the social interaction of the classroom, (for example, Seliger, 1983; Long and Sato, 1983; Pica and Long, 1986; Pica, Young and Doughty, 1987; Pica, 1987 among others, cited by Louw:1992). This model may help to explain why in some language learning environments, learners may fail to acquire the second language. The model proposes interactive procedures for managing classroom learning, such as conversation games, role plays, and student group and pair tasks (see, e. g. Brumfit and K. Johnson, 1979; K. Johnson and Morrow, 1981 both cited by Pica, Young and Doughty :1987:739). Interactive procedures for managing classroom learning will be examined in a later section. Several investigators have suggested that the learning difficulties of minority students as well as limited-English-proficient students are often pedagogically induced, in that students designated "at-risk" frequently receive intensive instruction that confines them to a passive role and induced a form of learned helplessness (Beers and Beers, 1980; Coles, 1978; Cummins, 1984 cited by Cummins and McNeely (in Fradd and Tikunoff: 1987:90). The way classrooms are organised can reinforce either efficacious types of behaviours or learned helplessness (Cummins and McNeely: loc. cit.). Cummins and Mcneely (loc.cit.) maintain that nowhere are self-efficacious student characteristics more important than in the teaching of limited-proficient-students where anxiety and fear of failure often counterbalance many positive factors. The importance of learner characteristics in second language learning is subsumed in the construct of the "good language learner"(Rubin, 1975 and Stern, 1975 cited by Brown:1987:92). Among the list of ten characteristics, "good language learners" display an active approach to the learning task. According to Cummins and McNeely the dominant instruction model in most western industrialised societies has been termed a transmission model (Barnes, 1976; Wells, 1982). The transmission model discourages social interaction in classrooms.

The basic premise of the transmission model is that the teacher's task is to impart knowledge or skills to students who do not yet have these skills (Malamah-Thomas, 1987:14). In the language classroom, it is assumed that the teacher knows the language, while the learners do not. This implies that the teacher initiates and controls the interaction, constantly orienting it towards the achievement of instructional objectives (Cummins and McNeely :in Fradd and Tikunoff:1987:90).

1.3.10 Classroom Management In Successful Language Development Classrooms

Few educational theorists would dispute the validity of "teacher-directed" classroom organisation as it does appear to be appropriate to a wide range of classroom instructional needs. Wong-Fillmore (in Gass and Madden:1985:24) puts the issue into perspective as follows:

"A common belief held by language-learning specialists is that the best situation for language learning is one that is relatively "open" in structure, and in which students can talk freely with one another even during instructional activities. We assume that in such settings students can get maximum contact with classmates who speak the new language, and through this contact get the practice they need in using it."

She adds however that this seemed not to be the case for the classes that she had studied. She informs us:

"By and large, the most successful classes for language learning were the ones that made the greatest use of teacher-directed activities."

She adds that students who want to interact with English-speaking classmates and teachers, and who have the social skills needed to conduct these interactions in a language that is new to them do quite well in open classes. However, she observed that open classes do not work very well where students' language skills are

under-developed. Another important point Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) makes is those students who find it difficult to socialize with others or feel constrained by the language differences that bar easy communication with classmates and teachers, do not learn optimally in open classrooms.

According to her, limited-English-proficient students will not benefit from "open" structure classrooms unless there are sufficient numbers of English-speaking students in the classroom to support the language-learning efforts of the LEP students who are there. She makes a further point of interest when she remarks that in open classrooms with high concentrations of LEP students, there are often not enough speakers available to provide the input needed by everyone. She notes that the teacher is sometimes the only person in the class who knows English well enough to be of any help to the learners. If the teacher does decide to put them into groups, the likelihood, according to Wong-Fillmore, is that where the students share a common L1, their interactions will be conducted in the language they know rather than in English. If they do try to speak to one another in English, they will use the L2 to the extent they can, and since no one knows the L2 very well, Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) believes that the forms the students are likely to use, will be imperfect ones. Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) believes the practice they get in trying to communicate with one another in a language they are just learning may result in some of the temporary, "pidginised" forms that learners rely on becoming permanent features of the new language. Learners who are isolated from native speakers of a language usually develop an imperfect form of the language which is termed "pidgin language".

Wong-Fillmore maintains that the problem of acquiring a pidgin-like command is a problem in any classroom where L2 learners greatly outnumber fluent speakers of the target language, no matter how the class is organised. Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit..) cites Selinker, Swain, and Dumas (1975) as showing that even in immersion classes that were structured in ways that apparently

worked well for second language learning (see for example, Long and Porter's 1985 suggestion of small group work), learners developed many permanent inter-language features through their exposure to the imperfect "input data" they were providing for one another in their interactions. Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) says that it is not surprising then, that after 7 years in school, students in French immersion programmes have yet to acquire a fully standard form of their second language. Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) claims that the problem is especially acute in open classrooms, since students generally spend more time interacting with classmates than they do with teachers; under such circumstances, the major source of second language input comes from other language learners, a situation, which Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) believes, is hardly conducive to successful language learning. While she does not doubt the value of "open" classrooms, she argues that the use of this structure must be decided on the basis of the ratio of non-native - native-speaker composition of the class. Peer input can be responsible for lack of grammatical accuracy in the target language use of second language learners. However, it is difficult to find consensus on this issue. Porter (1986) cited by Low (1992:3. 7) found that error incorporations were very rare in her research data on inter-language talk gathered specifically from small-group discussion settings because "there were comparable amounts of discourse repair in both native speaker - non-native speaker and non-native speaker - non-native speaker discussions".

It appears to me that Wong-Fillmore's use of the term "teacher-directed" should not be confused with the term "lock-step". Wells (1985:160) describes a lock-step classroom as follows: At school, a teacher is required to engage a class of around thirty children in conversational interaction. The demands this places on the teacher, leads to the question and answer routines observed in most classrooms. The teacher directs the initial question to all thirty children and then selects one child who provides an answer. The child is then given feedback, which is often inadequate regarding the response. While this one-to-one

interaction is going on the other twenty-nine children are expected to pay attention. The teacher then shifts to a different child either to get another learner to answer the original question if the first answer is incorrect, or to extend the topic, and expects the newly selected child to enter the conversation. Again the teacher engages in one to one interaction with the child while the remaining twenty-nine are expected to pay attention. Wells (ibid.) concludes that this pattern of interaction reduces children to passive participants in the classroom. These factors would, no doubt inhibit opportunities for learners to adjust and restructure interaction and negotiate for meaning that recent second language acquisition research shows as being an important condition for second language development. In the studies done by Long and Sato (1983) and Pica and Long (1986), (cited by Pica, 1987:8) reveal that the nature of questioning in lock-step classroom is such that teachers' questions are typically aimed at having learners display knowledge covered in class rather than at eliciting referential or expressive information unknown to the teacher. In interactions outside the classroom one person will ask another a question only because he or she is interested in the information he or she expects to receive. The implication is that display questions do not stimulate language development.

A structural characteristic that Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) discusses as important for language development, has to do with the format of the lesson itself. She points out that in the successful classes, a remarkable consistency was found across the lessons conducted in a given subject area by each teacher. This consistency was in how the lessons were organised, in the activities that were undertaken during each phase of the lesson, and in the language that was used in its conduct. As an example of lesson presentation which illustrates her point, Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) uses reading lessons: She explains that a teacher might follow a format like this: present new vocabulary items used in the text at hand; elicit discussion on the meanings and uses of the new words and relate them to known words; have

the group read the text silently; have individuals take turns reading paragraphs in the text; discuss the meaning of the text with the students; and finally, make an assignment for desk-work to be done individually. Wong-Fillmore does not give this format as example of fine teaching, but only to make the point that when a format becomes routine, the pupils can follow it, and play the roles expected of them as participants in the event. Obviously, the format may change somewhat as the class progresses through the curriculum, but consistency in presentation serves an important purpose. Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) believes that although the students had to deal with new content each day, the format in which it was presented was a familiar one. She stresses that the familiar routines "provide a kind of scaffold" for the interpretation and learning of the new materials. She observed that the learners in the successful classes seldom needed help in getting oriented to the content being covered in lessons, and she notes that the pupils were able to keep up with their teachers in most of these instructional activities whether or not they understood everything that was said. Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) maintains that the structural regularity and consistency in presentation added up to a predictability that plays a major role in comprehension. She adds that from day to day, only the specific content being taught was new. Since the activities were familiar, they provided a context within which the language and the subject matter could be understood, all of which adds up to greater comprehensibility for the materials.

Another important aspect of the formatting found in these lessons, Wong-Fillmore tells us, relates to the use of instructions and signals to guide the learners through the activity. The examples of statements she gives appear to serve the same purpose as interactional modifications that Long (1981; 1983) suggests are central features of native speaker input when talking to non-native speakers: this aspect was discussed in a preceding section. Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) refers to lesson transcripts to show how formatting statements not only mark the boundaries of the lesson, but also signal movement through the

phases of the lesson, for example: "Now we are going to review this page. . ."; "Now look at this problem. . . "; "OK, lets do another. . . ". The lesson excerpt that she quotes from also shows the teacher as setting aside a recapitulation phase when she reminds pupils of the ground covered during the lesson or unit. Wong-Fillmore maintains that the use of instructions and signals help to orient students during the lesson: they tell pupils where they are in the lesson and where they are going next. Wong-Fillmore (loc.cit.) believes that these statements are directions that help students to put together what they are learning into a coherent mental framework. Throughout the successful lessons, Wong-Fillmore found contextualising remarks of various kinds, which are meant to locate current experiences with respect to prior and future ones so the students have some way of interpreting the new materials being presented to them. According to Wong-Fillmore, by putting the present lesson in the context of previous ones, teachers anchor the new language in things that they have reason to believe the students already know. In successful lessons, Wong-Fillmore reminds us, prior experiences serve as the contexts within which the language being used is to be understood.

In Wong-Fillmore's studies (loc.cit.), another structural characteristic of lessons in successful classes relates to the way in which turns were allocated to students for participation. As pointed out earlier in this study, turn-allocation is especially important, since it affects the amount and kind of practice students get in the use of the second language, and the extent to which individuals actually participate in lessons. In Wong-Fillmore's (loc. cit.) observations, there were, for each type of lesson, and often in each phase of the lesson, fairly well established ways in which students were to participate. She observed that teachers might begin one phase of a lesson by inviting volunteers to read or to supply instances of whatever is being discussed. The teachers might then call on each student in turn. Wong-Fillmore comments that when the teacher distributes the turns more systematically than simply throwing

it open for volunteers, each person gets called on to take a turn. In another phase, the whole group might be asked to recite in chorus, a procedure which allows everyone to participate, although not individually. At some point in the lesson, the teacher will not allow bidding for turns, so that he will be able to call on individuals.

A variety of turn-allocation procedures is commendable so as to avoid the pattern that was evident in Seliger's studies (cited in Allwright and Bailey : 1991:130) in which it was the better learners who were making greater use of the input they were exposed to in the classroom. Seliger (1983) found a correlation between readiness of the learner to practise language by interacting with the teacher and fellow learners and the level of proficiency attained in the second language. Thus, if systematic procedures can increase whole-class participation, these are to be welcomed.

Equally to be welcomed is any increased focus on student talking time over teacher talking time (Wajnryb:1992:91). In Wong-Fillmore's study (loc. cit.), she observed that in less successful classes, "aggressive" students got called on more frequently, because "procedures for participation were not clear". She notes that those who were less aggressive got fewer turns to participate and hence less practice in using the second language and less of the feedback that is available through this kind of participation in lessons. Ellis (1980) cited by Chaudron (1988:9) speculated that L2 learners obtain more practice in the target language, and are more motivated to engage in further communication when they have greater opportunities to speak (e. g. when native speakers allocate turns to them) and when they achieve successful communication. This point has been underscored in research by Swain (in Gass and Madden : 1985:236) who believes that "comprehensible output" should be as important a goal during interaction in which meaning is negotiated as is the role of comprehensible input in second language acquisition. Swain (ibid.) suggests that negotiating meaning needs to

incorporate the notion of being pushed toward the delivery of a message that is not only conveyed, but that which is conveyed clearly, coherently, and appropriately. The implication in Swain's "comprehensible output construct" is that the learner has to be "pushed". Swain's principle would appear to inform our understanding of why Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) found that teachers who used well developed and well defined strategies for turn distribution were by far the more effective teachers. Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) explains that when students know that they will be called on to perform, they are attentive to what is going on. This type of participant structure will work well when the class size is small. Each pupil can expect several turns. However in a large class, there is the danger that there would be too few turns available.

1.3.11 Differential Treatment In Ethnically Heterogeneous Classrooms

A fundamental concern of some language researchers is the differential treatment of students by teachers related to ethnicity in some classrooms (Laosa:1979: cited by Chaudron:1988:119). Laosa argues that teachers in ethnically heterogeneous classrooms behave differently toward students belonging to a minority ethnic group. The different behaviour is negative in that teachers address these students less and fail to involve these students as active participants in the classroom. Hernandez (1989:53) suggests that "frequency of interaction" monitoring be used by teachers to examine their interactions with students who differ along dimensions such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status and gender.

The systematicity of procedure for turn distribution noted by Wong-Fillmore in successful classrooms may be extended to include developing approaches to analysing whether interaction is being distributed evenly among participants in the classroom taking into account the ethnicity factor. Cultural factors in turn taking styles has also been studied . Research on classes with

ethnic minorities illustrates differential cultural expectations for the manner of participation in school classrooms (e. g. Cazden et al. 1972; Philips 1972; Brophy and Good 1974; Laosa 1979; Trueba et al 1981 cited by Chaudron :1988:105). The research shows that some students (e. g. blacks, some Hispanics, native Americans, Asians) tend to be less direct or aggressive in initiating interaction with the teacher as a way of deferring to the teacher's higher status. Sato (1982) cited by Chaudron (1988:105) found that students as a group took significantly fewer self-selected turns than non-Asians, with the Asians adhering more strictly to a pattern of bidding for turns in class, instead of just speaking out. Thus, in these classes, Asians' expectations for appropriate turn-taking procedures may be denying them their opportunities for manipulating input.

According to Chaudron (loc.cit.), there is clear evidence that in mixed classrooms, second language learners risk being less involved in exchanges with the teacher, and possibly less involved in instructionally relevant interactions. This lack of attention to L2 learners could be seriously inhibiting their progress. The worst kind of situation, according to Wong-Fillmore, is one where the teacher races through the materials, neither stopping for discussion nor asking students whether they understood what is being presented (op.cit:32). A classroom with interactive features of classroom behaviours such as turn-taking, questioning and answering, negotiation of meaning, and feedback, are posited by language acquisition theorists as being far more educationally valid for second language development. (Chaudron:loc.cit.).

1.3.12 Characteristics Of Teacher Talk That Work As Language Input

According to Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.), there are various approaches that teachers can take when they believe their students might not understand what they have to say in English. One possibility she mentions, is simply to ignore the problem,

speak normally and "hope for the best". Another is to switch to the student's L1, and teach them what they have to learn in language they know, a solution that is available to teachers who are bilingual. Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) points out, however that in neither case, are the limited-English-proficient (LEP) students aided in their efforts to learn the second language. In the first case, according to her, the language being used is not the one that the students are trying to learn.

Another solution that Wong-Fillmore (loc.cit.) notes as being available to bilingual teachers is to repeat what they have to say in English in the students' own language, thereby providing them with translations that they can understand. With reference to her studies of classrooms, she observes that the use of the students L1 as a means of mediating subject content, was a characteristic of classes that were unsuccessful for language learning but "never in those that were successful" (p. 34 in Gass and Madden:1985). Wong-Fillmore's views find support in Krashen (1985:18) who argues: "Ineffective bilingual programmes use the first language in such a way as to block comprehensible input. This occurs when techniques such as concurrent translation are used, in which a message is conveyed to students in one language and then translated into the other. When this is done, there is no need to "negotiate meaning". The child does not have to listen to the message in the second language, since he or she knows it will be repeated in his first language. Moreover, the teacher does not have to make an effort to make the English input comprehensible". Krashen (ibid.) cites research done by Legareta (1979) as confirming this theoretical position.

A clear separation of languages, has long been regarded as a crucial element of the immersion approach, according to researchers who have studied its development (Lambert 1984, Cohen and Swain 1976 cited by Wong-Fillmore, loc. cit.). Wong-Fillmore remarks that like the immersion teachers, the ones in the successful classes in her study presented what they were teaching directly in the target language, and the reason they work,

according to Krashen's (1985) argument is that the immersion approach to second language learning provides comprehensible input.

