

**It's good to talk. An investigation into target language use in the modern languages classroom.**

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**I certify that this thesis has been written by me and is my own work.  
The work has not been submitted for any other degree.**

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## Abstract

Although there is a considerable body of research into various aspects of the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language, there appear to be few studies into the teaching of modern foreign languages (ML) to adolescents in the context of a secondary school setting. This thesis reports the findings of research aimed at identifying the strategies that ML teachers, considered examples of good practice, used to engage secondary school learners in interaction in the target language (TL) with the objective of developing their communicative competence.

Four teachers' lessons with their pupils aged 14-15, in their third year of learning a foreign language at secondary school, were observed and audio-recorded. Three of each of the teachers' observed lessons were subjected to fine grained analysis with the aim of delineating their TL moves which appeared to influence pupils so that they used the TL themselves readily to communicate meaning 'naturally' as well as to practise structures in more controlled exercises. The teachers and a sample of their pupils were subsequently interviewed to provide confirmation or disconfirmation of initial patterns arising from examination of the observational data set. Although the data were analysed predominantly qualitatively, quantitative methods were also employed to provide a clear picture of the teachers' TL use and the way it was deployed to assist learners in developing effective communicative skills. Goffman's (1981) production and Wadensjö's (1998) reception formats, not normally associated with the classroom, were considered appropriate to describe the participation frameworks within which the development of the learners' communicative proficiency was supported.

The findings display ways in which the TL used by the teachers helped to create a secure collaborative atmosphere where pupils were disposed to respond in the TL. The teachers' use of different 'types' of TL, depending on the focus in the lesson, was viewed as supporting learners in preparation for communicating their own meaning in exchanges in 'real world' interaction outside the classroom. A particularly successful scaffolding strategy employed by the teachers was the provision of TL cues offered to the learners before they responded to initiations which enabled them to express their meaning in the TL. Revoicing of learners' incomplete TL utterances also appeared successful in supporting learners to use their limited language resource effectively.

Through its close analysis of classroom talk, this thesis offers an important contribution to the understanding of the complex nature of interaction in the ML classroom and the role that teachers' use of TL plays in assisting adolescent learners to develop TL communication skills in interaction. Beginning teachers, as well as those more experienced practitioners, should benefit from the strategies identified, which appear to highlight the importance of establishing a collaborative classroom ethos which supports the learners, allowing them to contribute in the TL successfully.

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## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The Communicative Approach (CA) to second or foreign language teaching born in the 1980s, also known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), is a teaching approach which advocates the use of the target language (TL) as the principal means of interaction within the language classroom, using appropriate 'authentic' texts and contexts so that learners may develop competence in using TL which is personally relevant to them in preparation for interaction outside the classroom. Errors are treated with a 'light touch' so long as they do not impede communication. Grammar is not ignored, but is taught and practised within a functional, rather than abstract context. Although some teachers of English as a foreign language consider task-based learning and the Lexical Approach, a development of the Communicative Approach (Lewis, 1993), more up to date, a predominantly communicative approach centred on the learners and their needs rather than the language itself (Savignon, 2002) is the recommended approach to teaching modern languages in United Kingdom schools. The foreign language should be used as much as possible in the classroom (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2008), following the principles of depth, personalisation, relevance, challenge and enjoyment (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2009).

However, research has shown that although teachers agree that the use of the TL in the classroom within an overall communicative approach is desirable, many do not use it in their own classrooms (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). It may be that greater understanding of the processes and benefits of TL use within a communicative approach in the classroom is required not only by beginning teachers, but also by those with more experience. It therefore seems desirable to examine the practice of teachers who have a reputation for being accomplished practitioners who use the TL extensively in the classroom to create opportunities for learners to interact while at the same time providing sound foundations on which to construct meaning in the TL.

This thesis reports the findings of research undertaken to identify strategies that successful ML teachers who use communicative methodology employ in the Scottish secondary school classroom to enable learners to develop skills in communicating in the TL. As will be established in the review of the research literature, the majority of studies into ML teaching and learning appear to have been conducted in a university setting, or with adult learners. There seems little in the way of research into aspects of teaching ML which takes into account the special nature of the secondary school classroom and the effectiveness or not of the teacher's use of the TL in enabling adolescent learners to develop their proficiency in using the TL in interaction. Indeed, a large proportion of studies into language learning in the secondary school in the UK tends to concentrate on generic motivational strategies to improve attitudes to learning a foreign language (Jones 2005, Chambers 1999, Barton 2006) rather than techniques used by the teachers to get the pupils to talk using the TL. Inspectors' reports have criticised the inadequate development of UK learners' speaking skills (HMIe 2007, Ofsted 2002, 2008) therefore it seems important to reflect on techniques that appear to have proved successful in addressing the development of speaking skills. As a teacher educator and former ML teacher my interest in what constitutes effective teaching and learning of ML led to the decision to conduct research to consider just what happens in a 'successful' ML classroom in order to inform teachers and teacher educators of strategies that appear to be effective regarding the development of the learners' communicative skills in interaction.

The intention of this thesis, therefore, is to describe strategies used by four ML teachers deemed examples of 'good practice' to promote TL interaction with learners in the Scottish secondary school ML classroom. The research which informed this thesis aimed to answer the following question:

- What do 'successful' teachers do to develop an active response from the learners, specifically, what do the teachers do to enable pupils to use the TL for a communicative purpose in the Scottish secondary ML classroom?

Because of the focus on interaction and how it is managed by the teacher in cooperation with the learners, implicit in the research question above is the need to take the social dimension of the classroom into account. If it is accepted that interaction involves communication between two or more people, the context in which the communication takes place cannot be ignored as it will have a bearing on what is communicated and how the interaction unfolds. Therefore a further question is required in addition to the main one above in order to convey a fuller picture of the interactive processes which take place in the classroom:

- How do teachers establish a ‘social’ atmosphere which provides opportunities to involve the pupils in interaction?

The research was undertaken to examine what happens in the classrooms of four ML teachers considered ‘good practitioners’, focusing on the ways the teachers stimulated interaction with their learners in the TL. Consequently, the focus of the study will be on the communication which takes place between the teacher and the learners; the thread running through the fabric of the lesson, which links each element of the classroom experience.

## **1.2 Background**

ML teaching and learning is a matter considered crucial by the European Union (EU), which in 2002 ratified an agreement that all member countries should teach two foreign languages from an early age (Barcelona European Council, 2002). European citizens appear to agree that languages are important, with 84% holding the opinion that everyone in the EU should speak a language other than their mother tongue and 50% supporting the knowledge of two languages other than their mother tongue (European Commission, 2006).

Language learning in the United Kingdom is poor compared to other European countries. A recent EU survey into languages spoken by European citizens (European Commission, 2006) revealed that the United Kingdom was the second most monolingual country in the EU after Ireland, with 62% of its citizens unable to communicate in a language other than English. A House of Lords report (2005) into the proposed EU Integrated Action Programme for Life-long Learning stated it was ‘deeply disturbed ... about the declining capacity for language-learning in [England] (p.64) and urged an urgent reappraisal of language teaching policy. The Minister for Education agreed that the decline in language teaching and learning was a ‘real problem’ (p.64).

Although some may argue that ML teaching and learning in the Scottish context has a more coherent approach than in England, there is also concern here about inadequate levels of ML competence and a decline in learners opting to continue studying a foreign language post sixteen, themes explored in a conference, organised by The Royal Society of Edinburgh in 2006, entitled ‘Languages in Scotland: What’s the problem?’ which brought together business leaders, inspectors, academics and teachers. Their contributions all acknowledged that language learning in Scotland was an issue which needed addressed and the need to develop effective communication skills in languages in Scotland’s young people was crucial. National examination statistics, however, reflect an apparent lack of enthusiasm of pupils to study ML post sixteen. In 2006, 7,000 pupils sat the Higher examination<sup>1</sup> in a ML, compared to 16,000 in 1976, a considerable reduction in numbers (Scottish Qualifications Authority, n.d)

It may be that the global influence of English as the language of international communication has led to a failure to see any advantage in making the effort to learn a foreign language (Chambers, 1999). For many pupils mastery of a foreign language studied only in school can be a ‘lengthy and often tedious’ undertaking (Dörnyei, 2001: 5). Language learning may be perceived as ‘hard’ compared to so-called ‘softer’

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<sup>1</sup> The Higher examination is the Scottish national leaving certificate, sat after five years of study at secondary school and forms part of the qualifications for entry to university.

subjects like media and sociology (Coe et al., 2008), ‘unappealing’ (Watts & Pickering, 2004) and the content taught ‘irrelevant’ (Kent, 1996). The effectiveness of ML teachers has also been criticised (Kent 1996, Watts & Pickering 2004). Views such as those above may be formed as a result of methodology used by teachers to ensure sound understanding of the form of the language with less focus on how it may be used to interact with native speakers in ‘real life’ situations. I felt it was important, therefore, to examine what happened in the classrooms of teachers who appeared to be successful, not only in terms of their pupils’ examination success and take up rates post sixteen, but also in promoting ‘natural’ TL interaction with learners within the microcosm of the classroom as preparation for using the TL to communicate outside in the ‘real world’.