1.3.13 Which Language To Use In The Classroom?

According to Wong-Fillmore (loc.cit.) language learning occurs when students try to figure out what their teachers and classmates are saying. In this regard teachers make efforts to communicate with learners and provide them with "enough extralinguistic cues" to allow them to figure out what is being said, and when the situation is one that allows learners to make "astute guesses" at the meaning of the language being used in the lesson (Wong-Fillmore: loc.cit.:35). When translations are used, Wong-Fillmore believes that this disinclines teachers to make the kinds of modifications in English that they might otherwise make. Modifications are made, as noted in a previous section, in an effort to give learners access to the meanings of messages that speakers want to communicate to them. However, what happens when meaning is provided in translation, is that speakers do not regard it as necessary to make any modifications in the English they are using. Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) argues that if modifications enable learners to figure out what is being said, then the English that is being used in the concurrent translation procedure is not usable to the learners as input.

Wong reinforces the point Krashen (quoted earlier) has made: learners ignore the bits that are conveyed in English since they can count on getting the information in the language they already know. Observations in classrooms where this method has been used have shown that children tend to tune out when the language they do not know is being spoken (Legarreta 1979; Wong-Fillmore 1982 cited by Wong-Fillmore: loc.cit.).

In placing the emphasis on communicating directly in English, Wong-Fillmore (loc.cit.) suggests that the teacher uses whatever works, e. g. pictures, demonstration, gestures, enactment, to

communicate some of the information to students. Wong-Fillmore maintains that teachers mistakenly regard it as essential to teach LEP students everything that is contained in the curriculum at the same level that is appropriate for English-speaking students. She believes this practice to be inadvisable. When students do not understand the language of instruction, adjustments need to be made both in the content and in the language being used. Wong-Fillmore (loc.cit.) explains that the major way in which language learning in the classroom differs from learning in other settings is that there is a specific content that has to be covered in each lesson, and this content has to be communicated well enough for the students to learn it. Of course, as teachers are only too well aware this learning of both subject content (academic skills) and the language through which the content is conveyed is not an easy matter.

Wong-Fillmore (loc.cit.) however stresses that it is possible to develop academic and second language skills simultaneously; her conviction derives from her studies of lessons taught in successful classes. It would appear that the art of carefully modifying the content itself, adjusting the language to match the receptive capacities of the learner, tailoring the language used according to feedback provided by the learners themselves, checking for learners' comprehension of what is being said, is what teachers of second language learners will need to develop if they are to achieve success in their classes. The aim should be for students to get something out of each lesson, not necessarily everything. What is important about lessons in which the emphasis is on communication is that the language being used is communicative, that is, it is focused on the actual transmission and receiving of messages or information (or subject matter). It is quite different from the language that gets used in say, typical ESL lessons where the language is used strictly for practice (Arora:1987:101).

Wong-Fillmore (loc.cit.) believes that since a formal register is exactly the type of language skills that the students need for

school, it is essential for them to be exposed to this level of language by their teachers. At the same time, she stresses that the language being used should not be "complex". This lack of complexity is in accord with what other researchers have found. Hatch(1983 cited by Wong-Fillmore: loc. cit.) for example, in an analysis of discourse data drawn from studies of language learning, has found that the adjustments made by speakers for the sake of learners whether of first or second languages are quite similar: they speak more slowly, enunciate more clearly, make greater use of concrete references than of abstract ones, and use shorter and less complex sentences than they might otherwise. They also make greater use of repetitions and rephrasings than usual, and they accompany their speech with gestures and demonstrations that give learners some extra-linguistic cues to aid their understanding of what is being said.

When language serves a genuine communicative function, it is possible that the message can be understood from context (Long:1981 cited by Wong-Fillmore:loc.cit.:33). In context embedded discourse, it would appear that second language learners comprehend at least the essence of what is being said, without the teacher having to resort to simplified grammatical forms akin to pidginized forms of language. (Brown:1987:192). In fact, Wong-Fillmore (loc. cit.) reports that in successful lessons she had observed, the emphasis was on helping students to develop a greater control of the forms, functions and uses of the second language. The teachers used a variety of ways of encouraging accuracy in language use, including the way they exemplified correct usage in their own use of the language.

In drawing on Wong-Fillmore's description of features of lessons that work and of those that do not, my purpose was to discover which aspects of classroom structure and language use contribute to the language-learning outcomes that we find in classrooms serving LEP students (limited English proficient). She does not encourage the notion that teacher-controlled classrooms are superior to open structure classrooms, but she does stress that

in order for teachers to respond effectively to heterogeneity in today's classrooms, teachers will have to develop sound classroom management techniques. Moreover, her studies of classrooms point in the direction of integrating classroom management and curricular adaptations.

Wong-Fillmore's studies attest to the fact that teachers make a difference. Her analysis of classroom practices that promote second language development is consistent with the framework which I have set out for this study, as formulated by Cummins and McNeely (in Fradd and Tikunoff:1987) and Hernandez(1989). These theorists take the view that the context of classroom interactions between teachers and limited-English-proficient students represent the immediate determinants of students' success or failure. Wong-Fillmore's analysis serves this present study well in the way it suggests a theoretical basis to differentiate between teachers who are successful from those who are less successful.

1.3.14 The Communicative Language Teaching Model

Proponents of communicative language teaching have developed a range of techniques on promoting linguistic competence in the classroom while at the same time engaging learners in the processing of authentic texts (see for example, Nunan:1988). Authenticity refers to the use of texts that are related to the learner's personal concerns and interests (Little, Devitt et al:1989:72). Rivers (1981:245) maintains that there are normal communicative purposes for which we use language. These can be taught as can the forms appropriate for expressing them. According to Rivers (ibid.) language teachers can aim at promoting natural language use by stimulating and encouraging student-directed and student-initiated activities. This view obviously has implications about "power and control" in the classroom (Nunan:1989:86). According to Nunan (ibid.) "in classroom drills and other form-focused activities, control is usually very much with the teacher, while in simulations, role

plays and the like, the learner has much more control." Obviously, the need to achieve a balance between teacher-controlled and student-controlled activities is important in so far as it is acknowledged that the goal of language teaching in a formal context is both accuracy and fluency (Brumfit: in loc.cit.). Learners should not be so much concerned with accuracy that they do not develop the capacity to be fluent.

Bygate, (in Nunan:1988:86) suggests that in particular learners need to develop their paraphrasing ability, their willingness to ask for help, and their use of gestures and other devices to keep talking, as well as strategies for managing turn-taking in conversation, including taking a turn, holding a turn, and relinquishing a turn. Other strategies learners need to develop through classroom practice are: how to use conversation for both transactional and interactional purposes; strategies for opening and closing conversations; how to initiate and respond to talk on a broad range of topics; how to use both a casual style of speaking and a neutral or more formal style; how to use conversation in different kinds of social encounters, such as on the telephone, at informal and formal social gatherings and so on. SLA researchers(e. g. Hatch 1978) cited by Richards (1990:77) have argued that learners acquire language through conversation.

In using conversation to interact with others, learners gradually acquire the competence that underlies the ability to use language. Hatch (1978:404) quoted in Richards(loc. cit.) puts the position in this way: "One learns how to do conversation, one learns how to interact verbally, and out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed." As explained earlier, conversation or interaction, allows for the negotiation of meaning to take place. Negotiation of meaning refers to the skill of making sure that the person you are speaking to has correctly understood you and that you have correctly understood him. As a result of reciprocally assisting comprehension, SLA researchers argue, linguistic competence gradually emerges

(Richards:1990:77). The conclusion drawn from this view of the relationship between conversation and second language learning is that the classroom should primarily provide opportunities for learners to engage in natural interaction through the use of communicative tasks and activities (Richards: *ibid.*). In practical terms, this leads to the use of pair-work and small group work activities that require learner-to-learner interaction. Tasks most likely to bring this about involve information sharing and negotiation of meaning (Johnson 1982) cited by Richards (1990:78). The focus is on using language to complete a task, rather than on practising language for its own sake.

According to Long and Porter (1985:207) cited by Richards (*loc.cit.*) the negotiation work possible in group work makes it an attractive alternative to the "teacher-led, lock-step mode. . .". Richards believes that group activities should achieve a balance between transactional uses of language and what he calls conversation to "create social interaction and social relations" (*loc. cit.*:79). Long and Porter (1985:208) argue that small group work has the potential to increase the amount and variety of language practice opportunities. This is especially important in large second language classes where individual practice time available to each student is often insufficient. The disadvantage of the "lock-step" or teacher-fronted mode of instruction, according to them, is that learners do not have freedom to negotiate linguistic input.

Another advantage, Long and Porter (*ibid.*) claim for small group work is that it could help the individualisation of instruction. For example, small groups of students can be assigned different sets of materials to work on, suited to their needs. Individualisation of instruction will have great advantages for linguistically mixed classrooms, since the more proficient pupils do not need to be slowed down by the instructional pace and content that is appropriate for limited-English-proficient learners. Another advantage for mixed classrooms, that Long and

Porter(loc. cit.) mention is that small group work encourages a confident affective climate, which generally makes for a more supportive setting in which the second language learner can try out new skills in the target language. Lock-step classrooms are associated with competitive structures. Most studies, according to Hernandez (1989:61) suggest that the impact of competitive structures tends to be negative, particularly for low-achieving children (Ball, 1984 cited by Hernandez).

Group work structures can also have positive effects on intergroup relations. (Hernandez: loc.cit.). Long and Porter (1985:210) refer to studies which found that Spanish students learning English felt less inhibited and freer to speak and make mistakes in their groups than in the teacher-fronted monolingual class. The public character of a lock-step lesson students perceptions of their own ability and their feelings of personal satisfaction are related to how well they perform as compared to other children (Ames, 1984 cited by Hernandez :1989:61). It is possible that lock-step lessons are so threatening to the self-esteem of learners who have a low proficiency in English relative to native speakers in the classroom, that they are forced into "psychological withdrawal" (Larsen-Freeman and Long:1991:141). Psychological withdrawal, of course, should not be confused with silent periods observed in some children as a developmental phase in the acquisition process (Krashen:1985).

Second language acquisition research has identified a number of affective variables that relate to success in second language acquisition, self-confidence and lack of anxiety, ranking as one of the personality characteristics that predict success (Krashen: in Alatis et al:1981:101). Krashen (ibid.) hypothesizes that acquirers with more self-confidence and motivation will interact more and thereby obtain more input for acquisition. Small-group work then may help toward reducing much of the tension normally seen in language classes. Small group work may also create a setting in which excessive error correction can be avoided and the focus can shift to giving students the tools they need to

converse successfully. It is possible that we will be able to provide input for language acquisition if we did not have to deal with an educational system which relies on techniques for detecting inadequacies and weaknesses in individual learners. It will not be possible for learners to acquire English as a second language unless they understand the message in the input; making the message comprehensible will not be possible if learners are subjected to a passive role in the classroom. Krashen's belief is that the major function of classrooms should be to supply comprehensible input to second language learners. If this simple statement is accepted, it is possible to accelerate the learning of English in all schools responsible for second language learners.

1.3.15 The Evolution Of A Theory Concerning The Language Proficiency Of Second Language Learners

The major theory of the relationship between bilingualism and academic progress is one that has evolved in the last decade.

Cummins(1978), for example, developed an hypothesis that the level of second language competence that an individual acquires is partly dependent on the level of competence achieved in the first language. It was observed that older immigrants, whose academic ability in their first language is better established than younger immigrants, become academically more proficient in second language literacy as well as in their first language literacy (Skutnabb-Kangas :1976: cited in Baker:1988:177). Of course these findings cannot be simplistically applied to African learners in South Africa, who have varying degrees of contact with first language speakers of English. The situation in South Africa is that African education departments presently provide a vernacular medium of instruction during the primary school phase. Therefore, it can be inferred on the basis of Cummins's hypothesis that provided a good quality of education is made available to African children in their home language for at least five or six years of initial schooling then there is no reason

why they should not develop proficiency in their second language during the secondary phase of schooling. Therefore according to Cummins's model, conditions of schooling is the key variable. Inefficiency and indifference on the part of the education system and the teachers within it, can account for difficulties students experience in acquiring language and academic skills.

Cummins (1981) has made a distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). This distinction was posed to explain the relative failure of many minority language pupils (Baker: 1988:178). For example, in the United States transitional bilingual programmes often enabled pupils to achieve English language skills sufficient for them to converse with peers and teachers. Having reached this level, they may be transferred to mainstream education. (A parallel in South Africa is African pupils choosing to continue their secondary education in English medium Indian or White schools after having gone through a transitional bilingual type of education in one of the school systems designated for African pupils). Once the minority pupils have been enrolled in to "mainstream education" according to Cummins, the teachers wrongly believe that such pupils have the language competence to cope with the conceptual and academic demands of the curriculum. Language minority children are placed in an ordinary classroom amongst English speakers to either sink or swim. No provision is made by teachers to take account of the special needs of these children. Cummins's model, in that it distinguishes between two levels of language proficiency, claims strongly then that second language learners do have special needs and that the teacher's methodology has to take account of how materials and lessons have to be presented to second language learners.

The most recent evolution of Cummins's theory (1984) cited by Baker (1988:178) proposes two dimensions. Each dimension concerns communicative proficiency. The first dimension is the degree of contextual support available to a pupil. For example,

in a "good" classroom, a pupil may be able to negotiate meaning with a teacher, ask questions and indicate to the teacher a lack of understanding. In such a "good" classroom, language may be supported by non-verbal communication: the use of eyes, head, nods, hand gestures and intonation, miming, visual props, for example. Cummins refers to this as context-embedded communication (see Baker: loc.cit.) Context embedded communication means that when the context is used to support language students do not have to rely solely on their second language to understand messages. In textbooks used in high schools the only context available is linguistic. In these situations it is the teacher who provides the support in the form of providing information that goes beyond the information given in the text by the writer. The teacher's use of questions and trying to get the second language student to respond also provides contextual support. A discussion between students in pairs or small groups is likely to be context-embedded and for this reason small group work has become popular in successful second language classrooms.

Cummins (1986:28 quoted by Baker 1988:194) has distinguished between two models of teaching: the transmission model and the reciprocal interaction model. He maintains:

"The reciprocal interaction model "requires a genuine dialogue between student and teacher in both oral and written modalities, guidance and facilitation rather than control of student learning by the teacher, and the encouragement of student/student talk in a collaborative learning context."

This model emphasizes the development of higher cognitive skills rather than just factual recall, and meaningful language use by students rather than the correction of surface forms. Language use and development are consciously integrated with all curricular content rather than taught as isolated subjects, and tasks are presented to students in ways that generate intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation."

According to Cummins when all facets of curricular content are consciously integrated then the concepts in one curriculum area will serve to provide context and support in another curriculum area. Ultimately learning will be embedded firmly in the pupils' consciousness. One subject discipline will become the background to enable the student to assimilate new concepts in another subject of the curriculum. In this way new ideas will become less cognitively demanding. Presently, the way in which subjects are structured in our schools there is little scope for transfer of skills and knowledge from one area to the next. Cummins's hypothesis finds support from Krashen's (1982) construct of "comprehensible input". When students develop background knowledge as a result of the interdependence of subjects, the cognitive demand is reduced. When the cognitive demand is not too high, students begin to understand the messages.

Language which is cognitively and academically more advanced (CALP) is referred to as context-reduced (Cummins: 1984: cited by Baker :1988:179). Children whose language is under-developed will fail to understand meanings and will be unable to engage in higher-order cognitive processes such as synthesis, discussion analysis, evaluation and interpretation. This theory probably explains why a number of ESL learners perform poorly in predominantly Indian schools, where the syllabuses stress higher-order cognitive processes. The implication of the theory then is that when students language is under-developed and when they lack the necessary level of linguistic competence, then their academic learning becomes retarded. It then becomes imperative then that one of the primary goals of schooling for second language learners is providing a schooling context to support language development. Language is less cognitively demanding when it is more context-embedded. Teachers who provide as many linguistic and extra-linguistic cues possible, know that the greater the number of cues the less demanding the task of comprehending.

1.3.16 Teaching Content Through A Second Language

Many approaches to educating second language students seem to be based on the assumption that proficiency in English is a prerequisite for academic learning, even though research seems to indicate that it may take as long as seven years for students to acquire a level of academic proficiency comparable to native speakers (Cummins, 1981). Clearly, if second language learners are to achieve the goals of education, academic learning cannot be put on hold until students have acquired proficiency in English (Met, in Genesee:1994:159).

Schools are challenged to provide a quality education to students who are not yet proficient in English, and there are many teachers charged with developing these students' linguistic and academic proficiencies. This includes the two teachers whose classrooms were observed as part of this study. Recently, increased attention has been given to identifying what immersion teachers do or should do to facilitate the co-development of second language proficiency and academic content learning. Teachers need to explore how they may adjust classroom activities and the delivery of instruction when the demands of the curriculum exceed the linguistic skills of students. This has implication for how planning for instruction is affected by consideration of students' limited proficiency in the language of instruction. It also has implications for the roles and tasks of teachers within immersion programmes.

1.3.16.1 Planning For Instruction

Teachers who educate students in a non-native language need to sequence their objectives, plan for language growth, identify instructional activities that make content accessible, select instructional materials appropriate to students' needs, and plan for assessment (so that both teaching and testing are coordinated) (Met: in Genesee:1994:161)

1.3.16.2 Instructional Decision Making

Effective instructional decision making requires a repertoire of instructional options, and knowledge base necessary for choosing wisely among the options. Since providing instruction in a student's second language requires a greater repertoire than that of teachers in monolingual settings, specialised training of some kind is necessary if teachers are to have the flexibility to respond to learner's needs. Teachers who know only one way to teach a skill or concept have no fall-back options if observations indicate that this one way is ineffective or inappropriate for a given individual or group of students. (Met: in Genesee: loc.cit.) The teacher's knowledge of students' needs and abilities and their linguistic and cultural characteristics will help to determine which of the available options is most appropriate at a given moment.

1.3.16.3 Assessing Concept Mastery

Educating students in a second language presents unique problems in assessment. Teachers may have difficulty determining whether students fail to perform as expected because they have not mastered the concepts or because they simply lack the linguistic resources to demonstrate what they have learned. When students are extremely limited in their linguistic repertoire, it may be best to separate assessment of content mastery from language. (Met: in Genesee: loc.cit.) What strategies can teachers of content use to ensure that students can demonstrate content mastery even when they are as yet unable to verbalise their knowledge and understanding? This is an issue that needs to be addressed.

1.3.17 Principles For Planning Interaction

Johnson (in Genesee:1994:185) outlines the following principles as being relevant to second language teaching contexts:

- (a) Create opportunities to interact in a variety of participation structures;
- (b) Build from children's cultural orientations toward classroom interaction; and,
- (c) Create richness in oral and written performance by encouraging children to link language and content across situations.

As far as varying participation structures is concerned, teachers should structure activities so that students have opportunities to interact in a wide variety of participation structures. These include time alone to read, write, and think; pair work and small-group work with teachers and other students; and a variety of large-group arrangements. Limited approaches to grouping can seriously inhibit students' academic, linguistic, and even social development. (ibid.) The physical environment should facilitate many grouping arrangements. Enwright and McCloskey (1988) provide a useful discussion of specific ways to create a flexible physical environment in the classroom.

As far as the need to recognize and build from learners' cultural orientations toward social interaction and learning is concerned, it must be borne in mind that this is not something that teachers can learn to do in a few easy lessons (Johnson in Genesee: 1994:187). We still have a great deal to learn about how cultural experiences are related to classroom participation and to second language acquisition, but research is helpful in broadening our socio-cultural perspectives (ibid.). A socio-cultural perspective on language acquisition emphasizes the fact that language development and social growth go hand-in-hand. Language socialisation practices from home and community can affect the ways that pupils interact in the classroom in their second language (Philips, 1983).

As far as encouraging students to link language and content across situations is concerned, teachers should plan classroom events in such a way that they encourage students to make meaningful connections across activities and situations. This principle promotes language development by helping learners expand meanings in a network of spiralling and recycling of concepts. Teachers can encourage students to make connections through sequences of related activities. For example, a task in writing can be linked to the study of a short story. This principle also works across subjects, for example, when an English subject teacher, uses one of his lessons for asking pupils to explain topics they had learnt in, say, Geography. Where the school organisation encourages language development, teachers can create continuity for students and make connections between activities planned by different teachers (Johnson in Genesee:1994:190).

1.3.18 General Concerns

1.3.18.1 Planning Assessment

Assessment of second language learners needs to be carefully thought out in schools where there is a mix of first and second language learners. Arbitrary assessment procedures may be detrimental to the interests of second language learners. However, such negative effects can be counteracted if schools plan their assessment procedures. Planning for assessment should be an integral part of planning each lesson or unit. The results of assessment should be useful for ongoing instructional planning (Johnson in Genesee:loc.cit.). Students can also use the results of assessment to plan their own studying and learning. There is a need for more informal assessment procedures that include process-oriented information, where assessment is used to monitor the effectiveness of ongoing instruction.

1.3.18.2 Explicitly Teaching The Form And Structures Of Language

Explicit attention to the rules and structures of written language can help learners become literate and develop higher order thinking skills and learning strategies. (Hamayan in Genesee:1994:290) One of the reasons for teaching the formal aspects of language is that learners can and do make use of such knowledge for decoding and comprehending (ibid.). Explicit teaching of reading or learning strategies has been shown to be helpful for learners of a second language.

One of the ways in which literacy activities may become more meaningful to students is by doing extensive prereading activities to prepare students for specific reading passages or specific writing tasks (Hamayan: loc.cit.).

1.3.18.3 Curriculum Content

Teachers may have to explore various ways of modifying curriculum content to include the experiences, perspectives, and values of all learners in a multiracial, multicultural classroom.

Teachers may want to consider starting with materials, content, and methodology with which the students are familiar and move gradually into mainstream content and materials and more student-centred approaches to teaching and learning. The school could be using reading materials that make assumptions about the background and experiences of the readers that do not hold true for some or many of the learners in the class. Second language learners sink in those classrooms where teachers take for granted that their students have developed concepts and experiences expected by the syllabus. Teachers will have to remember that second language students will need more time to process ideas in two languages.

Finally, teachers will need to accept that second language learners need to confront cognitively challenging content which reaches beyond the memorization of facts to the exercise of higher-order thinking skills such as analysis and evaluation. The curriculum content needs to be pitched at least at the same level as that designed for their already fluent native-speaker peers, or they will soon fall beyond those peers in both academic achievement and intellectual development. Wong Fillmore warns against the tendency of schools to "dilute" programme offerings to students who are still developing proficiency in English as a second language by reducing the range of content courses or by reducing the breadth or depth to which these courses are taught. (Hanscome^h in Genesee: 1994:334).

Chapter 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design And Reasons For The Choice Of Method

This study is representative of a growing tradition: the application of qualitative inquiry to an understanding of the educational process. Non-participation observation aided by audio taping of a few lessons was the main procedure by which data and information was collected. In the role of non-participant observer I did not intentionally interact with, or affect, the object of the observation (Gay:1981:169).

Participants: The study was located in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. Two teachers from two different high schools volunteered to allow me to sit in their classrooms and observe their teaching. I requested and obtained permission to observe each teacher for the period of one week. This amounted to about 7 lessons in each teachers' class. Each lesson was of 35 minutes' duration. Both teachers taught the subject English. The schools involved in the study were controlled by an education department which at the time of the study was referred to as "Ex-House of Delegates". I, myself, am a teacher in one of the two schools in which the study was conducted. I was granted study leave for the purposes of this research. It was necessary that I negotiate access to the two schools with the relevant education authority; departmental permission was granted without any difficulties since one of the conditions of access was that the teachers and the respective principals submit to the department a written declaration that they are willing to participate in the research. As indicated already, the two participants were most co-operative. Another condition was that teachers should not be expected to deviate from the syllabus requirements as far as the content of lessons were concerned. The data collection process began in the second week of August and by the end of the third week data collection was completed. The participants were

observed in their standard seven classes. The first group (referred to as Class A, Teacher A) consisted of 24 students. All 24 students in this class are classified as "African" and speak Zulu as a first language (L1) and English as a second language (L2). The teacher is English-speaking, Indian and unable to converse in Zulu.

The second group (referred to as Class B, Teacher B) consisted of 28 students. Of the 28, five students were "African" with Zulu as L1 and English as L2. Twenty-three of the twenty-eight students were "Indian" with English as their first language and without knowledge of Zulu. In neither of these schools was Zulu being taught at the time of this study. In Teacher B's school less than ten per cent of the school population was African, while in Teacher A's school the ratio was one African pupil for every three Indian pupils.

2.2 Lesson Observation Schedule:

Lessons taught during the two weeks of observation for the respective teachers, from 12-16 August 1994 (teacher A) and 19-23 August 1994 (teacher B).

TEACHER A:

Monday:	Short story:	70 minutes.
Tuesday:	Poetry:	35 minutes.
Wednesday:	Language:	35 minutes.
Thursday:	Formal writing:	35 minutes.
Friday:	Oral communication:	70 minutes.

TEACHER B:

Monday:	Comprehension:	35 minutes.
Tuesday:	Poetry:	35 minutes.
Wednesday:	Language:	35 minutes.
Thursday:	Free writing:	35 minutes.
Friday:	Media education:	70 minutes.

2.3 The Syllabus In Use

From the minority language group perspective, the content of the curriculum and methods of teaching it, can be a very sensitive issue (Sarah Graham-Brown : 1994:27 in Minority Group Rights International Report). The relationship between language and culture in educational policy is a complex one. While I note that the curriculum in South African schools remains Euro-centric (ibid.) and consequently language minority children have been subjected to a dominant-culture-oriented curriculum, I need to make clear that my purpose for making reference to the syllabus is to determine whether the assumptions that underpin it are in keeping with the current state of knowledge regarding the learning of a language. In other words, the ideological underpinnings of the curriculum fall outside the scope of this study. It is possible to list only a few aims from the syllabus document so as to get some idea of the context of English teaching in schools:

1. "To encourage the natural enthusiasm, vitality, spontaneity and originality of pupils through their active participation in meaningful language activities;
2. To develop the pupils' ability to communicate ideas, thoughts and feelings effectively through language.
3. To help the pupils develop the language skills which contribute to effective expression and communication". (Natal Education Department Syllabus for English First Language :1986). The document states that:

"All communication should be regarded as a two-way process involving not only the ability to express but also a willingness to respond: to listen, to speak, to read, to comprehend, to think, to evaluate, to infer, to observe and to participate. . . . Communicative competence (both oral and written) should be developed in person-to-person, person-to-group and person-within-group situations." (ibid. : par. 2. 4).

In some respects this syllabus is compatible with principles of language learning; in other respects there are serious conflicts. This syllabus attempts to define the subject, English as part of a mass education system. As such it cannot take into account the views of most theorists that the experiential learning practices of different groups of learners in a variety of learning situations cannot easily be standardised (Gumperz and Gumperz in Wilkinson: 1982:20). The way in which the examination is structured appears to contradict some of the goals of the syllabus, particularly those which are "learner-centred". However, in so far as this syllabus recognises that unless a child understands and can use a language to communicate he or she will not gain any proficiency in that language, the syllabus is compatible with the views of current language learning theory.

2.4 Research Design

Ethnography, or in some instances, micro-ethnography, has been suggested as an appropriate approach in the endeavour of understanding the social organisation of interaction and teacher-student and peer interactions in linguistically mixed classroom contexts (Mehan 1981 cited by Carrasco in Saravia-Shore and Arviza :1992:394). The intention of this study, as explained already, is to gain an understanding of the ways in which the social roles of teachers and pupils (i. e. participant structures) help to create the quality of interaction and instruction. Recently, ethnographic methods have become popular in both educational and ESL research. Ethnography is suitable for investigating issues difficult to address through experimental research such as socio-cultural processes in language learning. The literature differentiates between two types of ethnographic research designs: "blitzkrieg ethnography" (Rist, 1980 cited by Watson-Gego *ibid.*) and "classical ethnography".

The difference between the two types is that the former involves only a limited period of investigation at the research setting, while the latter typically means that ethnographer carries out

systematic, intensive, detailed observation of people's behaviour. The longer the ethnographic researcher stays on the site, the more credible will be his accounts of how behaviour and interaction are socially organised, and particularly the social rules and cultural values underlying behaviour. In the conduct of this present study it would not have been possible for me to fulfil the broadest expectations of ethnography. In spite of the simple research design, this study allows me scope to provide certain details and analyses of specific areas of classroom interaction which can be observed and analyzed following qualitative and interpretive procedures.

In this study the qualitative approach has been applied to both data collection and data analysis phases of the investigation. Chaudron (1988:15) suggests four categories by which to classify methodological approaches to the study of L2 classrooms. These are: psychometric, interaction analysis, discourse analysis, and ethnographic. According to criteria discussed by Chaudron (ibid.) this study will be classified as ethnographic in so far as it is descriptive research involving a certain amount of interpretation of the meaning or significance of what is described.

I need to explain why an elaborate ethnographic model, though desirable, was however not feasible. In the "classical" ethnographic model, the procedures for conducting research involve considerable training, and continuous record keeping over a lengthy period of time. Under these circumstances, it is also possible for a researcher to combine quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The researcher should not only be able to receive training himself in the use of observation schedules and other instruments, but he or she will also have to train others in the use of these procedures. These systematic efforts allow the researcher to double-check and "triangulate" for reliability of data obtained. In some types of inquiry it is possible that ethnographic research designs may require a research team rather than an individual researcher (Goetz and

Lecompte: 1984:18). In the conduct of this study, limited time and financial resources, among other constraints, prevented me from adopting a more elaborate research design. Nonetheless, the type of design used allowed me to focus on the role of classroom organization in student access to types of language input and practice. I was concerned with the group rather than focusing on individual language-learning problems. Furthermore, the two teachers in this study, are not treated as individuals but as representative of a group.

An instance of teacher-student interaction occurring in a lesson, can be seen as embedded in a series of concentric rings of increasingly larger (or "macro") contexts. If one moves from the micro context of the interaction outward, these concentric rings might include other interactions during the lesson taken as a whole, the classroom with its characteristics and constraints, the school, the community, the administrative authority, and the society. To offer one example, it is often noted that to account for one instance of teacher-student interaction may require tracing its meaning or implications to other salient contexts such as the public examination system, which is known to exert a backwash pressure on teachers' construction of their classroom roles. There is no doubt that classroom behaviours, whether that of pupils or teachers are socio-culturally constructed. This explains why ethnographic methodology, with its holistic emphasis is so valued in educational research: any aspect of a culture or a behaviour has to be described and explained in relation to the whole system of which it is a part.

Having determined the topic, one of the decisions I had to make was whether to collect data by asking teachers how they taught the subject English to ESL learners in linguistically mixed classrooms or by observing. I discovered that for the particular research question I had formulated, observation was clearly the more appropriate approach. If I asked teachers how they handle mixed classrooms, I would immediately have to face the possibility of a discrepancy between what teachers say they do

in classrooms and what they actually do. Many researchers have found that teachers' beliefs about teaching and their actual classroom practice do not always correspond. It has been found that more credible information is to be obtained by observing lessons taught by teachers.

The value of observational research compared to teacher reports is illustrated by a study conducted in the United States on the classroom interaction between teachers and Mexican-American students (Jackson and Casca 1974 cited by Gay : 1981:168). Many teachers claimed that Mexican-American children are difficult to teach due to their lack of participation in classroom activities, their failure to ask or answer questions, and so on. Systematic observation, however, revealed that the main reason that they did not answer questions, for example, was that they were not asked very many. Observation revealed that teachers tended to talk less often and less favourably to Mexican-Indian children and to ask them fewer questions (Gay:ibid.). On the basis of this study, Gay (loc.cit.) remarks that observation not only provided more accurate information than teacher reports but also made the teachers aware that they were unintentionally part of the problem.

Since my own interest in this study is to discover appropriate classroom strategies that would serve as a "bridge" for bilingual students whose linguistic (as well as cultural) background differs from that of the school, data collected through observation would certainly be more authentic and more useful. I do recognize, however, that on account of the simple nature of this research design, the potential to extrapolate or generalise from settings that were observed to other similar settings is limited.

2.5 Data Collection

It is generally acknowledged that video recording of lessons provide a reliable record of what actually happens inside classrooms. However, I decided not to use the video recorder in the belief that this procedure would have been disruptive to both students and teacher. Instead, the data were collected through in-class observation and audio taping. The collection consisted of ten lessons (each of 35 minutes' duration). Five lessons were observed in Teacher A's classroom (i.e. all-African pupils; no Indian pupils); five lessons were observed in Teacher B's classroom (an ethnically mixed classroom).