### **1.3 The Study**

Four ML teachers who were considered examples of ‘good practice’ agreed to take part in the study. In order to obtain as accurate a picture as possible of the interaction that took place in their classrooms, the teachers were observed teaching an S3 class on five occasions and audio recordings made of the lessons over a period of nine months from September 2005 to June 2006. The teachers were also interviewed about their teaching philosophy. Samples of their pupils were also interviewed about their ML learning in general and the interaction which took place in class in particular. Three lessons from each teacher were selected for close analysis of the TL used with the aim of identifying techniques for stimulating and supporting TL interaction. The observations formed the principal source of data for analysis; however, the pupil and teacher interviews were considered important as points of reference which could support or disconfirm findings which emerged during analysis of the observation transcripts. The analysis was conducted using an overarching qualitative methodology, although some quantitative measures were employed, so that as clear a picture as possible could emerge of the TL the teachers and learners used. Further details of the methodological decisions and procedures taken are described in Chapter 3.



The first part of this first chapter has presented the background to, and the rationale for, the study. The next section will describe the way the thesis is structured, considering each chapter's contribution to the whole.

Chapter 2 comprises a review of the literature related to the teaching and learning of a second or foreign language, undertaken in order to identify aspects of good practice and effective models of ML pedagogy which could be used as a framework of reference during the analysis process. A historical perspective of second language learning theories leading to the development of Communicative Language Teaching showed the growing importance of teachers' use of the TL in providing a model of pronunciation and structure of the language for learners to reproduce. Social constructivist theories, principally Vygostkyan (1986) theory of first language acquisition and the role of the teacher in supporting pupils' development of language skills in their zone of proximal development through careful scaffolding (Bruner, 1983) seemed particularly relevant to this study, which sought to identify the way teachers used the TL to develop pupils' TL communication skills through interactive practices.

A sizeable proportion of the research literature appeared to regard the affective aspect of the classroom as essential in obtaining learners' collaboration in interaction, which was seen as crucial to second language learning. The social character of the encounter is therefore an important consideration in establishing a classroom ethos where learners appear to respond willingly using the TL. Just how the teacher, the sole expert, successfully stimulates and maintains meaningful interaction in the TL with up to thirty-three adolescent pupils whose level of language is very low, is the focus of this thesis. It seems that up till now there has been very little research into the kind of techniques that language teachers use which promote development of learners' communicative competence in TL interaction through the exploitation of the social aspect of the classroom context.

It should be noted that the majority of the research has been conducted into the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language with adult learners. Although comparisons may be apposite, the special context of the secondary school classroom where adolescent learners have no choice as to their presence means that strategies ML teachers employ to stimulate TL interaction with them may be seen as more relevant by practitioners in the field.

Following on from the literature review, Chapter 3 describes the methodology used to collect and analyse the data and details of the decisions and the procedures taken to ensure that the data were gathered in accordance with ethical guidelines. Decisions regarding the choice of qualitative or quantitative methods of analysis at different stages are explained as it became apparent that the amount and types of TL the teachers used, depending on the pedagogical focus in the lesson, would have to be measured. Issues of validity and reliability are addressed.

During close analysis of the transcripts it was not always appropriate to describe the interaction using 'accepted' classroom interaction frameworks, such as Initiation, Response, Follow Up (IRF) (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), as the teachers' third turn, which provides the learners with feedback about their response, was at times used to extend the talk rather than as a closing move in the exchange. The teachers also initiated TL interactional sequences with learners which appeared to have less of a pedagogic purpose, the description of which required a different exchange framework. Nor did conventional exchange frameworks appear to be able to describe how the development of learners' TL for communication purposes was scaffolded by the teachers. Goffman's production format (1981) and Wadensjö's (1998) reception format, normally used to describe the interaction which takes place between speakers during processes of interpretation from one language to another, were considered to be most appropriate to describe the way the teachers scaffolded learners' contributions to the TL interaction to support their development of communicative competence.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 report the findings of the study. Woven through the findings is the contribution the teachers' TL use made to the 'social affective' nature of the classroom and a concern for 'face' issues as they sought to involve the learners in collaborative interaction, individually and as a class. Chapter 4 discusses the way the teachers managed the classroom and the apparent contrast between their strict control of the setting and the collaborative atmosphere they appeared to succeed in creating. The nature of the TL interaction they instigated appears to have been instrumental in establishing a fine balance so that the learners felt secure and willing to respond within a structured environment which did not appear oppressive. Chapter 4 describes different 'types' of TL the teachers used which depended to a large part on the pedagogical focus of the lesson. The 'types' of language were located in four main categories: operational-type language; practice-type language; analysis-type language and conversation-type language. Questioning strategies employed by different teachers and their effect on the pace of the lesson are also examined in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 5, consideration is given to the relative quantities of TL used by the teachers and learners. Quantitative procedures were used to measure the amount and 'type' of language in the transcripts of the observational data with the aim of determining how much TL and English the teachers and the learners actually used and to identify the contexts where different 'types' of TL were used most frequently in interactive sequences. Possible reasons for the teachers' use of English are then offered before an exploration of the possible grounds for the teachers' use of different types of TL to engage the learners in interaction is presented.

Chapter 6 brings together the findings from the previous two chapters and examines techniques the teachers deployed to help the learners respond to unpredictable referential questioning in the TL. The role of the 'third turn', which in the IRF participation framework provides confirmation or otherwise of learners' responses, is examined. Alternative participation frameworks are proposed which appear to describe more fully the interactional approaches used by the teachers in the third and subsequent turns to

extend and support learners' TL utterances. Strategies the teachers employed which enabled the learners to respond appropriately in 'conversation-type' TL sequences are identified. These strategies also appeared to have a positive effect on the learners' willingness to respond and take responsibility for their own contribution to the interaction that the teachers proposed.

In Chapter 7, the findings are drawn together to highlight strategies which proved effective in engaging learners in TL interaction while at the same time creating and maintaining an ethos of collaboration in the classrooms of the teachers in the study. It appears from the findings that teacher instigation of a high level of meaningful TL interaction, that is, talk directed to the learners to which they may respond verbally or non-verbally, which is relevant to their needs and interests, is instrumental in drawing them into using the TL to communicate. Conversation-type TL sequences, in which teachers evinced interest in learners' responses and shared personal information, appeared particularly effective in drawing learners into the interaction. In order to support the learners' TL once they were engaged, the teachers provided them with the means to communicate what they wanted to say without losing face if they had problems formulating a response. The offer by the teacher of cues which scaffolded learners' responses by offering them vocabulary and structures appeared very effective. Reformulating and revoicing learners' faulty utterances by the teacher also allowed learners to preserve a degree of ownership for the response.

The reactive alertness which the teachers showed to the learners may have been developed over several years of experience. However, much can be learned from their actions and deployment of the TL to engage learners in interaction and as a basis for further research. It is envisaged that beginning teachers and also more experienced practitioners may find it helpful to use some of the findings to enhance their classroom procedures.

We will now move to the next chapter in the thesis in which theories of language learning and pedagogy are discussed and the research and professional literature into the teaching and learning of a second language are considered with a view to establishing what might be regarded as ‘good practice’ in the way teachers use the TL to develop learners’ communicative competence.

## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter seeks to establish a context for the study by reviewing the literature on second language learning and the role that TL interaction may play within learning and teaching processes in the classroom. By synthesising findings which are considered important in Second Language Acquisition and discussing theories of learning and teaching which have informed previous research into the development of learner communicative competence in a second language, I present a justification for undertaking this research and provide a theoretical background in which the study is situated.

A key purpose of this literature review is to explore what research has to say about classroom interaction and the way a collaborative atmosphere, where learners respond readily to the teacher's TL initiations, may be created. It was considered essential to acquire as much knowledge as possible from empirical research which related to the research questions, not only so that the analysis would be based on sound theoretical principles, but also to ensure that the questions themselves were situated in a framework where they made sense. Accordingly, in the initial phases I was concerned to refine the exact wording of the research questions to take into account previous research findings which might be particularly relevant to this study.