Whenever I went into a class I placed the tape recorder on a desk in the middle of the classroom in order to record the teacher's language as well as exchanges of as many students as possible in the class. I sat at the back of the class where I busied myself with taking down as much field notes as possible. The goal was to note as much of the interaction of the class as possible, both teacher to class, class to teacher and student to student. The initial novelty of my sitting in on lessons wore off after about five minutes of the first day in the case of both classes. The pupils accepted my presence readily probably because both teachers explained to their respective classes the purpose of my joining the class: the purpose being, to conduct research. I did not interact with the teachers or the pupils to any extent during the conduct of lessons. While I had managed to write notes of ten lessons I was able to tape only five of the lessons. On some occasions the power supply was cut off; in other lessons the use of a tape recorder was not feasible, for instance when one of the teachers involved in the study showed his class a film. I did not see it as being important to seek further opportunities for additional audio taping since I thought that sufficient materials had been collected in the span of two weeks.

2.6 Decisions About What To Look For In Lessons

These decisions are based upon the theoretical frameworks that inform the study. In this study two compatible and interrelated theories of second language learning were combined to help determine the relevant areas of investigation. These are: Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT) and the Interactionist Model of Language Learning. Principles and assumptions of second language learning related to these models are discussed elsewhere in this study. The framework for observation given below is drawn from chapter 7 of Richards (1990):

1. Classroom interactions: What kinds of interactions occur between teacher and class, and among students themselves?
2. Opportunities for Speaking: How much opportunity is provided for students to speak? Is teacher talk excessive in relation to student talk? Of time allowed for pupil participation, which of the two groups, that is, L1 and L2, dominate opportunities for student participation?
3. Quality of Input: What kind of input is the teacher's speech providing? Is the teacher using a natural speaking style or a classroom "foreigner talk"?
4. Communicativeness: Are opportunities provided for real communication in the classroom? To what extent? Is there "negotiation of meaning" in the classroom? To what extent is accuracy or fluency the focus of activities?
5. Questions: What kinds of questioning patterns are used?
6. Feedback: How does the teacher correct errors and answer questions for clarification? How are communication breakdowns dealt with?

The above represents the objectives at the outset of the study but in a later section I will report on what was actually accomplished during the actual observations.

2.7 The Value Of A Theory

The choice of a theoretical model is seen to have value as an aid to reflect upon and try to interpret the data that emanates from classroom observation. For example, once I have produced transcripts of one or two lessons I will treat the transcripts more like a literary text and try to understand them by close textual analysis. This is a method that is suggested by Allwright and Bailey (1991:14) but is accepted cautiously by Mehan (1979:15) who notes that qualitative interpretations produce reports that tend to have an anecdotal quality.

According to Mehan this is so when researchers do not provide criteria for including certain instances of behaviour and excluding others. Mehan also claims that research reports presented in summary form do not preserve the materials upon which the analysis was conducted. According to Mehan, as the researcher abstracts data from raw materials to produce summarized findings, the original form of the findings is lost. It therefore becomes difficult for some one else to suggest alternative interpretations of the same materials. In the report of his own ethnographic study of classrooms (1978) Mehan explains how audiovisual materials can be used to preserve data in close to their original form. According to Mehan (1979:19) videotapes serve as an external memory that allows researchers to examine materials extensively, often frame-by-frame. In some studies, audio portions of videotape are transcribed. Utterances are attributed to speakers, numbered for ease of reference, and sequentially arranged.

In my own study, I include transcripts of audio tapes with reports of analyses as the grounds of their interpretations. However, what needs to be recognized is that video and audio materials are not the phenomena per se, and producing these as exhibits does not in itself make a researcher accountable. Interpretation and analysis are motivated by one's theoretical standpoint and theory becomes a basis of making inferences.

An additional concern is expressed by Goetz and LeCompte (1982:11) who refer to the possibility of bias when the ethnographer is the only observer of the phenomenon under investigation. They say that this possibility can be avoided if different types of data collection techniques are used, so that data collected in one way can be used to cross check data gathered in another way. According to them an ethnographer pinpoints the accuracy of conclusions drawn by triangulating with several sources of data. Triangulation prevents the investigator from accepting the validity of initial impressions and it enhances the scope and clarity of constructs developed during the course of the investigation. I must note, however that multiplicity of data collection procedures is not of primary importance in a study such as the present one since its status is that of an exploratory inquiry. Obviously, a more rigid design would be required in any follow up to this particular study.

Another issue raised by Goetz and Lecompte (1982:34) is that researchers should specify the theoretical frameworks that inform their studies. Doing so, according to them, involves more than a review of literature on a study's topic. Their concern is that the theoretical framework used may include biases and assumptions that I hold about the particular phenomena under investigation. Assessment about the claims made by the researcher is facilitated when theoretical frameworks are identified explicitly. The need to bring assumptions underpinning a theory to the foreground is particularly important in the field of second language acquisition, in which there are several competing explanations for any corpus of data.

I began this study with a general question: "What happens in classrooms where there is a combination of African and Indian pupils with differing home languages?" I wanted to get a general picture of whether the activities and experiences the teacher provides in the classroom are helping second language learners develop their language proficiency. While I was reading the

literature on second language learning I became aware that there were several competing theories about the nature and principles of second language acquisition. The three major theoretical categories have been identified as :

1. behaviourist
2. nativist or mentalist
3. interactionist

Of the three, the interactionist approach seemed to hold a more plausible view of second language learning in that the proponents of this model attribute the acquisition of a second language to the interaction between the learner's innate abilities and his linguistic environment. The interaction between the external environmental factors and the learner's internal factors is manifested in the discourse which the learner and his interlocutor jointly construct (Ellis :1986). The areas of investigation I have set out in an earlier paragraph derives from the interactionist model. The model predicts certain relationships between patterns of interaction in the classroom and the rate of second language acquisition. The central hypothesis is that an environment is supportive of language development, if in the act of communicating, learners and speakers are able to negotiate the form of the messages (or input) until the messages are comprehensible to the learner.

As suggested by Goetz and Leconte (loc.cit.) I need to make clear also that the research questions I formulated were influenced by my personal experiences and philosophy. I drew from my own ongoing employment with an education department that after decades of catering for exclusively Indian pupils, in the last few years has opened its schools to all race groups. Some schools exert a tighter control on the admission of Black pupils than others. Schools that exceed a certain threshold of Black pupil intake face the danger of backlash from Indian parents: Indian parents remove their children from these "over-represented by Blacks" schools, and place them in neighbouring schools where the ratio of Black to Indian is "more favourable". It is highly likely that such options will narrow out in the long term and

schools will do better to grapple with the challenge of how teachers can become enabled to teach effectively in multilingual classrooms. It is my belief that only through careful study of the scholarly literature combined with a study of classrooms in their naturalistic contexts that professional growth for teachers can come about. There is a direct relationship between the teacher-as-researcher ideology and effective classroom practice.

I undertook post-graduate studies at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg that orientated me towards a Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT), which essentially is attached to a learner-centred philosophy (Nunan:1989).

One of the teachers whose classrooms I observed told me that certain aspects of theory do not translate easily into classroom practice on account of institutional and other constraints. In spite of these constraints it is my belief that CLT can serve as a reference point for improvement and evaluation of specific educational programmes. Central to CLT is the need to use language in social situations as being the focus of language and communicative development of school-age children. (Wilkinson:1982:3) One difficulty with the use of CLT in classrooms that are linguistically mixed (i. e. consisting of L1 and L2 learners) is that in the case of L1 learners structural knowledge of the target language is largely developed by the time the child enters school; in the case of the L2 learner he or she has limited knowledge of the grammar of the second language. In so far as interaction in classroom activities requires competence in both the structural and functional aspects of language, the L2 learner is at a serious disadvantage in relation to his L1 counterpart.

Clearly, this gulf between L1 and L2 learner in terms of proficiency in the school language poses a serious challenge to teachers of mixed classrooms. Fillmore's research (in Gass and Madden :1985) suggests that the rate of acquisition of English by children whose primary language is not English is strongly

influenced by the extent to which these children interact with English-speaking children in the classroom. "Indian" schools provide the conditions that Fillmore has identified as being important for second language development. On the basis of her research, I believe that the theoretical model that guides this study is an appropriate one.

It may have been helpful to this study if I could have interviewed the teachers I was observing so that they could have explained the practical and theoretical basis for their classroom decision-making, but this intention is seriously constrained by the fact that teachers have very little time on their hands to justify their teaching decisions. With not being able to get teachers' views of the ways in which they construct their teaching, I admit that I am predisposed to examining the phenomena from certain perspectives and to ignoring other views of classroom realities.

Chapter 3

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION AND THE WRITE-UP OF THE STUDY

3.1 TEACHER A'S CLASSROOM

3.1.1 Content Lessons: Short Story and Poetry

I observed two content lessons in Teacher A's classroom : one, the teaching of a short story entitled "The White Ox", and another, the teaching of a poem entitled "Leisure".

The content lessons were conducted within a framework of teacher-controlled interaction. To begin with, I shall reveal the basic turn-allocation system of classroom lessons since Wong-Fillmore's studies (in Gass and Madden 1985: 24) identified participant structure in lessons as a factor in language learning. Teacher A's classroom, it must be remembered, consisted of 24 Black pupils and no Indian pupils at all. The following excerpt, that is, turns 1-4 of appendix A captures the introduction to the lesson on "The White Ox".

Teacher: Right. We were looking at "The White Ox". Let's go over what we were doing in our previous lesson.

Teacher: First. Why is this story called "The White Ox"? Explain by referring to what we've already read.

Pupil: It is about "The White Ox".

Teacher: Yes, there is a white ox in the story. But what else can you tell us?

In the type of participant structure exemplified in the excerpt above, the teacher addresses the pupils collectively as a class. Any pupil in the class may call out the answer, without necessarily raising his or her hand. At other times the teacher may call upon a specific student to respond whether the student has his or her hand raised or not. The excerpt below, that is, turns 12 and 13 of appendix A, reveals how the teacher goes about nominating a student to take a turn at answering a question.

Teacher: No. They didn't. Why? (Class is silent: teacher points to a pupil.)

Teacher: You, Themba. Why do we say that they didn't like the white ox?

After this question the teacher pauses for about 45 seconds and eventually one pupil offers an answer. His answer was not picked up by the tape-recorder.

The long wait time that the teacher allows suggests that he places a high value on pupil participation. The teacher most probably sees student participation as a means of gauging the pupils' level of understanding of the text being read. Throughout this lesson the teacher had great difficulty eliciting the information that he expected from the students. For much of the lesson the teacher is faced by silence. In the language learning classroom, where the target language being learned is also the medium of instruction, it is highly probable that lesson breakdowns of the type reflected in the transcript above, will occur. The teacher in this case breaks the impasse by providing the answer himself. In this way the lesson is able to proceed.

In the face of unresponsive students, there is no practical reason for the teacher to adopt systematic turn taking procedures. There are no students in this classroom who monopolise the discussions. The teacher does not have to worry about class order since all the pupils appear to be attentive, with their eyes cast in the direction of the teacher. The pupils hardly speak to one another when the teacher is at the front of the class and leading the discussion. The students are obedient to the teacher's authority and readily respond to his instructions. When the teacher tells them to turn to a certain page or read a particular paragraph all the pupils will do as instructed. When the teacher asks for an answer, they move their lips as if to express themselves but the words fail to come through. Frequently the teacher would say, "Speak louder. I can't hear you". This teacher recognises that the feedback

provided by the learners themselves as to whether or not they understand the lesson content is an important part of the instructional process. Many times the teacher would leave his place at the front of the classroom, next to the chalkboard, and he would go very close to a pupil in the effort to encourage a pupil to talk.

One noticed that the ideas and concepts used in the written text are quite complex; so is the vocabulary used. For example, there is the concept of "wild talk" in turn 20. In turn 70, persecution is suggested. (Refer to appendix A for excerpts of teacher A's lesson). Words such as "calamity" are encountered. Idioms are used without restraint, for example in turn 39: "no hand was raised against him". The type of language contained in this reading text is not characteristic of the language used with second language learners. The lack of response to the teacher's questioning suggests that the students do not have the language skills to deal with this level of language complexity. The extent to which pupils are blocked by lexical difficulty or confusion is illustrated by turn 20, where the teacher asks the class what was this "wild talk"? The pupils are unable to offer an explanation. The teacher does not explain this concept at this point, but based on the field notes, the teacher picks up this phrase at a latter part of the lesson. At that point when the pupils reveal further lack of understanding of this phrase, the teacher creates a context to get the idea across to the learners. To embed the concept within a rich context helps understanding of the concept but inevitably slows down the pace at which the material is presented. The following excerpt reveals the skill with which the teacher modifies his approach in the light of the information fed back to him:

Teacher: Let me give you an idea of what "wild talk" is. Let us pretend that the following incident took place. One day one of the teachers who comes to this class, left a wallet and forgot to take it with him as he was leaving the class. He later remembered where he

left the wallet but when he returned to the classroom to fetch it he discovered that it was not there. The next day rumours were going around that Dumisane was the thief because he was the last one to leave the classroom at the end of that period.

. . . .

The teacher went on to explain all the circumstantial evidence that was used by class pupils to "prove" that Dumisani was a rogue. The teacher went on to draw on pupils' experiences of being used as scapegoats. The teacher's ability to talk well beyond the information in the text enabled him to convert a context-reduced text to a context embedded one. According to Cummins (cited in Johnstone 1989:37) a teacher's ability to provide more linguistic information than is strictly necessary in order to convey meaning improves the chances that meaning will be understood.

I noticed that while the teacher was relating this hypothetical incident about Dumisani the students listened carefully because it struck a chord in their experience. They kept looking at Dumisani, as if to identify with him, who was one of their peers. The teacher went on to ask the students a few questions about Thekwane, the protagonist in the story. The questions were mostly of the yes/no type but the students showed that they understood Thekwane's plight. For example, the teacher asked: "Was it wrong for Thekwane to stroke the white ox?" The teacher used appropriate gestures to express this idea. The pupils were quick to respond: "No!" The teacher again asked: "Was it wrong for Thekwane to feed the white ox even though it did not do the work that oxen normally do?" The pupils answered: "No". Of course the writer would not expect the reader to arrive at such simplistic conclusions but the teacher was taking care not to confuse his pupils which could easily happen if he tried to lead them into a discussion of the deeper issues involved in Thekwane's decision to keep the white ox in the face much opposition.

It must be remembered then that the teacher is able to communicate only some of the information to the students and not everything. Much that is contained in the curriculum that will be made available to other classes that comprise mainly first language speakers of English will be withheld from this class of Black pupils. This point becomes clear in turn 44: The teacher asks: "What does it (the paragraph being read) tell us about the life of the people in the village?" The teachers's attempt to keep the discussion of this point as simple as possible, adjusted to what he believes is the learner's limited language resources, probably accounts for his reducing this point to a simple : "So their life wasn't affected in any way" (turn 51).

This explanation not only side steps the question but avoids issues that are central to the short story. Particularly, there is no discussion on how the beliefs of the village people are shaped by their day to day struggle to eke out an existence in an inhospitable district. When the tribes-people are subjected to something alien to their way of life, they experience a sense of agitation that grows into a form of hysteria as their very survival becomes threatened by a vicious drought. Since the teacher has to convey this culturally difficult idea in the learners' second language the teacher chooses to render the explanation as unnecessary.

I noted then that although the concept "motive" is important to a meaningful understanding of a work of literature, the teacher was unable to enter into a discussion as to why either the protagonist or his opponents acted in the ways they did. It does appear as though denotative or face-value meanings are easier for the teacher to convey to his class than connotative meanings. Words that carry denotative meanings are stated explicitly in the text. Connotative meanings, on the other hand are implied but when understood by the reader they evoke particular associations. The writer calls upon pupils to develop a mental image or conception of how a white ox can become in the minds of certain people an object of fear and in others, (for example, Thekwane)

an object of veneration. From my observations in this classroom there was little evidence that the pupils were making the leap from the level of denotative understanding of the white ox (for example, an animal) to the connotative level of meaning at which level the white ox is a figurative illustration. One was not able to tell whether the white ox aroused any strong feelings in the pupils since affective domain questions did not feature strongly in this lesson. The teacher's chief preoccupation in this lesson was to ensure that pupils had a reasonable grasp of the main incidents in the story. However a story does not merely narrate but includes values as well. The values do not become all that clear unless the teacher can connect these to the pupils' own experience of life. When Doughty and Pica (1986) speak of language as the negotiation of meaning they refer to the various means by which teachers and learners negotiate the meaning of input so as to make it comprehensible and personally meaningful. In the content lesson this calls for the teacher constantly going beyond the text as a way of aiding pupils' language learning. To be successful in clarifying meaning the teacher may have to ask: "Themba, what if you were given a white ox as a birthday present?" Once the teacher can get the pupils used to imagining things happening to them, their imaginations would be stimulated and in this way they will better be able to understand the short story.

However this type of decision making becomes difficult for the teacher, as we have seen in the excerpt quoted above. The difficulty stems from the limited time at the teacher's disposal to make all the images in the text comprehensible to the second language learner. As I have already showed, much of the language used in the content subjects and text books of this school system are context-reduced and there is a limit as to how much of the content can be adjusted to fit the levels of proficiency of second language students. The linguistic and cultural richness of the text may explain why many key ideas are dealt cursorily and perfunctorily by the teacher.

Whatever little information that the teacher does try to convey to his pupils he ensures that these they will at least understand fairly well. In getting these relatively few ideas across, the teacher was observed to speak more slowly, enunciating more clearly and making greater use of concrete references than abstract ones. Moreover, the teacher uses shorter and less complex sentences than he might otherwise. For example, when the teacher asked a question: "Was Thekwane troubled by some of the things that were happening to his family?" the teacher made the task simpler by asking them to turn to the relevant page and paragraph where the answer was to be found. When they had located the paragraph they were not asked to explain anything. The teacher simply asked the pupils to read out the sentence from the paragraph that carried the answer. In this case the answer the pupils gave the teacher is that Thekwane "sang" happily in his hut. This approach suggests that the teacher uses the text as a scaffold. By keeping pupils' attention focused closely on the written text, he manages to keep up a two way flow of information with them. In turn 87 we see how this scaffolding strategy works.

Teacher: I will mention some of the things and you will tell me what happened to them. Let's look at the dogs. What did the dogs do as a result of the drought?

The excerpt reveals that gradually as the teacher models a few responses the pupils catch on. Since the paragraph that the teacher has based the activity on is short, the learners quickly assimilate the ideas and are able to produce one word answers. For example, turns 92-97:

Teacher: And what happened to the pumpkins?

Pupil: Worms.

Teacher: Very good. The worms ate them.

Teacher: And the fowls?

Pupil: Died.

Teacher: Yes. The fowls died for no reason.

Comprehensible input according to Krashen (1982) cited by Allwright and Bailey (1991:122) is responsible for progress in language acquisition. The feedback that these pupils are giving the teacher indicates that they do understand some of the details in the text.

In the excerpt above, the students are seen to be coping with the learning task. The teacher allows the pupils to cope with whatever resources are at their disposal. As these pupils attempt to construct messages, notice how the teacher helps them figure out how the language is structured. The teacher enlists methods of providing opportunities for language input and production that simulate the first language acquisition environment. In some ways the excerpt above approximates the way a parent talks to a child learning his first language. The teacher warmly receives the learner's one word answer but goes on to build the learners' utterance so that it is syntactically complete. The pupil's answer of "worms" gets expanded by the teacher to "Yes, the worms ate them." Perhaps the teacher attends to this language "error" only because he solicited this statement from the class. If it had been a spontaneous student statement the teacher would most probably would have accepted "worms" as an adequate answer since the context supports the meaning. However since the incomplete sentence is uttered in the presence of other students who are also learners of the second language the teacher does not overlook the violation of the "complete sentence" rule. By attending to the form of the utterance even though the meaning may be implicit the teacher is trying to influence the course of language development.

Ferguson(1977) found that mothers also repeat utterances of their children frequently and expand and elaborate on what the children say. I observed this teacher in a non-instructional context in face to face interaction where only one pupil was being engaged in conversation. The conversation went as follows:

Teacher: Patrick, why didn't you do your homework?

Pupil: I visit my friend.

Teacher: Where does your friend live?

Pupil: Imbali.

Teacher: And you?

Pupil: What?

Teacher: Where do you live?

Pupil: Me? Edendale.

Teacher: Next time, visit your friend in the week-end. On Saturdays and Sundays, you hear? Not schooldays.

Pupil: Yes, sir.

Situations such as these provide a lot of opportunities for language development because he is asking for information that he does not already have. As long as he gets the information he is not too concerned about syntax. However, in trying to make himself understood the teacher has to speak slowly and deliberately with exaggerated intonation. These modifications are no doubt very helpful to the second language learner.

In content lessons on the other hand, the teacher is focusing on whole-class instruction where the routine practice is to get pupils to answer comprehension-type questions on the text. If students don't understand the text they cannot respond and as a result the teacher-controlled interaction format does encourage much silence.

To break the impasse of silence the teacher has to be adept at finding ways of ensuring that at least something of the lesson gets through to pupils. A striking example of the teacher's accommodations to the learner, so as to help improve the learner's chances to comprehend the meaning of the speech addressed to him or her is given as follows: The teacher was explaining a point in the poem, "Leisure". The teacher had asked the class why the reference to "cow" was more appropriate, than say for example, the "rabbit". When the pupils were unable to explain, the teacher mimed the leisurely pace and meditative posture of the cow and to establish the contrast the teacher

mimed the hurried movement of the rabbit. The teacher's theatrical behaviour not only aided understanding but also helped create a happy and relaxed atmosphere in the class, for at least a short while.

I noticed that the learners always seem to understand messages when the teacher builds up a context or says the same thing a number of times and in a variety of ways. These strategies for communicating with second language learners were being used time again in the content lessons of this classroom.

According to Krashen (1985:18) the more the effort that the teacher puts into making input comprehensible the more the language of the second language learner is being developed. Moreover, the fact that the learner has no choice but to listen to the teacher's message in the second language without the option of falling back on the resources of his native language stimulates his language development. The pressure to listen attentively will be less compelling if the teacher knew the learner's first language and resorted to the learner's home language every now and then to explain the difficult parts of the lesson.

Krashen (1985) argues that reading contributes to second language acquisition. In following the "reading" lesson in this classroom we see that the teacher in this classroom has recognised the important contribution that a written text makes to the development of a new language.

3.1.2 Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills In Teacher A's Classroom

Many classrooms these days involve a range of interactive patterns, using teacher-led activities, pair work and group work to varying degrees, depending on learning needs, purposes and contexts. Pair and group work also requires different teacher skills from those involved in teacher-led activities. Teacher

A used pair work, group work and role play activities for the purpose of developing students' basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS).

BICS is an important dimension of language proficiency, since students who reach this level are able to converse with peers and teachers and have the necessary foundation to cope with the conceptual and academic demands of the classroom. In Teacher A's class, I observed a number of group activity and role-play lessons.

In some of the lessons the teacher asked pupils to work in groups of four. The groups' task was to construct dialogues. Thereafter each group was asked to choose two or three representatives from their group to go out to the front of the class in order to perform the dialogue. The groups were free to choose whatever language they thought appropriate to the situation they wished to role play. Some groups involved learners with a range of proficiencies. In other groups, ability levels were homogeneous. In one role play activity three of the six groups built up convincing dialogues accompanied by lively enactments.

The preparation, performance and general on-task behaviours of the other three groups were somewhat indifferent. In these groups there was a lot of giggling and unwillingness to organise themselves for the task at hand. One of the better groups improvised a scene showing the tensions that enter into family relationships when the mother invites a new man to live with her after the death of her husband. The language function in this scenario entailed the daughter raising objections to the mother's actions and the mother having to defend her decision. Although the length of the performance was short, lasting no more than a minute, the purpose of the interaction was achieved when the daughter agrees to accept the mother's point of view.

These group activities revealed significant differences among the learners. The teacher and I could clearly see that some of the pupils were leaders co-ordinating the input of ideas; others were group scribes taking on the task of recording ideas. Some pupils clearly had a lot of ideas about the topic but chose to express these in Zulu, their stronger language. The group members received these ideas expressed in the vernacular since there were always those in the group who were able to translate into English.

There was one group that spoke rather fluently about the inadequacies of the school tuck shop. However, the teacher was not happy with this group. He explained that a lot of lessons had been devoted the previous term to the topic: "Our School Tuck Shop" and that these students had wasted their time rehashing materials already dealt with. In my opinion this group was more ingenious than the group that invented all manner of excuses to avoid going to the front to present their act.

In second language learning, theorists propose several advantages for group work and cooperative learning: increased student talk, more varied talk, more relaxed atmosphere, greater motivation, more negotiation of meaning, and increased amounts of comprehensible input (Long:1985). The pupils in this class appear to have group activity with minimal teacher direction as a language learning strategy. The teacher was wise to set time limits to discourage groups from dawdling. A number of students showed that they have become adept at working cooperatively.

I noticed that during group activities the teacher kept a good distance away from the groups and did not participate in any of the interactions. His interventions were largely aimed at ensuring that discipline prevailed in the classroom. I noted that several times he urged groups and individuals to collaborate. He made certain that no one was sitting too far away from the group. He intervened whenever he felt that someone was being left out of the discussions. The teacher used the

double period lessons (approximately one hour) in such a way that the tasks were accomplished within that time. The teacher intervened in group where he noticed that there was a lack of a spirit of togetherness. In one instance the teacher overheard two pupils quarrelling. Upon investigating, one pupil complained to the teacher that the group leader was ignoring contributions from other members. The group leader in his defence, protested that some of the members of his group were not explaining their ideas clearly. The teacher reprimanded the entire group for not taking their work seriously. He said that he could see from their performance that they were not working together well. The teacher asked the aggrieved student to go over his points once again so that the leader could build them into his notes. The task that this group had chosen to work on was a role play scene in which pairs of pupils from two different schools exchange information about experiences in their respective schools.

3.1.3 Contextualised Grammar Lessons

In the grammar lesson I observed, the teacher preferred to start with utterances taken from the students' own oral or written performances and then associate these to the language forms being practised. Once a context was established, in this case a L2 pupil's activities during the holidays, for which the past tense was required, the teacher guided the pupil into producing sentences by which information can be conveyed. For example:

Teacher: What did you do during the July holidays?

Pupil: I worked in Checkers.

Teacher: Tell us about some of the duties you performed at Checkers?

In this way the teacher worked with about three pupils to reflect the function of past tense verbs. I noticed that this type of discourse structure where the teacher asks for real life information usually succeeds in getting pupils to talk. The fact that they are able to draw on real experiences in their lives

seems to help their speech production. On the other hand the speech in the literature lessons was tense and laboured. Perhaps these students have not as yet become comfortable with the non-realistic discourse style that is often referred to the I. R. F. pattern (initiation-response-feedback). Of the three students the teacher called on, none of them had difficulty expressing themselves. In one situation the teacher asked the following question:

Teacher: What lesson did you have yesterday in the last period?

Pupil: Geography.

Teacher: What was the lesson about?

Pupil: The moon.

Teacher: Did you understand the lesson?

Pupil: Yes.

Teacher: All right. Repeat after me: Yes, I understood the lesson.

In spite of the single word utterances from the pupil one notes that a conversation is taking place between two speakers. The teacher's job is rather difficult since he is the only proficient speaker of the language in this classroom. He does not have the option of pairing native and non-native speakers to teach and practise language forms.

Another way the teacher tried to contextualise grammar was to let students experience the results of their own errors made during the writing of compositions. I looked at a few pupils' composition books and noticed that the teacher had indicated errors in the margin with codes. Errors of "tense" were indicated by an asterisk above the word in the text and an asterisk and the letter "T" in the margin of the respective line. The teacher paired pupils and instructed each to pick out the errors of tense from their partner's books and write these in the "Language Book". Once this was done the both pupils were asked to work together and correct all the errors made between them.

Some of the errors that came to light during the report back phase were as follows:

Pupil's error: "The party was sad for me. My father is drunk. He fight with my mother."

Teacher: When you use the verb form "is drunk" you are in fact telling us that your father is still drunk at this present moment.

Teacher: What tense should Elizabeth have used?

Pupils: (in unison) The past tense.

Teacher: Very good. What will the sentence be in the past tense? (Goes to the chalkboard).

Pupil's Error: On Friday two boys are fighting. I see this myself. One boy drop Coke. The nother boy he's shirt be full of Coke.

Teacher: What verb tense do we use in this case?

Pupils: Past tense.

Teacher: Why must it be the past tense?

We note that in this classroom the teacher was not using textbook examples even though every student in the class was supplied with a textbook. The teacher felt that the textbook dealt with exercises that were either too difficult, or irrelevant to the needs of his pupils. The teacher's rejection of the prescribed textbook is not surprising since the textbooks were designed for native speakers of English and were inappropriate for use with second language learners.

Since the lesson on grammar was of seventy minutes' duration, the teacher had further materials on standby. He distributed to pupils newspaper clippings. He arranged for three pupils to sit together and work with one clipping. The students were asked to ring any word that contained the suffix "ed". The teacher asked the class: "When you see an "ed" at the end of a word what does it tell us? How many of you can find words ending with "ing".

Is there another word that comes before the "ing" word? What word is that?"

Two groups had located verbs supported by the auxiliary "was" or "were".

When the teacher realised that there was still some time left, he asked the groups to work together on a newspaper report announcing forthcoming events. The outcome of this exercise was very interesting since some of the pupils were keen supporters of certain soccer teams and made some predictions of results based on the skills of select players. It would appear that the personal interest of students in the topic helped to generate ideas.

3.2 TEACHER B's CLASSROOM

3.2.1 Content Lesson: Poetry

In this classroom, the poem, "Discovery" was discussed. The turn allocation system was such that whichever students had the urge to participate could do so without having to raise their hands to bid for turns. By watching facial expressions and posture the teacher could see the ones who were the most eager to be heard and he would signal to them by a nod of the head or hand gesture that they could take the floor. Student participation is for the most part entirely voluntary. None of the pupils, whether African or Indian, are pressed into making contributions. The verbal interaction in this classroom is arranged primarily to hold pupils' interest in the lesson; not so much to provide practice in using the language.

In the lessons observed in this classroom the Black pupils were silent for most of the week-long observation period. There are two groups of learners in this classroom: the active group and the quiet group. There were no Black pupils in the active group but the quiet group was made up of all the Black pupils (five) and about fifteen Indian pupils. Thus there were not more than

ten pupils in this class of twenty eight pupils who get to do most of the talking during the lessons.

One reason why this teacher may not want to call on the quiet pupils, which includes African pupils, is that they slow down the pace of the lesson. In the poetry lesson, for instance, the teacher has just thirty minutes to explain the poem. The teacher realises that if he has to give priority to distributing turns equitably to give pupils enough practice to use the language then there may not be sufficient time to explain the content of the prescribed poem. In this lesson on poetry, once the teacher has led the students through the text being taught, the teacher assigns individual work as a follow-up activity to the formal lesson. The exercise follows closely the examination requirements for poetry. For example in turns 1 to 6 the teacher spoke a lot about the word "discovery". When he later put up questions on the chalkboard, the first question was : "Why is the title, "Discovery" ironical?"

Pupils feel cheated if a question the teacher set on the poem was not explained in the class. As a result the teacher spent a lot of time during the lesson explaining words and lines of the poem. Poetry and other literary texts contain many allusions and dense expressions which need to be mediated and explained by the teacher. For example in turn 26, the teacher asks: "Who was Columbus?" The teacher is not interested in who it is that provides the answer, or to what ethnic group the learner who answers belongs. The teacher's main concern is that a correct answer emerges without too much loss of time. This explains why the teacher does not mind when proficient learners use up most of the available turns. This is the most economical arrangement for the teacher. Since the teacher, by virtue of his specialisation in the subject, is the most knowledgeable, the belief in this classroom is that it will be most economical if the teacher provided most of the explanations himself. This is one explanation as to why the teacher spoke for about 90% of the time during the poetry lesson.

In this classroom the transmission of knowledge is a more important goal than the welding together of an interactive learning community. Moreover, the nature of learning in this classroom is such that the teacher makes limited adjustments for the sake of second language learners. For example, unlike Teacher A (class of all African pupils), Teacher B makes frequent use of abstract references. This becomes clear in turn 48, where the teacher moves away from the poem so as to use it as a "stimulus" or context in order to encourage in his pupils a critical approach to information offered by school textbooks. The textbooks the teacher refers to are those which were prescribed during the apartheid era and are still in use at state schools. The discussion about textbooks serving as a vehicle for propaganda was probably over the heads of the second language learners.