Once the research questions had been decided, they necessarily guided the decision making on which areas of the literature would need to be examined in depth. It was thus considered necessary to look at theories of first and second language acquisition, theories of interaction and the research literature into the classroom environment. These areas were deemed points of reference which could be used when examining the teachers' TL in interaction with the learners. While not wanting to bring pre-conceptions to the analysis, it was important that I was well-informed in such areas.

The study explores how teachers deemed examples of good practice in Scottish secondary school ML classrooms by HMIe and other professional bodies provide opportunities for learners' development of speaking skills through engaging them in interaction using the TL. In order to understand what is meant by good practice in teaching a ML it was necessary to look at theories of learning and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The strategies that the teachers in the study employed to involve learners in dialogue may then be examined to determine which approaches they appeared to have adopted and also if there were any gaps.

The focus of the study is on the way teachers assist learners to make their own contributions in the TL, even though their language resource may be meagre, that is, at Basic User level if the Common European Framework of References for Languages (Council of Europe, 2002) were to be used to measure their proficiency. (Basic User level relates to the understanding and use of familiar and frequently used TL expressions of 'a concrete type', related to areas of 'immediate relevance' to the learner and describes learners at this level as 'beginners' or 'elementary'). It was also essential to examine the literature on frameworks of interaction between the teacher and the learners and how the different types and functions of classroom interaction between the two parties aid the development of communicative competence.

This review of the research literature is therefore divided into four main sections:

### **Theories of language learning; how do children acquire language?**

As will be seen in the findings, although they were working with adolescent learners, many of the strategies the teachers used in the classroom appeared to be similar to those used by care-givers or parents in interaction with young children. Although the focus of the study was on strategies used by teachers to stimulate pupils' responses in the foreign language, I considered theories of first language acquisition important as a starting point to provide a context for the subsequent section on theories of second language given that these second language learning theories seemed to be closely

linked to first language theories. Understanding of first language acquisition theories was also judged to be important in the analysis stages, when relating the way the teachers encouraged the learners' responses in the TL in the classroom to care-giver/child talk during the process of first language acquisition.

**Theories of Second Language Acquisition: approaches to teaching and learning modern foreign languages.**

I was aware that the teachers in the study believed that extensive use of the TL was significant for pupils' development of communication skills. When mapping the teachers' strategies, what was key was to get a sense of exactly how the TL was being deployed. To inform my analysis of the teachers' use of the TL, it was clearly necessary to review in depth the specific methodologies and approaches to teaching and learning foreign languages and the theoretical underpinning of such approaches. Such close examination of leading methodologies and approaches was designed to allow me at the stage of analysis to consider the extent to which these teachers' actions could be mapped against existing approaches and to identify any aspects of their practice which might not fit readily within existing models.

**Theories of Interaction: different interactional frameworks within the classroom which may be used to promote the development of learners' oral competence in the TL.**

This section and the next section were considered crucial in terms of providing possible explanations for the teachers' interactional language. I believed that the conventional classroom participation framework, Initiation, Response, Follow-up (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) would be useful in the analysis of the data, although I also wanted to explore its possible limitations. Research literature focusing on teachers' interactional moves, such as questioning and error correction within different interactional contexts in the lesson, was regarded as central to providing 'sensitising concepts' (Blumer 1954, Charmaz 2003) to inform the analysis process. What the literature says about the role of



practice and communicative tasks and their demands, although less explicitly related to the research questions, was also seen as important because of the contribution they might make to development of the learners' communicative skills.

**The Second Language Classroom Environment: how the teacher creates classroom conditions which may or may not have a facilitating effect on the development of learners' communication skills.**

The second research question relates directly to the exploitation of the 'social' aspect of the classroom, therefore I was eager to explore what the research literature had to say about the way teachers might establish an ethos of collaboration, which enabled lessons to be 'co-productions' (Allwright & Bailey, 1991), where learners actively contributed to the interaction. It was important to be able to recognise how the teachers used the TL to create such a collaborative atmosphere. In this section, Vygotskian theory is discussed, as it appeared particularly suitable as an analytical tool to describe the way the teachers' talk supported the pupils' developing communicative skills and helped them to co-construct their understanding.

Although the review of the research literature has been divided into different sections, it is inevitable that there will be overlap between sections, for example, it is difficult when considering theories of Second Language Acquisition to discuss teachers' use of the TL, without mentioning the classroom or the way that the environment supports or impedes interaction. Therefore, features of elements mentioned above are, to a certain extent, interwoven through each of the sections. In the first section below, theories of first language acquisition will be briefly presented as a basis for understanding theories of Second Language Acquisition which are addressed in the second section.

**2.2 Theories of learning: how do pupils acquire a language?**

There are three main theories of first language acquisition: behaviourist, innatist, also referred to as nativist, and constructivist, also known as interactional/developmental (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). The explanations below are necessarily short and do not

explore all the complexities of each theory, nor the subtleties where there is overlap within the diversity. Nonetheless, it is important to have an understanding of what theorists believe about first language acquisition which may inform the thinking behind theories of Second Language Acquisition.

### **2.2.1 Behaviourism**

Behaviourism (Skinner, 1957) was a popular theory in the middle of the twentieth century which explained children's language development as forming 'habits' of correct utterances. It was believed that through constant repetition, children would acquire linguistically correct responses to stimuli provided by the caregiver or others around them. Errors in language production were 'recast' to provide a correct model for the child to repeat. According to behaviourist theory, language is seen to develop as a result of conditioning as the child is given positive reinforcement to develop 'good' language habits. In second language learning, stimulus-response language practice exercises may be used to reinforce structures and vocabulary in a similar way. Behaviourism contrasts with innatist or nativist theory which argues that children's language develops naturally as they mature.

### **2.2.2 Innatist or Nativist**

In a trenchant attack on Skinner, Chomsky (1959) argued that children learn their first language by the same processes that they learn to walk; their language development occurs naturally as they mature, assuming there are no pre-conditions which may impede their development. Chomsky argued that language development is an innate feature of the developing cognitive process. He proposed that language is an innate faculty with which every individual is born. 'Universal Grammar', a set of language 'rules' which are housed in the brain, allows children to make sense of the language system to which they are exposed, and then allows them to test hypotheses when speaking themselves. The Universal Grammar operates during a limited period until just before puberty. After this time language learning is seen as more difficult and learners may not acquire native speaker proficiency, although this claim has been disputed (Birdsong 1999, Bongaerts 1999).

Hymes (1972) was one of the first to exploit the notion of ‘communicative competence’ as a reaction against Chomsky’s (1965) concept of linguistic competence. Chomsky’s Language Acquisition Device (LAD) described the development of children’s first language acquisition through an innate facility in the human brain which allowed them to process the linguistic functions of the language and develop grammatical competence. Hymes, however, was of the opinion that the differences in children’s linguistic output could not be explained without reference to the social conditions in which they learned to use the language. Hymes viewed the ability to use the language in a variety of social situations as being as important as the inherent knowledge of grammar systems. He distinguished between Chomsky’s theory of linguistic competence and his own view of linguistic performance in social interaction. In Chomsky’s model the learner acquires knowledge of language structures; Hymes argued that equally important was also a sense of appropriateness of when particular language may be used. He argued that the latter could only be described from a sociolinguistic point of view. Although Chomsky does talk about performance, it is from a psycholinguistic position which measures the cognitive development of the learners as to whether they produce grammatically correct utterances and appears to take less account of the social conditions within which the learner is operating. There will be further discussion of Hymes’s position in a later section of this chapter.

### **2.2.3 Constructivist theories: Piaget’s Cognitive Constructivism and Vygotsky’s Social Constructivism**

Chomsky’s arguments have also been disputed because they do not appear to take into account the inclusion of language acquisition as part of a child’s overall cognitive development (Slobin 1973). Piaget (2002) contended that children’s beginning language represented their developing understanding of their experiences and concepts as they learned to interact with the world around them and was therefore not linked to a separate module of the brain. He argued that as children’s cognition develops, they use language to articulate the understanding of concepts informed by their experiences.

Vygotsky (1978) differed from Piaget because of his view of language as a fundamental part of cognitive development. Vygotsky's view was that language was inextricably linked to thought processes. Unlike Piaget, Vygotsky saw language as the vehicle through which children's cognitive development occurred, rather than as a means of expressing their understanding. He contended that children's language developed through interaction with adults and other children as they were helped to accomplish tasks which they could not achieve on their own, mediated by the language of explanation and discussion. 'What one can do in co-operation with others today, one can do alone tomorrow' (Vygotsky, 1986:188). The process through which this happens is termed the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1986).

The mediation process may be achieved through 'scaffolding' the pupil's learning (Bruner, 1983). The scaffolding is removed incrementally as the learner becomes more knowledgeable and able to articulate his/her understanding. Language is used to enable the collaboration process, through which the learner is helped to construct understanding of his/her developing cognitive awareness.