In Teacher A's classroom, which we examined in the preceding section, issues about values were completely avoided. In this classroom such issues are tackled but no attempt is made to embed these ideas in a suitable context. For example, it would have been more helpful to show second language learners particular textbooks and point explicitly to the inaccuracies contained in them. In this way the teacher could translate the abstractness of the concept "propaganda" to something more concrete and comprehensible.

In another instance, (turn 75) the teacher says that the "sails are pregnant" in his effort to explain the metaphor "bellying cloth". This explanation will not be useful to someone who does not understand metaphors at all. In another instance, the teacher asks: "Who was Columbus?" (turn 20). Without pupils understanding who Columbus was and the consequences of his discovering America (not only in respect of Europeans but also in terms of the indigenous peoples of America), much of the content of the poem will be incomprehensible. The teacher assumes that Columbus is tediously familiar to all his pupils and instead of providing the much needed background information he

chooses to trivialise Columbus's contribution to history. He remarks: "If it were not for Christopher Columbus we wouldn't have had hot dogs and hamburgers."

Second language speakers are known to interpret statements like these literally and the reference to hot dogs and hamburgers must have been very puzzling to them in this context. In the teacher's reference to the "pie" it appears as though he wants to make the point that the word "discovery" is a euphemism for "conquest" or "theft". The analogy of the pie may have served to illustrate the difference between stealing something and being offered something as a gift. After all, at the very beginning when the teacher first mentions the pie, a pupil sitting at the front of the classroom tells the teacher: "I brought you the pie." (turn 4). The tendency therefore is to make references indirectly and slightly. Perhaps, with the majority of pupils being first language speakers, the teacher expects that they will pick up the hints. The need to make the references explicit so that second language learners can grasp them, is not in evidence.

In classrooms where teaching is pitched at second language learners "redundancy" is a characteristic feature. Redundancy is a strategy whereby the native speaker gives more information than is strictly necessary so as to make accommodations in his speech to the second language learners. The impression gained is that the teacher was making up the explanations spontaneously without necessarily taking any particular account of how helpful they might be for second language learners.

To illustrate further, the following excerpt from turn 48 will be analysed. Here, the teacher asks: "Where do these textbooks come from?" He answers his own question as: "Don't they come from a huge factory up there from one of the planets, a factory of truth? Where do these books come from?" The first language pupil is comfortable with the teacher's satirical tone and quickly responds that textbooks are produced by publishers. Another pupil goes much deeper in his appreciation of satire and

therefore adds that it is the "white man" who publishes books. The teacher is happy that the "white man" has entered the discussion. He gives positive feedback to this pupil by telling the class: "The argument may be crude. . . but there is a certain amount of truth in it". Again, a reference has been made to the "white man" but no attempt has been made to explain what is the connection between the white man who publishes books and Christopher Columbus's discovery of America. The generalisation that follows the reference to the "white man" could present difficulties for the L2 learner. For example, the teacher remarks: ". . . and much of what we learn is not the absolute truth but simply people's interpretation of events which may have occurred on the basis of their view of the world". The teacher is speaking in very general terms and does not appear to be contextualising this point within the framework of the poem. The only way to embed the idea in a context is to state explicitly: "What do the textbooks say about Christopher Columbus?" "What is the poet saying?" "Why do the two accounts differ?" When pupils respond directly to these questions then it is likely that their understanding will be enhanced. As it stands, the teacher does most of the talking and there is uncertainty as to whether the communications are understood. In fact, the traditional I. R. F. pattern of classroom discourse in which the teacher initiates, the student responds and the teacher provides feedback does not seem to be working too well. One way of accounting for this is that the teacher does not work from a predetermined set of questions by which he could get pupils to respond directly to the poem. The paucity of questions restricts opportunities for pupil participation. Too few questions and too few student responses is bad in relation to the purpose of the lesson.

For example, in turn 59 the teacher asks: "Who had known no change." "What does that mean?" A pupil answers: "He lives a primitive life". For the benefit of second language learners this key word deserved to be written on the board and by questioning the teacher could have determined whether the word was understood by pupils. What Long (1985) calls a "comprehension check" would

have been appropriate at this point. For example: "What ideas in the poem suggest that the Indian was primitive or lived a simple life?" could have brought further clarity to the use of the word "primitive". Instead, the teacher talks disconnectedly about "raybands" without taking sufficient care to use his explanations so that the understanding of the text is enhanced. The teacher in this speech event has to choose a form of words that make his intentions clear. The teacher is using a language code that may not be accessible to the second language learner. Without this shared knowledge of the code being used second language learners cannot be regarded as participants in this communication situation. Soon after mentioning "people's glasses" the teacher jumps to another reference, that of "walking past a pork shop" and in this way any sense of coherence with "a primitive life" becomes slighter and slighter. Mediating a text for the benefit of second language learners can not be left to the inspiration of the moment.

3.2.2 Language, Comprehension And Free Writing Lessons

I observed two comprehension lessons in this classroom: one based on a written text and another based on a film. The organisation of this lesson was such that the teacher stood at the front of the classroom, from where he led the discussions. The comprehension text and the accompanying exercise had been set in the previous week's lesson. The purpose of the current week's comprehension lesson was therefore to discuss with pupils "correct" answers so that pupils may adjust their answers in their exercise books.

The comprehension text was of the expository type on the theme of status symbols. The teacher explained that people are prepared to pay more for products with popular labels even though cheaper alternatives are available. The teacher gave a number of examples of products that carry prestige because of the label's positive image. The teacher said that he for example, would not like to be seen walking about town carrying an

"Asmall's" packet. "Asmall's" clothes are the distinguishing mark of a person who lacks a sense of taste in clothes, or at least this is how some people in Pietermaritzburg perceive this shop.

In this lesson the teacher intended to go through ten questions. The students were expected to have written down answers to each of the ten questions in their exercise books. As the teacher called out each question, the pupils would put up their hands to indicate to the teacher that they wanted to read out the answers they had penned in their books. Once a pupil has secured the teacher's attention, his or her answer is heard by the entire class. Sometimes the teacher would ask the class whether they agreed with the answer just provided. On no occasion did I notice that one pupil's answer was challenged by another pupil. Invariably, the pupils would see it as being the teacher's duty to pass judgement as to whether an answer was acceptable or not. It was not this teacher's style to criticise an answer directly. The teacher would acknowledge the answer with a "yes" even if in his opinion the answer was not quite what he was expecting. Without drawing any attention to the imperfectness of the pupil's answer, the teacher would build up an answer apparently on the spur of the moment. In none of the lessons did the teacher refer to notes he had brought with him into the classroom. A few pupils were seen to be taking down a few points into their books. The majority of students however simply listened to the teacher's explanations. The teacher did not give any specific instruction as to whether pupils should note the teacher's answers. The teacher did not appear to be convinced that any practical or pedagogical purpose was to be served by getting pupils to take down the answers he supplied.

At one point in the lesson the teacher tried to draw an African pupil into the lesson. The teacher left his place at the front and went up very close to the pupil. He then lifted the pupil's bag shoulder high and asked him with exaggerated intonation: "Would you like people to say that you are good or bad just by looking at this bag you carry?" The pupil answered with a short

"No!". As was the case in Teacher A's classroom, in this classroom too, questions calling for yes/no responses invariably succeed in drawing out a response from second language learners.

However, there was very little of this simple type of communication to engage the participation of the five African pupils present in this lesson. It was a thirty minutes' period, time was running out and the teacher began increasing the pace of his discussions. At the latter part of the lesson the teacher did not call on pupils to exchange their answers with him and the other pupils. The teacher provided the answers himself. In spite of this increased pace when the siren interrupted the lesson, two questions were left without teacher formulated answers.

In another comprehension activity, the teacher took pupils to the library where the class watched a 35 minutes' segment of a two hour long film. Thereafter the teacher allotted 15 minutes in which time pupils were instructed to answer ten questions on the video cassette. The questions had been given to the students just before the video cassette was played. During the last 20 minutes of the double period lesson (70 minutes) the teacher stood at the front of the class and led a discussion. The discussion was structured around the ten questions.

None of the Black pupils took any of the opportunities to offer their answers to the rest of the class. The one exception to this was the last question. It asked: "Did you enjoy the film? Why?" Perhaps on account of this question being a little more open ended than the others, a Black girl sitting at the front of the class, next to the window on the right, raised her hand meekly to indicate that she would like to answer the last question. However, since this bid came towards the closing moments of the last lesson, with the weekend beckoning, the teacher did not see the hand go up. The teacher took the answer from one of the Indian pupils, and with that the class was dismissed.

I observed that four of the five African pupils were seated in the front rows at opposite ends, close to the walls. The teacher was not once observed to position himself next to the chalkboard or teacher's table. Instead, there was a vacant desk in the first row and the teacher often sits on this desk in a leaning posture. The effect of this is that four of the five pupils were outside the teacher's range of vision. By sitting in this position the four pupils for all intents and purposes can be said to have "dropped out". More significantly, the four pupils had ceased to be participants. In sharp contrast, the one Black pupil who did participate occasionally, sat in the middle row at the back of the classroom. She was the only Black pupil who sat next to an Indian pupil. Although this pupil was not observed to communicate with the Indian girl she was sitting next to, she was also the only Black pupil who did not speak in her vernacular whenever formal lessons were not in progress.

I asked the teacher how the seating came to be arranged in this way. He explained to me that at the beginning of the year he paired all the Black pupils with Indian peers. However, the very next day the Black and Indian pupils parted ways and his efforts to establish a "buddy system" failed. One Black pupil however persevered with the arrangement. She was very far from the other Black pupils and she would sit silently most of the time even when there was no lesson on and when pupils around her would be chatting noisily. On such occasions she was seen to be busy with some school related task.

I also observed a vocabulary lesson on "homonyms". This lesson took the form of a game with the teacher offering ice-cream for anyone who came up with homonyms that, as he put it, no one else knew. One Black pupil, incidentally the one that sat next to the Indian pupil, volunteered to go up to the board and write a pair of homonyms. However, she confused homonyms with something else. She wrote "pole" next to "hole". The Indian pupils found this answer to be very amusing; however, the laughing was not loud but very suppressed. Towards the latter part of this lesson

the teacher put up a short exercise on the chalkboard. As was observed in Teacher A's class, teacher B also did not take the exercise from the textbook prescribed for the class. As a result some time was taken up with pupils having to take down the exercise from the board into their exercise books. There was no time for pupils to complete the exercise in class and check the accuracy of their responses with the teacher. Since the exercise was not followed through the next day, it is probable that checking of answers would take place the following week.

Lastly, I wish to report on a "free writing" activity. In this lesson the teacher asked pupils to copy an eight line poem from the chalkboard into their "free writing" books. The teacher explained that a pupil from the other class had shown him this poem and he decided that it would be a good "stimulus" for their "free writing" task. The short poem was on the subject of "Arbor Day". Since "Arbor Day" was to be observed at the school within a week's time the teacher thought that a poem from the pupils on the subject would be appropriate. The teacher told the class that they were free to start the poem in class and complete it at home. The pupils construed this as "time off" from serious work and they started chatting among themselves. The teacher had no objections to this and he himself went up to a group of boys and opened up a topic for light conversation. The teacher initiated the conversation: "Do you'll know that Enver's father had won a jackpot of R80, 000?" One pupil quipped: "Did Enver tell you that? Don't believe everything Enver says. He is not shy about telling lies."

The teacher is always smiling whenever he talks to his pupils and his congenial, approachable manner allows pupils to personalise their relationship with him. Once I was walking with him to the staff room, when a female teacher stumbled on the steps in front of us. The teacher lost no time in telling her: "This is the first time that a beautiful woman had fallen at my feet." It was a girl from his own class, who was nearby, who took him up

quickly on this remark: "Don't flatter yourself. That was just accidental. It wasn't the real thing."

The point of interest in the example given above is the extent to which the Indian pupils share a common language code with the teacher. They don't merely have a language in common but a whole cultural communication system. I have already explained how this sometimes obviates the need for the teacher to make himself plain. He merely has to hint at something and many of the first language speakers quickly catch what he says. This saves the teacher from having to make too much of an effort to make himself understood. The commonness of their cultural backgrounds serves to fill in whatever gaps there are in the pattern of communication. The second language learners on the other hand do not seem to enjoy this advantage and this limits the quality of their interpersonal relationship with the teacher.

In the free writing lesson, one of the Indian pupils saw that the teacher was in a good mood. He went up to the teacher and asked him if he could be allowed to play a "pop" music cassette softly. The teacher allowed him this privilege. The pupil then came up to me and requested the use of my tape recorder. The pupil had somehow inferred that my power in the class was less than that of the teacher and that it would be difficult for me to refuse.

The first language students were adept at joining in conversations with the teacher and with each other. In lessons they knew exactly how to make good use of opportunities to kill a bit of time during lessons. For example, after watching the videocassette, it being the last lesson of the week and with the week-end claiming their attention, the students were in no mood to answer academic questions on the film. So when the teacher asked: "What type of audience will this film appeal to?" one of the pupils answered: "The human audience!" To this the teacher replied: "Of course, that will exclude you". Another question asked: "What is a side-show?" The students couldn't think of an acceptable answer, so one of the students said that a side-show

is something you did at the back. When they were asked to explain the meaning of "snake-infested ponds" one student avoided the obvious but appropriate literal meaning and went for a figurative meaning. He said: "Sir, there are a lot of snakes in this class". The teacher couldn't resist asking him what was going wrong. Thereupon the teacher was told that the class was divided into two factions and that relationships between the two groups were souring.

What is of interest when we see students ingeniously mitigating the teacher's purposes for a lesson is that students also contribute to the organisation of a lesson. So many of the lessons in this class seemed on the surface to be teacher controlled but unless a teacher is very authoritarian, in practice students can "own" a lesson. The Black pupils on the other hand, come to school expecting a very formal type of teacher-pupil relationship and cannot easily relate to authority figures at this level of informality. They do everything to avoid an interpersonal relationship with the teacher. I noticed how impersonal the relationship between the teacher and the black pupils is. Once a Black pupil came up to the teacher to request permission to leave the classroom. She spoke formally and politely and she was so soft spoken that the teacher actually had to bend his head towards her to hear the request. Of course she succeeded in explaining to him the reasons for her request. The teacher allowed her to leave the classroom.

It is not the case that the Black pupils lack the ability to communicate but it does require a lot of effort on their part. Unless the listener is mature and empathetic the Black pupils will feel disinclined to interact with the more proficient first language speakers.

An interesting observation I made in this classroom is that first language and second language pupils hardly ever interact socially with one another. The two groups remain isolated from each other. The Black pupils believe that since they have not

mastered the English language as yet, their best defence would be to isolate themselves from their first language peers and keep communications in their second language to a minimum. Little do they realise that it is only by speaking as often as possible in their second language will they achieve the mastery they so desperately need. It would be interesting to observe whether there are any forms of peer pressure from either groups reinforcing the syndrome of "social distance" (Schumann : 1986).

3.2.3 Informal Interviews

In spite of time constraints, I managed to ask both teachers one question that I thought was important to the study: "What difficulties do you experience teaching Black pupils in a mixed school? Their views are summarised below :

Teacher A, who had twenty-four Black pupils in his classroom and no Indian pupils at all, said that he is often frustrated because he has to deal with pupils who do not seem to be able to learn material that is considered "average" for the specific grade level. He said that the need to explain abstract concepts at a concrete level to accommodate the learning styles of his pupils entailed going very slowly through the syllabus . He said that he found himself giving his pupils a limited amount of information, but going over and over this information until he thinks that they grasped at least some of it. He said that with regard to literature lessons, he found it unfeasible to set seatwork assignments at which they could work independently or in pairs. On the occasions that he had tried this, pupils would speak to their partners or group members in Zulu and since he knew no Zulu he was unable to follow their conversations, especially to determine if they had understood the content of the English texts. However, when he inspected their work he found very little written work on their exercise sheets. This behaviour he said affected his decisions concerning classroom organisation. When it comes to literature lessons he believes he will get more out of class time if he controls discussion from beginning to

end. However, to compensate for tight teacher control in literature lessons, he arranges for other lessons to be more informally conducted.

He said that he also faced a lot of conflict about the need to pitch content at the level of the second language learners' understanding. He felt that his emphasis on low order cognitive skills may be disadvantaging his pupils since they were required to write the same tests and examinations as the first language Indian pupils of the school. Furthermore, he said that the content of the syllabus was not within his control. It was the practice in his school for teachers to meet from time to time to decide what work was to be covered during the term. In these meetings choices were in terms of which novels, plays, poems, genres of essays and units of grammar were to be covered in the course of a term. The standards are set by the head of department (HOD) of the subject he taught, namely English. For example, if the HOD wanted Standard seven pupils to be trained to write compositions of one and half pages, then getting his pupils to write up to this length would be one of his goals. This meant that it would be pointless for him to give his learners a variety of simplified writing tasks such as filling forms and giving explanations. He said that if he were to make adaptations to accommodate second language learners within his own classroom then at the same time certain aspects of the school's organisation would also have to be reviewed. Testing for example, would have to take on a new format. He said that such readjustments were not easy. Once, at a staff meeting he raised the possibility of setting a separate paper for his second language class. This suggestion was turned down. He said that on one occasion he suggested to the principal that priority be given to ordering library books that are recommended for second language learners. Again, the principal explained that library funding policy militated against such a plan.

The teacher I observed said that the school was organised for first language speakers of English and that second language

learners were expected to adapt to these conditions as best as possible. He said that he was concerned that 90% of his second language pupils had failed English in the mid-year examinations.

3.2.4 An Interview With Teacher B

Teacher B, who was in charge of five Black pupils and 23 Indian pupils told me that he found it difficult to give instruction to Black pupils because he sensed that these pupils came from Black primary schools that had made very little intellectual demands on their learners. He believed that the Black pupils were undergoing a transitional phase and that it was best not to exert too many pressures on them at this stage. He noticed that whenever they are singled out in class they become very anxious, some of them trembling visibly. He said since he began drawing less attention to them in the classroom they were adjusting better to being in a classroom in which they were so strongly outnumbered.

Teacher B claimed that a further problem was that the syllabus he had to work with expected pupils to command a high level of proficiency in the medium of instruction language. He said: "If a student of literature is not proficient in the language how could he or she expected to analyse literary texts?" According to this teacher the ability to critically analyse and synthesize information is assumed by the curriculum designers. A basic foundation in English being assumed, pupils were expected to take a lot of responsibility for their own learning. He maintained that at the shallow end learners can manage with basic communication but at the deep end they are expected to recognize different viewpoints and express their own position. They were expected to demonstrate skill in assimilating ideas in lengthy discourse and the role of the teacher was to provide the stimulus for this to happen.

He noticed just before the mid-year examination African pupils had asked for notes on set works. He made some available to them

just to help them build up some confidence. However, when he was marking their scripts he found that they had committed large chunks of the notes to memory and that they had penned these to questions set in the literature paper without regard to relevance or the requirements of the question. How to get second language learners away from rote learning methods towards genuine understanding was the most serious challenge facing him.

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According to Teacher B it was difficult for him to go through the materials and lessons at a slower pace. Paraphrasing and repeating ideas and lessons to aid comprehension for second language learners was not an option for him. Over-teaching a limited amount of information would, as he put it, "alienate the first language learners of English from the curriculum". This teacher believes that managing a gradual transition from the African learners' current level of English proficiency to the relatively more advanced level required of the curriculum in an English medium, English as first language school presented him with serious dilemmas.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSIONS

Learners from non-English language background represent between 10 -50% of the school population in schools that previously catered almost exclusively for Indian pupils. In fact there are some schools where the figures are very much higher than this.

This study is based on the assumption that the school curriculum is a major resource for language development and that any school programme that seeks to be responsive to the needs of second language learners takes into account the fact that second language learners are not only learning a new or second language but that they are learning all their subjects in that language as well. Therefore when ESL learners are placed in the same classrooms as first language speakers of English or have to follow the same curriculum as LI learners, then the ESL learners will be at a distinct disadvantage comparable to their L1 peers.

The purpose of the study was to investigate to what extent the strategies and attitudes of teachers in two mixed schools exemplify current theories of second language development.

In comparing the two classrooms, I found a very important difference between them: in the all-African classroom the teacher found space within the curriculum to devote a number of lessons where pupils had opportunities for interaction with their peers. The pattern, unavoidably, was non-native - non-native peer interaction since the teacher was the only L1 speaker of English. In the mixed classroom, however there was no peer group interaction at all, at least for the duration of the week long observation. In fairness to the teacher, one must state that a short period of observation such as this, does not give one grounds to suggest that the teacher is unaware of the influential role that small group work activities play in the development of proficiency in English.

What I feel is important to emphasise, is that the planning of meaningful interaction between peers is regarded as an important principle of second language development by second language theorists.

As far as inter-group peer interaction was concerned, the situation was such that in both teachers' classrooms or schools contact between African pupils and Indian pupils was virtually non-existent. African pupils in both schools give the impression of being isolated from the normal life of the school. The African pupils sit close to each other in the classroom and stick to their groups during breaks. From the point of view of language development, this tendency of self-imposed segregation raises concern. It has often been observed that people of all ages can "pick up" a language through engaging in social relations with speakers of the target language. The need to establish social relations with first language speakers usually serves as a strong motivation for the learner to learn the second language. Teachers in mixed schools will have to consider whether inter-group contact can be facilitated by some form of deliberate and planned intervention. The development of basic communication skills (BICS) is believed to be a precursor of the development of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins:1984). As such the development of basic communication, which includes skills sufficient for L2 learners to converse with peers and teachers, needs to be a planned part of the school curriculum. A whole-school policy may be relevant in this regard.

In comparing the two classrooms, a distinctive pattern to emerge was the way the class composition affected the two teachers' instructional decisionmaking: in the all-African pupils' classroom there was evidence of a tendency on the part of the teacher to "dilute" programme offerings to students whose proficiency in English was limited. The teacher had reduced both the breadth or depth to which he taught the English course. It appeared as though the teacher was teaching English as a second language and little else. This is a common instructional coping

strategy to delay challenging LEP students with too much content until they have acquired basic English skills of speaking, reading and writing. In the mixed classroom, where the teacher had only five L2 learners to cater for, the approach was to teach the English course as it would normally be taught in a classroom of English as a first language pupils. In the mixed classroom the L2 learners were physically present in the classroom when content and skills instruction occurs but since they occupy places in the classroom apart from the "mainstream" of learners, they are left to manage as best as they can with the materials or lesson content. The teacher rarely goes to their desks to monitor their progress or to "push" them along. If these pupils were to do no work at all, the teacher in the classroom will be none the wiser. The problem with both these arrangements is that there is little intellectual substance to the programmes L2 pupils in both classrooms were receiving. Teachers of L2 students in these settings, need to find some way of coming to grips with the challenge of providing curriculum content that is pitched at a level that stimulates the academic and intellectual development of second language learners.

I recognise that the goal referred to in the last paragraph may be difficult to realise. According to Cummins (1984) the language associated with school learning takes a long time to develop. The language of academic life is quite abstract compared with the language of basic communication skills. Perhaps, had the second language learners experienced good literacy development in both their first and their second languages while at the primary schooling phase, then the work of the English as first language teachers may have been easier. However, as one teacher in the study told me, there is abundant evidence that pupils in "African" schools experience disabling schooling conditions. What sorts of transitional or "bridging" programmes that can be offered to help those pupils who were the victims of "Bantu" education, remains a much debated issue in the school system in which I conducted the present study. It is against such a background that I draw the conclusion that as far as the two

classrooms in which the observations were done, are concerned, the overall impression gained is that the language development of second language learners is not well supported.

The following points represent aspects that must be looked carefully in relation to providing instruction to second language learners:

1. The strategies developed by African pupils to mask their real difficulties in English, including the learned helplessness syndrome (Cummins and McNeely in Fradd and Tikunoff: 1987) which inhibits efforts on their part to take responsibility for their own learning;
2. The need to create conditions in classrooms so that interactive strategies can be developed. These include feedback to the speaker and clarification sequences (see Long, in Gass and Madden: 1985). ESL learners should not ignore communication that they do not understand; rather they should seek clarification. The teacher should accept responsibility not to view requests for clarity as a challenge to his authority but as an important part of his language teaching role;
3. Many learners suffer from low self-esteem because of language-related difficulties in school. How do teachers enhance learners' self-esteem and develop their confidence? Classroom anxiety can be a very strong factor working against language learning (see Krashen). The role of anxiety needs to be studied carefully so that freeing the classroom of stress can have the positive effect of increasing "risk-taking" rather than the negative one of second language learners enjoying the concession of reduced effort.

What characterizes a classroom that is supportive of the second language learner?

1. Language is used in the service of other learning, with planned integration of content learning and language

development. Learning a second language seems to be most effective when the focus is on using language to learn about something else. There is a place for explicit discussion about language, but this is likely to be useful only so far as it is related to the actual language being used by the learner. This is one of the more important principles that have emerged about language learning. In so far as the two schools are teaching content through the medium of English to ESL students, it has to be predicted that this "immersion" type of schooling is supportive of language development.

2. There are planned opportunities for meaningful interaction between peers. The peer group is a powerful resource to the learner providing a range of models of language use.
3. Learners have to be given opportunities to be "problem solvers" rather than "information receivers" (see Cummins's reciprocal interaction model). The transmission model is still firmly entrenched in our schools. The new pedagogy in which pupils work as "problem solvers" in collaborative learning and take responsibility for some of their own and the group's learning is a learning model that is struggling to gain a foothold in our schools.
4. Any model of language presented to the language learner must be comprehensible to him but obviously the learner must also be exposed to new models that will extend his own language use.
5. In classrooms where there are large numbers of ESL learners and where the teacher is the only good English model, the quality and quantity of personal interactions with the teacher becomes a major resource for the pupils' language development. A good teacher of second language learners then is one who enjoys communicating, is pleasant and affable.
6. Teachers do not have to allow content to always dictate their approach to teaching. One can adapt or add activities to units of work so that it addresses the language needs of learners. Learners need to master a range of functions both to enhance their everyday interactions as well to acquire the language to participate in the classroom. A skilful teacher

will match some of the teaching and learning activities in his programme with the relevant language functions. Common functions of language are too numerous to list but explaining, describing, comparing, expressing likes and dislikes, criticising are among the many that can be worked into lessons. The language forms and patterns associated with these can be modelled by the teacher and practised by pupils in class.

Teachers may feel that their previous training and experience have not sufficiently prepared them for teaching in multilingual classrooms. Teachers who may be worried that they are not giving their ESL students adequate support should enrol for special courses offered by Second Language Studies departments of universities. The specialised skills required for second language should not be underestimated.

With reference to the topic, it may be concluded that there are significant differences in the way that teachers organise their classrooms and their teaching.

In classrooms where the majority are first language speakers, the teacher's task is seen as merely to transmit knowledge to the students in the form of teacher-led discussions. The teacher has no problem of engaging pupil participation. In fact, student responses are rapid and lively with students vying with each other for the teacher's recognition. However, the pupils' contributions are often very short. Teachers spend a lot of time elaborating or correcting pupils' responses and as a result the turns that teachers take in mixed classrooms is very sustained, giving one the overall impression that lessons are teacher-dominated. In mixed classrooms, however, very noticeable is the absence of participation by second language learners.

In classrooms where the majority of learners are second language speakers, the teacher's questions are greeted by silence. To compensate for L2 learners' lack of comprehension of text-book

based knowledge, teachers may be resorting to lesson organisation that taps learners' command of basic communication skills. The danger with such lessons may be that they are not intellectually challenging and as such play a small part in equipping learners to come to grips with the communicative demands of functioning in a school context where English is the medium of instruction. When classroom activities are unstimulating, then the teacher's classroom management can be said to be ineffective.

Thus, in both classrooms, many second language learners show symptoms of marginalisation. Marginal learners can be seen as people in difficulty who are reacting to unfavourable conditions at school. Much research needs to be done in order to understand the processes that contribute to the marginalisation of African pupils when they are placed in the same learning environments as Indian pupils. I had the distinct impression that second language learners, particularly in classrooms where they are in the minority, go through the motions of schooling with little expectation of success.

In these classrooms, the pupils sit with exercises and tasks but do not finish them. They attend classes without participating very much. The students seldom go to the teachers for help and they hardly ever ask questions. There are teachers who try hard to assist the second language learners in their classrooms, but many teachers label L2 learners as beyond help and treat these learners with a casual indifference or "benign neglect".

One cannot give a prescription for successful intervention but from the available literature one can suggest some ways for educators to engage students who are not successful in a first language, English medium context, and as a consequence, are continually under emotional strain. First of all, it must be accepted that people develop their second language when they feel good about themselves and their relationships with those around them in the classroom setting.

Moreover, language develops when the language learner focuses on accomplishing something together with others rather than focusing on the language itself. Therefore classroom organisation in which group activities predominate are ideal. The importance of learners working with others and with the teacher needs to be strongly emphasised. Co-operative learning as a principle of classroom organisation provides social interaction within the classroom. Among the benefits for second language learning are academic achievement, improved ethnic relations and social development (Kagan:1986).

While much of the literature on language development stresses the need for co-operative learning, the two classrooms I observed make greater use of competitive and individualistic learning structures. Learning a language means learning to do things with people who speak that language. The classrooms I observed, there is ethnic segregation. The traditional curriculum and classroom organisation tends to encourage segregation. However, research in classrooms that used co-operative learning showed that the strong cleavage along lines of ethnicity observed in traditional classrooms was reduced to insignificance in classrooms with co-operative learning structures. One reason for improved ethnic relations in co-operative classes is that in these classes teachers often teach social skills directly. Furthermore students are involved in group activities that develop positive interdependence among group members.

One common element among successful activities that promote social interaction is that they are well organised. In these classrooms there are smooth, efficient classroom routines. Instructional groups formed in the classroom fit instructional needs. As teachers go about organising their lessons it would be useful to ask: "What activities are helpful in promoting social interaction?"

Often teachers want to know whether it is useful to teach content to learners in a language that they have not fully mastered. It

needs to be stressed that classes in which language is taught through content, provides an ideal context for language learning. The language of the subject represents functionally motivated speech or texts. Learners are pressured to use language to accomplish academic purposes. However, the way the teaching of content is organised, reduces the opportunities for learners to use language over a wider range of activities within the topics and subjects to be covered. The methodology of the content class has to be modified to incorporate activities that demand extended use of written and oral language by students across a wide range of functions. A number of activities come to mind. However, in the classrooms I observed the range of tasks was extremely limited in that language use was primarily aimed at getting pupils to rehearse the types of questions that are commonly asked in examinations. As a result the potential of texts to stimulate a functional command of language was hardly ever exploited.

Many second language theorists including Chandlin (1984) reject the notion of a prespecified syllabus, preferring rather to rely on teacher-pupil judgement as to what is best to do next. Breen (1984) envisages a process syllabus as a framework which will permit decisions to be taken as to which learning experiences to select for particular purposes from available banks built up on the basis of experiences of what has worked well in the classroom. The process approach in language teaching draws heavily upon insights into the nature of the language acquisition process. The principles of procedure underlying process approaches invite teachers to become sensitive language acquisition promoters, who adapt their talk to the level of the learner, and provide communicative input in both language and writing such that learner interests and needs are accommodated.

In contrast to the process approach, the school system presently adopts an "objectives-driven" view of curriculum (Clark:1985). The objectives are specified in behavioural terms. The teacher is merely responsible for bringing about predetermined behavioural changes in a somewhat stereotypical manner. This

view of learning is referred to as the ends-means or product approach to knowledge. In this view of learning textbooks and examinations largely control the curriculum. There is very little room for manoeuvre on the part of teachers, and little scope for teachers to negotiate with pupils as to learning goals and outcomes. The ends-means approach is firmly linked to the transmissive teacher-centred approach to classroom organisation which Cummins (1981) described as responsible for the disempowerment of second language learners. Within this model, learners are seen as having deficits which advocates of the transmission model see as accounting for the high rate of failure among second language learners. In this approach, since teaching does not take account of the learners' preexisting level of proficiency in the language of instruction, there are instances when the gap between the proficiency assumed by the syllabus designer and the actual competencies of the learners are so great that the learner has no option but to drop out of the schooling system. ^{inclusion} In South Africa, for instance, the past learning experience of African learners are completely ignored to the extent that upon leaving primary school the learners do not have the competencies to participate in the junior secondary curriculum. In many African schools pupils are taught through the medium of Zulu rather than through English. Moreover, conditions at primary schools for Africans are so wretched that the pupils are barely literate when they enrol at a high school.

Against the background of disabling schooling conditions for the majority of African learners, it will be rather simplistic for me to present linguistically mixed schools with "solutions" to their problems. What is necessary at this particular juncture of our country's educational history is to suggest a model of curriculum renewal that encourages teachers to diagnose the problems they experience in their classrooms. As a means of ^{effecting} interventions that would help remedy the problems that ^{teacher} have identified, teachers should be able to turn to advisory services. The role of the advisory services can be summed up as one of helping teachers to develop the knowledge and

skills which enable them to research, plan, develop, implement and evaluate their curriculum in a professional and responsible manner.