Theories about first language learning above have been instrumental in providing a basis for second language learning theories, which will be discussed in the next part of this review of the literature. It could be argued that in the ML classroom Vygotskian theory seems particularly relevant for the development of speaking skills as learners interact in their ZPD with a more experienced speaker, the teacher, to develop knowledge and understanding of grammatical concepts which help them to communicate. Hymes's concept of communicative competence may also be considered appropriate to describe how learners are guided to use language appropriate to the moment and the situation. The carefully scaffolded TL the teacher uses in the interaction provides exposure to vocabulary and structures which the learner may use at a later date, either with the teacher, other learners or native speakers. Through guided interaction the learners also

gain understanding of appropriateness of language use. Further discussion of the role Vygotskyan theory may play in the ML classroom will take place in section 2.5.2.

### **2.3 Theories of SLA: Approaches to Teaching and Approaches to Learning Modern Foreign Languages.**

This section builds on the first section which presented theories of first language acquisition, considers approaches which have influenced attitudes at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century regarding what are viewed as effective ways of teaching and learning second languages and relates them to the present study. It should be noted that language teaching methodologies round the world may differ greatly. The approaches presented below represent a predominantly ‘Western’ philosophy. Teaching methodologies in Confucian Heritage Culture countries, for example, may reflect a more teacher-centred, didactic approach.

A great deal of research has been carried out into how a second language is learned, but the majority of this research has been undertaken in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. Many of the subjects have been adult learners, who, it could be said, are implicitly well disposed to learning a foreign language, particularly English, as it is seen as the ‘major ‘official’ language of many professions and most academic fields, as well as the main means of communication in international tourism’ (Dörnyei, 1990: 49). Only one in four of those who use English to communicate is a native English speaker (Crystal, 2003), the language being considered a ‘lingua franca’ among speakers of diverse languages to communicate with each other (Seidlhofer, 2005).

Perhaps for the reasons above, there appears to be less research into teaching foreign languages to schoolchildren whose native tongue is English. After an extensive literature search, I have concluded that there is a surprising lack of research into how teachers in UK secondary schools increase pupils’ communicative skills in the foreign language. These pupils may not constitute an intrinsically motivated group, although it could be assumed that their goals are the same as the majority of language learners, that

is, the development of skills which enable them to communicate with native speakers in the target culture, therefore, while certain findings from the research into adult SLA can be generalised, the special nature of the dynamic within the secondary school ML classroom and the compulsory nature of the subject demand a different approach (Stables & Wikeley, 1999). For this reason, this literature review focuses predominantly on studies whose findings, although not concerned directly with, may be related to the secondary classroom.

Attitudes to learning languages have changed as the world has become 'smaller' in the last fifty years with greater democratisation of travel opportunities and workforce mobility, with the result that methods of teaching have also changed. There follows a short description of how language teaching approaches have evolved to the present day.

### **2.3.1 Teaching Methodology: Grammar-Translation Method**

From the time of Erasmus in the early 15th century, until the last half of last century, foreign language teaching was based on the 'grammar-translation' approach. This method was based on the pedagogical grammars developed for the teaching of Greek and Latin. The emphasis was on understanding the language system rather than learning how to use the language for communicative purposes (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Learners were expected to be able to translate literary texts after having memorised grammatical rules and vocabulary. Classroom activities, including grammar drills and translation exercises, were conducted in the mother tongue (MT). Speaking the language was disregarded, since the emphasis was on reading and written expression. This method suited a small number of school learners but did not meet the needs of the majority (Omaggio, 1990). Until the mid 1960s foreign language learning was largely seen as the preserve of the elite in society, developing intellectual capacity, particularly in literature and the written genre, and social capital but not for practical oral application or use by the majority of people (Johnstone, 2003).

### **2.3.2 Teaching Methodology: The Direct Method**

The beginning of the twentieth century saw the development of the 'direct' method initially as a reaction to the grammar-translation approach (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The theory underpinning the direct method was based on innatist theories of children's first language acquisition. Teaching and learning emphasised the importance of listening and speaking the language. Its exponents were vehemently opposed to the teaching of formal grammar and argued that language learning was more than the learning of rules and the acquisition of translation skills. Grammar was expected to be learned inductively, prefiguring the use of Chomsky's LAD. The learners' MT was never used in the classroom and the language taught reflected real life situations.

Although teaching and learning in the ML classroom could not parallel the way young children learn to communicate, the direct method paved the way for a more communicative, oral based approach, and as such represented an important step forward in the history of language teaching methods (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) as theorists began to consider different approaches to address the development of oral communicative skills.

### **2.3.3 Teaching Methodology: Audio-lingual and Audio-visual Methods**

During and after World War 2 the audio-lingual method was used to produce foreign language speakers who could work in Europe and Asia. This method was based on Skinner's behaviourist principles (1957) and relied on repetition of drills to practise patterns and structures in the TL, in an attempt to address the need for development of communication skills and the understanding of grammar systems. Although the development of all four language skills was considered important, teaching and learning placed great emphasis on aural/oral drills, which often took place in a language laboratory, practising de-contextualised language structures. A description of this method by Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) cites the following main characteristics:

- attention to structures and form more than meaning

- memorisation of structure based dialogues
- language items are not necessarily contextualised
- language learning is learning structures, sounds or words.

A subsequent development of the audio-lingual method, the audio-visual method, enjoyed popularity in school foreign language teaching classes in the 1970s and early 1980s. Film strips and tape recorded dialogues were used as a basis for drills used to practise structures. Another development of the audio-lingual and audio-visual methods, available widely through internet sources, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), is a technique which supports language learning by allowing students access to videos and practical exercises: it may be more suited to individual learning or as a support for learning and lacks the communicative interaction of a classroom.

The methodologies described above follow quite definite rules for the practical organisation of teaching and learning, which can be contrasted with those below which are termed ‘approaches’, that is, they are informed by theories of language learning and teaching which underpin the choice of teaching strategies and which may be more suited to a less rigid methodological stance (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

#### **2.3.4 Functional/Notional Approach**

A concern to make language teaching and learning more ‘communicative’ led to a focus on the everyday situations that learners might encounter and the kind of language which would be appropriate in these situations. This underpinned the functional/notional approach to ML teaching, which was also popular in the 1970s and 1980s (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983). Here, the content of a course was organised in terms of meanings (notions) learners required in order to communicate in particular functional contexts, such as asking or giving directions or buying tickets at the cinema or train station. The functional/notional approach has been seen as the starting point for making language teaching more relevant to learners’ needs.



... we can only really *teach* language if we present and practise it in relation to the uses which, as a communicative tool, it may be put. (Brumfit & Johnson, 1979: 4)

Teachers using the functional/notional approach encouraged learners to practise the use of certain language structures which would be useful in a variety of contexts. This often meant that learners continued to rehearse structures in drill-type exercises as they had done when learning under the audio-lingual and audio-visual methods. The main difference was that the drills were related to a particular context (Howatt, 1984).

### **2.3.5 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach**

The current CLT approach, often referred to simply as the Communicative Approach (CA), a development of the method originally advocated by Comenius in the seventeenth century and the techniques of the direct method and functional/notional approaches, aims to use the TL as much as possible as the means of communication in the classroom in a natural and meaningful way, while also addressing the need to understand the form of the language (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). In CLT the extensive use of the TL by the teacher does not mean that the learners should not learn about language systems; a focus on form is also seen as essential for learners to make progress in second language acquisition (Ellis 2005a, Mangubhai 2006).

Two versions of CLT have developed: a 'strong' version which has similarities to the Direct Method where the focus is on 'using [the foreign language] to learn it' where grammar is learnt inductively as the learners experiment with different forms of the language, and a 'weak' version which emphasises the 'importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their [foreign language] for communicative purposes' within a wider programme of teaching and learning which includes a focus on grammar structures, (Howatt, 1984: 279) which may include some instruction in the MT.

### 2.3.6 Focus on Form within a Communicative Approach

Although there have been critiques of CLT, which will be considered in a later section of this chapter, the ‘weak’ version of CLT is widely accepted as the most effective means of all the approaches that have been used so far in teaching school pupils to communicate in a foreign language confidently and competently (HMIe 1990, DfES 2003), and appeared to be the approach taken by the teachers in the study. However, many practitioners still express concern that an emphasis on meaning and fluency will mean that accuracy will be compromised. This concern is often voiced by teachers who have to prepare pupils for national examinations where speaking may only account for 25% of the total mark and the focus is on accuracy. However, CLT does not preclude a focus on form. Conversational interaction is seen by Gass (1997) as the basis for development of the learners’ grammar in the foreign language. Belchamber (2007) notes, ‘There is a lot of preparation; accuracy practice is the bridge to a fluency activity’. She cites Canale and Swain’s (1980) model of communicative competence, which includes grammatical, social and strategic competence.