As such, the advisory service becomes an important forum for interaction, where theory meets practice. The notion of advisory services is a realistic one and with the help of funding from sponsors, university departments can become engaged in teacher education and materials development programmes. For example, the Second Language Studies Department of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, has already embarked upon a project called Language in Teaching and Learning (LILT) which has, as one of its aims, the enablement of teachers who are faced with the challenge of providing effective instruction to second language learners in English as first language environments.

It is the view of this researcher that classroom-based innovation, although indispensable, will be dissipated without the entire educational system itself becoming a subject of research.

One of the primary goals for in-service teacher education is to give teachers ways of researching their own classrooms. With regard to the topic I investigated in this study, two aspects which might be investigated in the classroom are:

- (a) which tasks stimulate the most interaction?
- (b) which types of classroom organisation work best with ethnically mixed classrooms?

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APPENDIX A:

TRANSCRIPTS

In the following transcripts, the numbers along the left margin signify the turns of conversational exchanges in the classrooms observed.

TEACHER A; CLASSROOM A:

1. Teacher: Right. We were looking at "The White Ox". Let's go over what we were doing in our previous lesson.
2. Teacher: First. Why is this story called "The White Ox"? Explain by referring to what we've already read.
3. Pupil: It is about "The White Ox".
4. Teacher: Yes, there is a white ox in the story. But what else can you tell us?
5. Pupil: He liked the white ox.
6. Teacher: Yes. He liked the white ox.
7. Teacher: We spoke about the type of animal the ox was. What type of animal was it? Was it a very angry animal when people were around?
8. Pupil: It was friendly.
9. Teacher: And how do we know that it was a friendly ox?
10. Teacher: What about the people of the village? Did they like the ox? (pause). Did the people who lived in this valley did they like the white ox?
11. Pupil: No.
12. Teacher: No. They didn't. Why? (Class is silent: teacher points to a pupil.)
13. Teacher: You, Themba. Why do we say that they didn't like the white ox?

After this question the teacher pauses for about 45 seconds and eventually one pupil offers an answer. His answer was not picked up by the tape-recorder.

14. Teacher: That's right. Thekwana spent so much time with the White Ox that the villagers felt that there was something wrong with him.
15. Teacher: And of course, on page 90, we find that his friends came and spoke to him about the ox and they began to tell him not to spend a lot of time with the ox, and that there were stories going around that there was something wrong with this ox. So, let us turn to page 100, where we stopped the last time. (Teacher reads a paragraph from page 100).
16. Teacher: Looking at this paragraph. What is this talk? (No response from the class).
17. Teacher: There was a lot of "wild talk". (No response. Teacher pauses for about 30 seconds.)
18. Pupil: Gives an answer which the tape fails to pick up.
19. Teacher: No.
20. Teacher: Last week we discussed what the people were thinking about this Ox, and what was this "wild talk". All the things that people said about the Ox, were these things true?
21. Pupil: No.
22. Teacher: No. It wasn't true.
23. Pupil: They were lies.
24. Teacher: Yes. They were lies in a way.
25. Teacher: We come across the word "calamity". this refers to a disaster, to things that are going wrong. So there's a lot of wild talk about things going wrong.

26. Teacher: Right. I want you to look at the next paragraph now: from "This talk . . . (up to) sowing and reaping". Right. Have you got the paragraph? When you are reading through the paragraph, I want to know whether the people had done anything about the White Ox, or whether the people had done anything to Thekwane? Did they do anything to him? (The teacher pauses for about 45 seconds waiting for a response.)
27. Teacher: Did any harm come to Thekwane because of the White Ox.
28. Pupil: No.
29. Teacher: One person says "No". What do the others say?
30. Teacher: Agree?
31. Teacher: Allright. Good.
32. Teacher: When you quote words from a passage or book we said (in a previous lesson) that we use a special type of mark to show that we are quoting. What do we call those marks? (No response).
33. Teacher: When we are using someone else's words, not our own words, what do we use?
34. Pupil: Inverted commas.
35. Teacher: Right. Inverted commas or quotation marks.
36. Teacher: Now, I want you to quote to show that the people didn't do anything to Thekwane. I want you to quote the words. (A 30 seconds pause).
37. Teacher: Right.
38. Pupil: "No hand was raised. . .".
39. Teacher: "No hand was raised against him". Although there was this " wild talk", the people didn't raise a hand against him? Did the disaster they spoke about come about?
40. Pupil: No.
41. Teacher: No, there wasn't this disaster.

42. Teacher: Quote words that tell us that there was no disaster. (A 25 seconds pause).
- (Teacher calls on a pupil: Seswe; but this pupil maintains the silence.)
43. Teacher: Quote words that tell us that there was no disaster. (A 10 seconds pause)
44. Teacher: Yes? What does it tell us about the life of the people in the village? Was it affected in any way? We are looking at just that paragraph now. Was the life of the people affected in any way? How are they affected? (30 second pause).
45. Pupil: Tape fails to pick up response.
46. Teacher: Sorry, I can't hear you. Start again.
47. Pupil: Inaudible again.
48. Teacher: So did their life change in any way?
49. Teacher: No. Their life didn't change. How do we know? (No response).
50. Teacher: "Life went on as it always had done".
51. Teacher: So life wasn't affected in any way. The calamity or disaster, this wild talk but there was nothing that happened. Now, if you look at the next paragraph, they mention the two members of his - I want you to look at the paragraph closely and tell me which two members of the family do they talk about? (25 seconds pause)
52. Teacher: If you look at line one, they mention a certain family member: who do they talk about?
53. Pupil: His wives.
54. Teacher: Is it wife or wives?
55. Teacher: So what do we know? He had more than one wife, isn't that so?
56. Teacher: And what do they tell us about his wives? (30 seconds pause).
57. Teacher: Did the people at the valley want to talk to his wives?

58. Pupil: No.
59. Teacher: No, they didn't want to talk to the wives. How do you know that?
60. Teacher: Because we read that they were driven by pinching, and slapping and mocking. What is mocking?
61. Teacher: The people mocked them.
62. Pupil: The people laughed.
63. Teacher: Yes, they laughed at them or they teased them.
64. Teacher: And then we come across the older boys. The older boys of his family, what did they do?
65. Pupil: Tape is unable to pick up response.
66. Teacher: Sorry, I can't hear you. Speak a little louder, please.
67. Pupil: The older boys went away.
68. Teacher: Yes, they left the valley. Why did they leave the valley?
69. Pupil: Tape cannot pick up the words.
70. Teacher: Because no one wanted to talk to them. We find that Thekwana's family members were affected. Isn't that so? The people didn't want to talk to his wives. The young girls didn't want to talk to his older sons so that they had to leave. Did this affect him in any way? Was Thekwane affected in any way by what was happening to his family members?
71. Pupil: It didn't.
72. Teacher: How do you know it didn't? (25 seconds pause.)
73. Teacher: How do you know that he was untroubled? Did his life change in any way?
74. Pupil: No.
75. Teacher: How do you know that?
76. Pupil: He sang.
77. Teacher: Yes. He carried on singing. And is there any word, one word that tells you that he was

untroubled, that it didn't affect him in any way? That he didn't feel hurt by what was happening?

78. Pupil: Reads a few words from the text.
79. Teacher: Yes, what about untroubled? He was untroubled and he was happy.
80. Teacher: Right. Let's go on to paragraph 4. Now let's see what happens in paragraph 4 .
81. Teacher: Then trouble came and a chain of misfortunes disrupted the lives of the people of the family.
82. Teacher: Straightaway, we hear that there is a change. In paragraph 2 we found that life went on as normal, isn't that so? And what happens in paragraph 4 now? What brought about this change?
83. Pupil: A drought.
84. Teacher: What is a drought?
85. Pupil: No rain.
86. Teacher: Good. When there is no rain and things are dry. Let's work at the effects of the drought. Read through that paragraph and tell me the things that happened. (A 50 seconds pause.)
87. Teacher: I will mention some of the things and you will tell me what happened to them. Let's look at the dogs. What did the dogs do because of the drought?
88. Pupil: They killed sheep.
89. Teacher: Good. They killed the sheep.
90. Teacher: What about the children?
91. Teacher: Children died of diseases that were unknown.
92. Teacher: And what happened to the pumpkins?
93. Pupil: Worms.
94. Teacher: Very good. The worms ate them.
95. Teacher: And the fowls?
96. Pupil: Died.

97. Teacher: Yes. The fowls died for no reason.

98. Teacher: And because of this disaster or calamity, the wild talk started again.

APPENDIX B:

TEACHER B: CLASSROOM B:

1. Teacher: What's the word on the board?
2. Pupil: Find.
3. Teacher: Some kind pupil realized that I didn't have supper last night. When I went into the staff room I discovered a pie.
4. Pupil: I brought you the pie.
5. Teacher: Yes, you were kind enough to bring me the pie. Thank you so much.
6. Teacher: Are we using the word "discover" in the correct context there? (No response.)
7. Teacher: Could we say that Mr Z (pseudonym for teacher referring to himself) discovered the pie?
8. Teacher: Is the word "discover" the same as this word here? (points to the board on which the word "find" has been written)?
9. Pupil: "Discover" is to find something nobody has found before.
10. Teacher: If "discover" is "to find" what nobody has found before, what's important about "discovery" is that it is found for the first time, not something some one has already found or discovered. You can't discover something that someone has already found. For instance, can I discover this pen? It has already existed. The poem is entitled "Discovery" and in terms of our understanding of the word "discovery" or "discover" what will this poem be about?
11. Pupil: Finding something new.
12. Teacher: Finding something which no one has found.

13. Pupil: The poem we are doing today is found on page 107.
(Teacher asks if everyone has a book.) (Teacher reads aloud the poem).
14. Teacher: Who would like to read the poem? (A pupil offers to do a second reading of the poem).
15. Teacher: What's this poem all about? (No response: a 40 second pause).
16. Teacher: It's called "The Discovery".
17. Teacher: What's being discovered?
18. Pupil: Tape fails to pick up response.
19. Teacher: Sorry. I can't hear you.
20. Pupil: (Tape cannot pick up the words.)
21. Teacher: Speak a little louder, please.
22. Pupil: (Not clear on tape).
23. Teacher: I never thought of it like that. She says that the Indian discovered Columbus's boat and his crew. I said that I never thought of "discovery" like that. What interpretation do you think I was focusing upon?
24. Pupil: The crew finding the land.
25. Teacher: Yes, the crew or Columbus finding the island, the country or whatever it was.
26. Teacher: Who was Columbus? (No response)
27. Teacher: I remember you (points to a pupil) saying that Christopher Columbus discovered America. He was a wonderful person. If it were not for Christopher Columbus we wouldn't have had hot dogs and hamburgers today. I recall someone else telling me that Jan van Riebeeck was also a great man.
28. Teacher: Why is Jan van Riebeeck a great man? What did he discover?
29. Pupil: The Cape, Sir.
30. Teacher: Yes. The Cape or he discovered South Africa.

31. Teacher: Wasn't he wonderful then, the fact that he discovered the Cape in the same way as Columbus discovered America? Wonderful, isn't it? (No response from pupils).
32. Teacher: But you people told me not so long ago, that I didn't discover the pie although I thought that I discovered the pie? (Pupils laugh)
33. Teacher: Why didn't I discover the pie? Why wouldn't it be reported in "The Natal Witness" tomorrow that Mr Z (the teacher) had discovered the pie?
34. Pupil: Many other people saw the pie.
35. Teacher: Yes, many other people had seen the pie and the pie had not been invented by me but by somebody else.
36. Teacher: So in terms of what you people are saying, what about Columbus's discovery, this "new country" in inverted commas ? There were people living there, but we know and we read in our textbooks, and we heard on television as well that Christopher Columbus discovered America.
37. Teacher: Yes, Urisha. Tell us more. (The nominated pupil does not respond).
38. Teacher: So you are saying to me that what we learned in school is not the truth but it is a certain version of truth according to white people.
39. Pupil: But, sir, you can't say that.
40. Teacher: But the class told me when I asked you what Columbus discovered, you said, "America". Have we been lied to?
41. Pupil: (inaudible)
42. Teacher: No?
43. Teacher: You don't know. What about the rest of you? Have you been lied to?

44. Teacher: Are you saying that a book (holding up a book) something which is published will have information that is incorrect?
45. Pupil: (wants to say something but teacher does not surrender his turn).
46. Teacher: A book. . . (pupil breaks in)
47. Pupil: Yes, sir, there are fairy tale books, non-fiction books.
48. Teacher: Where do these books come from? Where do textbooks come from? (Answers his own question)
49. Teacher: Don't they come from a huge factory up there from one of the planets, a factory of truth? Where do these books come from?
50. Pupil: Publishers.
51. Teacher: Yes, from a publisher.
52. Pupil: Yes, sir white man publishes it.
53. Teacher: The white man published it? Okay, his (pupil's) arguments even though they may be very crude and simple has a certain amount of truth in it. In school there is a certain version of history: it is written from a certain view, a certain understanding, and much of what we learn is not the absolute truth but simply people's interpretation of events which may have occurred on the basis of their view of the world.
54. Teacher: Now what do they tell us in the first three lines. Who was on the beach?
55. Pupil: The Indian. (barely audible).
56. Teacher: Yes, the Indian was on the beach. What was he doing on the beach?
57. Pupil: Picking up shells. (barely audible).
58. Teacher: Picking up shells. What does this tell us about his lifestyle? (No response)
59. Teacher: What do they say? "Who had known no change. " What does that mean?

60. Pupil: He lives a primitive life. (barely audible).

61. Teacher: She said that he lives a primitive life. He hadn't experienced any change. He has always lived the 2lifestyle that he is now living. And she says that it is a primitive lifestyle. People know that in the world we all wear glasses or raybands. Who's got their glasses here, even if it is not raybands. We're all wearing glasses: it is a figure of speech, not literally so. We can't see it and each person's rayban is unique. If you go to an optician he can't just give you a pair of glasses if your sight is poor. He would have to first test your eyes - because your eyes are unique. The glasses you wear are unique. Some people's glasses would be stronger than other people's glasses. The glasses you wear is the way you see the world. Some people's glasses may be blue and you see a blue world. My glasses may be light blue, and another person's may be yellow. When you are walking past a shop in town, you may see a very juicy succulent piece of pork. You know what's pork: piggy-wiggy meat. To you it may be delicious food that makes your mouth water, but on the other hand, the same pork may make you feel put off, disgusting because to me the pig is a dirty, filthy animal. I am seeing the pork through my glasses. Are you people with me? Frequently when we use words like primitive, civilised, barbaric, you know those words? Let me give you another example. If I just say to you, that your mother doesn't know how to make roti properly. Roti is a round bread that you eat with curry. (Addressing a few pupils). Does your mother know how to make

roti? Your mother? Whose mother doesn't know? Your mother doesn't know- good. Now if I say, because her mother can't make roti, she is uncivilised, what am I doing?

62. Teacher: Yes, I am comparing her through whose glasses: her glasses or mine?

63. Pupil: Your glasses.

64. Teacher: Don't you think, if you want to judge other people on the basis of our glasses everybody will turn out to be primitive and uncivilised? (no one responds)

65. Teacher: If I say to you, you don't listen to Tchaikovsky and therefore you are uncivilised.

66. Pupil: Tchaikovsky?

67. Teacher: Who is this Tchaikovsky? You haven't heard of him? (No response).

68. Teacher: Well, you may say to me : "If you don't listen to Doctor Alban, you are uncivilised. " Are you people with me? (No response).

69. Teacher: Now what we must be aware of, is that, if we are looking at the world through our glasses, we must be very careful about judging other people through our glasses because while you may be uncivilised by my glasses, how would I appear?

70. Teacher: Equally uncivilised, okay?

71. Teacher: So we have this Indian going around the beaches, picking up shells. What does he do all of a sudden?

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72. Teacher: Why is he so intrigued? (No wait-time). "Intrigued" means fascinated.

73. Teacher: They speak about a "bellying cloth". What does "bellying cloth" mean?

74. Pupil: bulging.

75. Teacher: The sails are pregnant.
76. Teacher: What figure of speech would that be? (No response).
77. Teacher: They compare the cloth to a stomach. Why do you think that the cloth is heavy like a big fat stomach? (No response).
78. Teacher: The wind.