Bachman’s (1990) Framework of Communicative Language Ability is a more recent development of Canale and Swain’s model, which describes two competences, *language competence* and *strategic competence*, which, added to *psychophysiological mechanisms*, form a framework for communication (p.84). *Psychophysiological mechanisms* is the expression Bachman uses to describe the neurological and psychological processes the learner experiences during the act of speaking, that is, the neuromuscular skills used to voice the utterance and the messages transmitted and received in interaction with others through auditory and visual channels.

In Bachman’s framework precision in grammar is seen as residing within *language competence* as the correct form of the language is put together in a coherent unit by the speaker. *Strategic competence* pertains to the business of creating and sustaining communicative acts, through reference to register, context and social aspects, for example, politeness, as well as the correct choice of linguistic form to achieve

communication. *Strategic* competence also refers to strategies the learner uses to make meaning in communication from a possibly limited language resource. Zhuang (2007) suggests that strategic competence is ‘a wise ability to modify the communicative goal while making up for the limited L2 competence’ (p.45). The way the teacher may assist learners to develop strategic competence was a focus of the study. Implicit in Bachman’s framework is the speaker’s need not only for recognition of the contextual demands of particular interactional situations but also for familiarity with language forms in order to be able to communicate effectively.

Many communicative language classrooms have discrete grammar teaching phases where the focus is on the form of the language being learned, either before a practice session or as a result of a point which has arisen through negotiation of meaning. A common approach within CLT is Presentation, Practice, Production, (PPP) where the learners progress from the presentation of new language by the teacher to controlled pair or group practice, before using the language independently. Focusing on form speeds up the rate that learners acquire knowledge of the language systems (Long, 1983, 2001), but care should be taken that learners do not become preoccupied by accuracy at a cost to confidence and fluency (Zhao & Morgan, 2004). In this study, the interface between grammar instruction and the development of the learners’ communicative fluency was considered important to explore, in order to establish how the teachers went about ensuring mastery of form, while also developing the learners’ communicative competence.

Ellis proposes ten Principles of Instructed Language Learning (2005b), a number of which relate to the importance of the development of learners’ sound understanding of the form of the language, although he also highlights the importance of TL use for meaningful interaction. This suggests recognition of the need for balance between the sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic stances taken with relation to the development of communication skills in the foreign language; learners should be aware of the underlying structure of the language they are studying, but at the same time should not

feel constricted in their utterances by focusing solely on form when using the language to express themselves. Ellis's ten principles of instructed language learning are listed below in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1. Ellis's 10 Principles of Instructed Language Learning**

1. Instruction needs to ensure that learners develop both a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and a rule-based competence.
2. Instruction needs to ensure that learners also focus on form.
3. Instruction needs to be predominantly directed at developing implicit knowledge of the L2 while not neglecting explicit knowledge.
4. Instruction needs to take into account the learner's 'built-in syllabus'.
5. Successful instructed language learning requires extensive L2 input.
6. Successful instructed language learning also requires opportunities for output.
7. The opportunity to interact in the L2 is central to developing L2 proficiency.
8. Instruction needs to take account of individual differences in learners.
9. In assessing learners' L2 proficiency, it is important to examine free as well as controlled production.
10. Instruction needs to ensure that learners focus predominantly on meaning.

Many of the different principles of instructed language learning listed above will be discussed in relation to specific areas of language teaching in further stages of this review of the literature.

While Ellis emphasises the role of instruction, Gardner's model of second language acquisition (2007) focuses on the learner, suggesting that there are four stages of second or foreign language development: elemental, consolidation, conscious expression, automaticity and thought, which can be compared to the stages in first language acquisition. The elemental stage is when the language is introduced to the learners and they are made aware of it. In the consolidation phase, where they use the new language in practice exercises, the learners become familiar with the language and aware of rules governing particular structures, before making the effort to employ the language in more open-ended dialogue in the conscious expression stage. The final stage, automaticity and thought, happens when the learners no longer need to think *about* the language they are using, but think *in* the language.

A communicative approach to teaching and learning foreign languages presupposes that learners will be given opportunities to use the language they are learning in meaningful exchanges in the classroom. The language learners hear and use should reflect the ‘real world’ as much as possible so that they are prepared for conversations with native speakers outside the classroom (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003). In order to benefit from the communicative approach, learners should be exposed to extensive input in the TL (Ellis, 2005b), so that they can hear the sounds, intonation patterns and correct pronunciation of the language, in order to be able then to interact, just as they did when learning their first language (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). When learners live in a TL culture, as learners of a ‘second language’ they are exposed to the language outside the classroom, in the street, business and in the media. For learners in their own culture as learners of a ‘foreign language’, exposure to extensive TL outside the classroom may be less feasible, unless the learner has ready access to native speakers.

The challenge of providing learners opportunities to practise ‘genuine conversation’ in the ML classroom will be discussed later in this review of the literature. It could be that the teacher’s TL use for all or most of the lesson as part of a Communicative Approach gives learners access to language used in a ‘natural’ way by the teacher, even though the purpose may be educational rather than conversational. One of the aims of the study is to consider the influence that the teachers’ TL has on the learners’ TL production. The next section considers the literature on use of the TL by teachers in the ML classroom.

### **2.3.7 The Use of the TL in the Classroom**

This section considers the literature in favour of teachers’ extensive use of the TL in the classroom as part of a communicative approach. Although CLT assumes maximum possible use of the TL, there are arguments against its exclusive or near-exclusive use which favour greater integration of the learners’ mother tongue (MT) and which will be discussed in a later section of this review of the literature.

In the Scottish secondary school context, where the teacher may be the only source of TL that the learners encounter, it seems advisable to maximise the teacher's use of the TL in the classroom for the learners' benefit (Turnbull, 2001), so that they become accustomed to the phonological and syntactical differences to their own language. It also seems desirable that learners should have as many opportunities as possible to engage in interaction which focuses on meaning (Butzkamm 2000, Ellis 2005a, 2005b), which will give them practice in hearing the language spoken and taking part in communication for 'real purposes'. Ellis (2005b) lists 'extensive L2 input' as number six of his Principles of Instructed Language Learning, basing his argument on research into the differences in children's first language acquisition which found evidence which related the speed of first language acquisition to the amount of language to which they were exposed (Ellis & Wells, 1980).

Time available to learners in a 'foreign language' learning environment, such as the one in the study, may be restricted (Turnbull, 2001). Teacher TL use is therefore crucial if 'teacher talk' is to influence the learners' progress in a situation where the pupils' only contact with the language is in lessons, a claim earlier put forward by Chaudron (1985):

In the typical foreign language classroom, ... the fullest competence in the TL is achieved by means of the teacher providing a rich TL environment, in which not only instructions and drills are executed in the TL, but also disciplinary and management operations. (p.21)

Given the shortage of time they have to expose the pupils to the TL, it has been suggested that teachers 'fine tune' their language input to raise pupils' awareness of specific useful language structures or vocabulary (Macaro, 1997: 72), echoing Ellis and Sinclair's (1996) assertion that the recurrence of language to which learners are exposed in the day-to-day routine of the languages' classroom aids consolidation of vocabulary and phrases. Texts for beginning teachers recommend that learners should have many opportunities to hear good models of the TL (Morgan & Neil 2001, Pachler & Field 2001).

### 2.3.8 Comprehensible Input

The quality of teachers' TL input, however, is crucial (Krashen, 1985). If the language that the learners hear is incomprehensible, there is little likelihood of progression which may cause frustration and demotivation (Kent, 1996). Equally, if the input is too simple and does not stretch the learners, their language skills will not develop and they may become bored.

Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985) emphasises the need for teachers to provide 'comprehensible input' in order to convey meaning effectively to the learners and provide a model from which they can create their own utterances. The input should be at a level just beyond that of the learner, at 'level  $i + 1$ ', 'i' being the present level of competence of the learner. He argues that by being exposed to comprehensible input learners 'notice the gap' between what they know how to say and what they do not know, thus triggering more attention to the form of the language and vocabulary items used by the interlocutor (Doughty & Williams, 1998). It has been argued that there are links between the ZPD and Krashen's  $i + 1$  in that the level at which learners are working in the ZPD and the level of language for  $i + 1$  are both slightly higher than their present level of competence (Walsh, 2006). However, Lantolf (2000), points out that the Vygotskian model requires collaboration whereas Krashen's model is concerned only with input and does not include the interactive process.

There have been criticisms of Krashen's theories, for example, Mitchell & Myles (1998):

The concepts of 'understanding' and 'noticing a gap' are not clearly operationalised, or consistently proposed; it is not clear how the learner's present state of knowledge ('i') is to be characterised, or indeed whether the ' $i + 1$ ' formulation is intended to apply to all aspects of language, from lexis to phonology and syntax. (p. 126)

Furthermore, in any class, learners may be at different levels of understanding so that the 'i' will not be consistent. How then does the teacher provide input at ' $i + 1$ ' effectively for all learners? Even in a 'set' class, where pupils are grouped by attainment levels,

there may be a considerable difference in ability to understand the spoken language. There appears to be a need for teachers to use strategies to ensure that the language is comprehensible to all. This may involve visual and other paralinguistic features of language, such as tone, intonation and volume as well as possible adjustments to their speech.

Pupils' understanding of teachers' TL input may be helped by the accompanying messages which are transmitted non-verbally (Macdonald, 1993). The input may be made comprehensible to learners through the use of common vocabulary, cognates, shorter, less complex sentences, the increased use of gesture and facial expression and slower, more articulate speech, incorporating more and longer pauses (Lynch, 1996). Interviews with pupils in a pilot study (Crichton, 2006), have indicated that they are aware of and appreciate these aids to understanding.

### **2.3.9 'Teacher Talk'**

In the ML classroom 'teacher talk' is slower than in other classrooms and comprises a 'special register' in which words are pronounced clearly, at a slower pace, avoiding complex structural language (Chaudron 1988, Magsig et al. 2007), in much the same way that parents or care-givers structure their language when talking to young children, so that the learners have time to de-code the messages the teacher is transmitting. 'Teacher talk' is recognised to be a valuable source of language for learners, although Swain et al. (2002) have called for more research studies on whether dialogue between peers in the language class also aids learning. Ellis (2005b) agrees that learners should have opportunities for output, but makes it clear that peer speaking exercises may be restrictive in terms of the language and structures practised.

'Teacher talk', has been viewed as instrumental in setting up interactional sequences (Cullen, 1998). Scottish pupils interviewed about their reasons for not continuing to study a ML after the compulsory period were in agreement that teacher-pupil interaction was for them the most satisfactory way of teaching and learning (Kent, 1996).



### **2.3.10 Intake**

While there appears to be agreement that a TL-rich environment is beneficial for learners, being exposed to input, however comprehensible, does not guarantee 'intake' by the learner. Learners have to 'notice' language before it can be acquired (Schmidt, 1990, 2001). The conscious paying of attention is described in Schmidt's 'noticing hypothesis' (2001). Noticing is therefore seen as the starting point for acquisition. Research involving video footage of interaction which was then shown to the learners with requests for a 'think-aloud' commentary of their thoughts as they participated in the interaction has shown evidence of learners' noticing (Mackey et al., 2000).

In the classroom then, emphasis should be on 'comprehended' input or 'intake' (Gass, 1997). Gass makes the distinction between comprehended input, which involves recognition by the learner of the language used by the interlocutor 'for the purpose of a conversational interaction' (p. 25) and intake, which allows the learner to take notice of the interlocutor's language 'for the purpose of learning' (p. 25).

Intake is described by Loew (1993) as 'an intermediate process between the exposure to input and actual language acquisition' (p.334). According to Kumaravadivelu's findings (1994) in a study of adults learning a second language, intake factors include, among others, individual characteristics in the learners, affective variables and the social and educational context. This suggests that the teacher has to be sensitive to a much wider variety of factors in the classroom than merely achieving the pedagogical aims of the lesson, 'the task-as-workplan' (Seedhouse, 2004: 93), taking affective and social factors into account (Allwright, 1984). The importance of factors in the classroom which may influence the choice of language used to create a supportive affective atmosphere will be discussed in more depth later in this review of the literature.

Principle 1 of Ellis's ten principles for instructed language learning (2005b) underlines the need for learners to acquire a rich store of formulaic language. The significance of repetition of TL formulaic language sequences for intake is developed below.

### **2.3.11 Formulaic Language**

It is difficult to provide a clear definition of formulaic sequences as they may comprise idioms, proverbs or multiword units expressing a single meaning but they are generally fixed and occur frequently (Schmitt & Carter, 2004). It has been estimated that formulaic language may account for up to 58.6% of English native speaker discourse (Erman & Warren, 2000). It is not unreasonable to assume that a similar figure may be applicable to other European languages. Formulaic sequences of language are stored by the learner as an unanalysed 'chunk' and used as a single vocabulary item (Wood, 2006). The use of formulae by language learners is an important part of learner output aiding fluency in the long term (Raupach, 1984). The formulaic 'chunks' are progressively analysed or 'unpacked' as learners use them more often in communicative interaction (Myles et al., 1998). The more often formulaic chunks of language are repeated in the phonological short-term memory, the greater the chance of them lodging in the long-term memory and therefore the easier they are for the learners to access (Ellis 2001, Logan 1998). Since many native speakers use 'stock' phrases and expressions in conversation (Wray & Perkins, 2000), by exposing pupils to set phrases in the TL, the teacher is supporting acquisition of language which the learners can draw on when required to converse with native speakers (Belchamber, 2007). Bialystok (1994) claims that formulaic chunks of language which are useful for conversational purposes gradually evolve into more analysed representations in the learners' minds which may support higher literacy skills in the foreign language, (Myles et al., 1999) as structures are re-cycled for use in other contexts. Discussion of formulaic language in routines which the learners in this study regularly followed can be seen in Chapter 4, section 4.10.

The first part of this section has examined theories of language learning and second language acquisition. From the evidence above it appears CLT may be able to offer a comprehensible TL rich environment, fundamental within a communicative approach,

which gives the learners access to the language used ‘naturally’ which they may then use themselves appropriately.

### **2.3.12 Use of the Mother Tongue (MT)**

Despite a majority of studies supporting the use of the TL as the main means of communication in the classroom, not all linguists believe that total exposure to the TL is always effective or even desirable. Cook (2001) argues that the learners’ first language may be used effectively to introduce vocabulary and grammatical concepts, which learners may find difficult or need more time to interpret. He claims that classroom management is also an area where the learners’ first language can be used more effectively.

Butzkamm (2003) agrees with Cook that the role of the MT is important for language learners as a basis to build on when learning a foreign language, and should not be banned from the classroom. Learners come to the second language classroom with a language system (or two if the child is bilingual, since the composition of many classes may include children of immigrants or of bi-lingual families) which is already sophisticated, and which allows the learners to process new information, make connections and retrieve experiences from memory. Pachler and Field (2001) agree that meta-language to define grammar terms and new language structures should be in the learners’ MT because their previous learning about their own language means they can relate the syntactical concepts to their new learning, helping the learners make sense of the patterns of new language they are exposed to. ‘Learners inevitably engage in [TL]-English associations and formulations in their minds’ (Hammerly 1989: 51). However, Hammerly, Cook, and Butzkamm counsel ‘judicious’ use of the MT aids.

In UK ML classrooms learners need clarity about what they are learning, and the MT may provide the reassurance that they require to understand what they see as a complicated point of grammar or to translate a vocabulary item. The issue arises when too much is used and learners do not get valuable exposure to the TL (Ellis 1984, Cook

1991). Macaro (2000) suggests that practitioners should ‘make professional judgements for themselves, based on sound principles ... for the benefit of the learners’ (p. 187). This is sensible advice, but may lead to teachers’ overuse of the MT, particularly beginning teachers who may lack the experience upon which to base decisions about optimum MT usage.

Arguing that whatever the advantages of demonstrating ‘real’ classroom communication through the TL, there is no logical necessity that communicative tasks should avoid learners’ first language, Cook (2001) cites the ‘concurrent’ method in which the teacher switches from one language to another at key points according to particular rules (Jacobson, 1990). Teachers who adopt the concurrent method may switch to the learners’ first language to explain a grammar point, for example, or to focus learners’ attention if they appear to be going off task. Butzkamm’s (2003) proposal for the use of ‘sandwich techniques’, a procedure developed by Dodson (1967) where the teacher inserts a MT translation between repetitions of an unknown phrase in the foreign language may be less effective in a secondary school classroom comprising adolescent learners for whom a ML is compulsory, who may listen for the translation in English, without paying attention to the TL version (Turnbull, 2001).

There is also the possibility that they may miss out on ‘tuning into’ the sounds and intonation patterns of the TL if there is interference from their first language. Although Cook (2001) argues that it is unrealistic when all the participants in a classroom share a common first language to force an artificial monolingual environment on learners he does agree that the use of the TL should be maximised. The challenge for practitioners is to quantify just what is meant by ‘maximising’ comprehensible input within a communicative approach.

Wong-Fillmore (1985) states that the de-coding or “figuring out” of what the teacher says is an important process for the learner. This may tie in with Butzkamm’s argument above for the learners’ meta-cognitive use of the MT as a tool to articulate new knowledge, but her advice to teachers to ensure that the majority of TL they use is

comprehensible suggests that it is crucial that the TL used should be at a level which will facilitate pupils' interaction and not constrain it. This appears to relate to pupils' own preferences. In a small study of Scottish senior pupils, Kent (1996) interviewed 56 pupils about language learning. They preferred the teacher to explain the form of the language in English, but also expressed 'enormous pleasure' in using the TL to speak with their teachers and the Foreign Language Assistant.

There has been much discussion in the research literature about how much TL to use and the level to pitch it at in the classroom (Krashen 1985, Macaro 2000, Cook 2001, Turnbull 2001, Butzkamm 2003), so that learners can get the greatest benefit from hearing it spoken. Although the literature may disagree on whether and how much the MT should be used in the classroom, there seems to be agreement that the way teachers use the TL is essential in sustaining interaction in the foreign language between themselves and the learners (Cullen, 1998) and that teachers' TL should be pitched at an appropriate level which ensures learners' understanding.

The main arguments for and against the exclusive or near exclusive use of the TL and the use of the MT by teachers have been presented in this section. However, the majority of those who argue against its exclusive use appear to agree that extensive use of the TL is desirable as a model for learners and that care should be taken not to tip the balance towards overuse of the MT. This may be an easier task for experienced teachers than for beginning teachers and highlights the need to look at strategies and techniques that all teachers, but especially beginning teachers, can use and adapt to make their lessons more TL oriented. Discussion of the use of English by the teachers in the study takes place in Chapter 5, section 5.7.

### **2.3.13 TL Use in the ML Classroom: To What Extent is Theory Informing Practice?**

If, as seems to be accepted, a communicative teaching approach is desirable to engage learners in interaction in the TL which will aid the development of their listening skills as they make sense of what they hear and their speaking skills as they negotiate meaning,

it might be assumed that ML teachers will use a great deal of TL in their classrooms. Studies into the actual degree of TL use in the classroom have produced results which vary considerably and call into question how much TL some language learners are experiencing (Crawford, 2004). Crawford identified three studies in the period 1998-2003 which found that teacher use of the TL varied from 17% to 100% (Calman & Daniel 1998, Turnbull 2000, Hou & Zhao 2002). Her own study of Australian teachers of foreign languages found that a number of teachers disagreed with the desirability of TL use as the main medium of instruction in the classroom, the majority of teachers of younger children in the primary and early secondary classes expressing reservations. Although the majority of teachers of older classes agreed that using the TL was desirable, they acknowledged that they tended to use English as the language of instruction. The majority used the TL less than 40% in a week, the exception being the level used with senior pupils, where just over half (50.2%) of teachers used more than 60% of TL in a week.

Neil's study (1997) into the use of the TL by ten Northern Irish secondary teachers of German with pupils in their fourth and fifth year of studying the language found that when teachers used self report sheets to measure the amount of TL they used in the classroom their estimates varied from 27.5-67.5%. 'High target language values' that is, between 75-100% TL (p.15) were perceived to be used for content areas such as giving praise, greeting and settling the pupils and instructions. The content areas for which least TL was used were grammar teaching, instructions for tests and instruction on examination techniques. A perceived need to ensure learners do not use the teachers' TL use as an excuse for not understanding may mean that teachers do not want to risk any ambiguities and therefore use the MT.

In one of the few studies looking at target language use by teachers in Scottish secondary French classrooms, Franklin (1990) asked 201 teachers of ML to judge whether 10 classroom activities could be performed in French, in French with difficulties, or should be carried out in English. Her results showed that that although

teachers may be aware of the desirability of using extensive foreign language use in the classroom, what is actually happening may be different. 68% thought that classroom organisation could be carried out wholly in French although only 53% thought that French could be used to give instructions or 'chat informally' with the pupils. Only 15% of the teachers surveyed thought that discipline could be handled through the TL. Their responses indicate that the function for which the language is used may decide whether teachers use English or the TL. Explaining grammar, discussing language objectives and teaching background were the three functions which the teachers in Franklin's study identified as finding difficult to realise using the TL. Reasons for not using the TL included pupil behaviour (95%) and teacher lack of confidence in using the language (83%). Another reason for not using the TL that teachers gave was class size (81%), although Franklin points out that this reason was given by teachers whose class sizes were relatively small, as well as teachers who had high numbers of pupils in their class.

Meiring and Norman (2002) in a similar exercise with 46 ML teachers from 22 different local authorities in England had similar results. The teachers they surveyed increased their use of TL depending on the level of ability of the pupils; pupils judged to be of lower ability had only 'modest' TL input. The intention of the present study, the findings of which are reported here in this thesis, was to identify teachers' TL strategies which might be effective with all levels of proficiency.

Perhaps the most surprising figure in Franklin's study is the number of teachers who lacked confidence in using the TL as the main means of communication, suggesting that they lack proficiency in the language they are teaching. Changes in requirements in terms of foreign residence for teacher training courses in Scotland since her study was carried out may have addressed this to a certain extent (GTCS, 2010). However, at present ML teachers in post are not required to attend courses to keep up with current usage.

It appears from the evidence above that teachers need strategies to increase their confidence in their own TL so that they can optimise its use and learners are not

disadvantaged by lack of exposure and therefore unwilling to use it themselves, leading to further lack of confidence on the part of the teacher. Techniques used by the teachers in the study which demonstrate effective use of TL and which are shown to engage the learners in interaction may be helpful for those teachers wishing to increase their use of TL but who need more guidance. It is intended that teacher strategies observed in the present study will act as a basis for meaningful professional development for beginning and less confident teachers in communicating effectively with learners using the TL in the ML classroom.

In describing how a communicative approach may assist the development of learners' communicative skills above, the emphasis has been on the way learners are helped to develop understanding through the input the teacher provides. Although there are arguments about the quantity and quality of the teacher's TL use, the consensus appears to be that teachers should maximise their TL, making it comprehensible to the learners, so that they are exposed to the sounds, intonation and patterns of the language. The value of the MT, however, in terms of providing learners with a meta-language which helps them to make sense of new grammatical concepts, for example, should not be ignored. It may be that teachers need to find a balance between providing pupils with a TL-rich environment, while accepting that there will be times when the MT may have to be used for clarification. The danger is that either through lack of confidence or laziness on the part of the teacher, the MT becomes prevalent.

If the purpose of language teaching using a communicative approach is to provide opportunities for learners to develop their language skills in interaction, teachers will have to take steps to ensure that positive social and affective factors, the value of which has been stated above (Kumaravadivelu 1994, Allwright 1984), have been addressed. This section has considered theories of language learning. The next section will look more closely at theories of language analysis as research findings into interaction in the language classroom and the part it plays in developing learners' language skills are examined.



## **2.4 Theories of Interaction: The Role of Interaction in the ML Classroom**

This section of the review of the research literature examines the role of interaction in the ML classroom. Different types of interaction will be discussed and strategies to promote interaction will be examined. Research findings relating to interaction in the classroom were considered important as points of reference when drawing up the research questions and performing the analysis. It should be noted that it is the teacher's role in interaction that is the focus of this research study. Research literature focusing specifically on the outcomes of pupil/pupil interaction will not be reviewed. While acknowledging an important role that pupil/pupil interactive tasks may play in the learning and development of TL communication skills, the focus in this study is on teachers' interactional moves and their use of TL which stimulates pupil responses.

Allwright (1984) describes classroom interaction as 'the fundamental fact of classroom pedagogy'. For van Lier (1996) interaction is the 'engine' that 'drives the learning process' (p.147), although he does not specifically limit the interactive process to dialogue, but also includes interaction with text, and reflection about social processes. The role of classroom interaction in the acquisition of first and second language has been the subject of a number of recent studies (Johnson 1995, Seedhouse 1996, Van Lier 1996, Ellis 1999, Hall & Verplaetse 2000, Nassaji & Wells 2000, Walsh 2002, Richards 2006). The majority of those looking at interaction in second language learning have focused on the acquisition of English as a second or foreign language with adult learners, who have chosen to learn a second language and who, it could be argued, have not the same attitudes or goals as adolescents who have no choice about the fact that they are learning a language or even the language they are learning. However, general points made about interaction may be applicable to learners in a secondary school context.

A description of 'teacher talk' has been offered earlier in this chapter. Many studies of 'teacher talk' in the second language classroom have concentrated on the language used in isolation and have not taken into account the interaction that contributes to the overall class dynamic arising from learners' prior experiences and their already established

social skills in interaction (Johnson, 1995). Studies have focused on the way teachers correct errors (Lyster & Ranta, 1997), special features of ML teacher talk (Chaudron 1988, Magsig et al. 2007) and frameworks for interaction (Hall & Walsh 2002, Seedhouse 2004), but less appears to have been written about the way the teacher's language helps learners to take responsibility for developing the interaction.

A study by Wong-Fillmore (1982) although conducted over 20 years ago, identified 'effective L2 classrooms' as ones where the learners were called upon frequently to respond, either individually or as a group. It is unclear, however, whether the interaction she refers to had a pedagogic focus or a 'social' function. Regular 'social interaction' is considered of benefit to learners (Firth & Wagner 1997, Van Lier 2000, Block 2003). 'Social' aspects of classroom interaction will be discussed more fully in section four of this chapter.

In a study of primary children's literacy and numeracy development, Smith et al. (2004) found that teachers who had a 'more interactive style' (p. 408) appeared to be more effective. However, questionnaires completed by the teachers in their study revealed that they did not have a clear view of what was meant by interaction. Although the context is different to the ML classroom, their findings highlight a need for a greater understanding of the role of interaction used by teachers in the classroom in engaging learners with a view to collaboratively constructing their knowledge.

In Block's view the 'acquisition metaphor ... should be complemented ... by the participation metaphor' (2003: 104). Sfard (1998) argues that participation allows the learner to become a member of a community through developing the skills necessary for communicating within that community. Kumpulainen and Wray (2002) emphasise the role of the learner as 'an active participant in social learning' (p.10). They argue that it is the teacher's role to activate and manage the interaction with a view to developing the learners' communicative skills through practice of language which is relevant to their needs. Just how that may be achieved is the focus of this study. A common view has

been that the majority of classroom interaction takes place within the IRF participation framework (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), which is described in the following section.

#### **2.4.1 IRF: Intitation, Response, Follow-up**

Studies have found that the IRF framework predominates in classroom discourse (Nassaji & Wells, 2000) and may account for up to 70% of classroom interaction (van Lier 1996, Wells 1999). As will be seen in Chapters 5 and 6, the majority of the interaction in the classrooms of the teachers in this study occurred as part of the IRF framework. The framework involves three ‘turns’: the teacher’s initiation (I), often a question, the learner’s response (R), followed by the teacher’s follow-up (F) to confirm or disconfirm the pupil’s answer. Teachers ask questions in order to gauge how much the learner knows. However, as important as the questions the teachers pose are their responses to the learner’s answers. Teachers’ responses were originally termed ‘feedback’ (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) which was revised as ‘follow-up’ (Sinclair & Brazil, 1982), due to the many ways of addressing the learners’ responses in the second turn, and are viewed as giving the learners a positive or negative reaction to their utterances. Mehan (1979), re-named the third move as Evaluation, with the result that both IRF and IRE are used to describe the interactional moves which take place in teacher/pupil dialogue. In this study the term used will be IRF, as it is the more recent.

It should be noted that the third turn and its function can be problematic. Interaction is a complex social phenomenon, which needs to be recognised as comprising more than its verbal features (Kumpulainen & Wray, 2002). In many studies, the follow-up move is considered evaluative, when, in fact, it may have another purpose such as extending the discourse through the use of referential rather than display questioning (Cullen, 2002), that is, questions to which the teacher does not know the answer rather than questions asked so that the learner can display his/her knowledge.

There may also be a perceived conversational function if the teacher chooses to use repetition in the third turn (Schegloff 1997, Tannen 2007), which goes beyond an

affirmation of the pupil's answer because of the reinforcement provided by paralinguistic features such as body language, gesture and eye contact and tone which are used in face to face discourse (Francis & Hunston, 1992).

Defenders of the IRF may argue that strategies such as repetition, gesture and non-verbal communication could be termed follow-up; although there is no overt confirmation of the learner's utterance, it could be said that because there is no negative feedback from the teacher, the message is transmitted to the learner that the utterance is correct and the teacher's third turn is seen both as confirmatory and initiating a new exchange. This illustrates the difficulty of describing the third turn. This issue will be examined more fully in Chapter 6.

An interesting point about the IRF model is that it is prevalent in almost every study of caregiver-child conversation (Seedhouse, 1996). This may be due to the fact that in classroom and in caregiver-child interaction, the focus is on instruction, or learning through dialogue. Mercer (1992) defends the model's 'potential to allow the teacher to monitor children's knowledge and understanding, to guide their learning and to highlight what is viewed to be educationally significant or valuable' (p. 172). Through their use of questioning teachers can get a clear view of what the learners know, in order to move the learning to a further developmental level. The next section will look in more detail at the strategies that teachers employ when questioning learners and their purposes in the ML classroom.

#### **2.4.2 Questioning**

Fundamental to the analysis of the data in this study was an understanding of the way the teachers might use questions to interact with the learners. As we have seen at the beginning of this section, the IRF participation framework prevails in the classroom. Teachers' questioning therefore forms a large part of the interaction which takes place. In a secondary ML classroom, where the teacher is the manager and instigator of the interaction which takes place (Walsh, 2006), questioning is seen as central to involving the learners in the lesson and scaffolding their learning as they collaborate together to

construct meaning (Vygotsky, 1986, 1978). Teachers question to assess that learners' cognition is at a level which allows them to proceed to the next step of the learning process and to develop their communicative competence (Mercer, 1992).

#### **2.4.3 'Display' Questions**

Display questions are those questions to which teachers already know the answers. In the ML classroom, questions are used to assess pupils' understanding of key concepts or how to use the language accurately. They are normally evident as the first turn, or initiation, in the IRF exchange. The use of display questions in the classroom has been criticised because they are not seen as examples of 'real' or 'natural' conversation (Long & Sato, 1983). They have also been termed 'purposeless' because they ask for information that the teacher and the learners know already and only serve to show what the pupil has learned (Nunn, 1999); as such, they limit the learners' opportunities to develop an extended and meaningful exchange. Learners may restrict their responses to what they think the teacher expects and will evaluate positively, reluctant to attempt any other communication, the form of which they may be unsure.

However, the use of display questions is seen as a necessary and useful tool for assessment of a pupil's learning (Mercer, 1992) and can be helpful when used to measure if the teacher's objectives for the lesson have been met (Magsig et al., 2007). Not only are they used as an assessment tool; their very predictability may be reassuring for certain types of learner (Magsig et al., 2007). Display questions in the ML context also allow the learners to practise model responses as they perform in preparation for interaction outside the classroom.

#### **2.4.4 'Referential' Questions**

Referential questioning, on the other hand, is less predictable. The teacher does not know what answer the learner will provide, thus making the question more 'genuine' (Walsh, 2006: 67). '[I]ncreasing the use of referential questions over display questions is likely to stimulate a greater quantity of genuine classroom interaction' (Nunan, 1987: 142).

Referential questions are seen as promoting more natural communication than a 'distorted version' realised through display questions (Long & Sato, 1983). Although the teacher's purpose in asking a referential question may be pedagogical, s/he exploits the social nature of the exchange to engage the learner as an active participant, a role emphasised by both the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic paradigms as highly important (Kumpulainen & Wray, 2002). The learner, in responding to a referential question, must call on his/her previous learning and use it to communicate meaning rather than a prepared response focusing on the form of the language, which may not be relevant to his/her situation.

#### **2.4.5 'Tag' Questions**

Teachers may also make great use of tag questions when interacting with pupils. A tag question usually follows a statement and has a variety of functions (Tottie & Hoffman, 2006). Tag questions may be used for emphasis, for confirmation of understanding, to show support of another's utterance or to seek agreement. In the ML classroom typical tags may include phrases like: *Alles klar? Das geht? N'est-ce pas? Ça va?* or one word tags such as: *Ja? Ok? Oui?* Holmes (1983) categorises two different categories of tag questions; the first she labels 'modal' which are used for confirmation purposes; the second is given the title 'affective', which indicates concern for the person, or persons addressed. Affective tags are considered facilitative in terms of offering others the opportunity to co-operate in speech acts and to soften negative comments or commands in order to save face on the part of the listener (Holmes, 1983). Holmes suggests that tag questions are used by interlocutors who have a responsibility for the successful outcome of an exchange.

Alternatives to questioning, 'open negotiation' (Dashwood, 2005) are seen as promoting longer learner turns. Dillon (1994) provides examples of alternatives to questions, including expression of interest in the learner's answer by the teacher, making a reflective comment, stating a point of view, or referring to other learners' utterances (pp.77-85). Dashwood's study found greater participation in discussion from the

students in the study, who were adult second language students participating in a university preparatory study skills course, when alternatives to questions were used. In the secondary school context, perhaps modifications could be made to the strategies described by Dashwood which incorporate scaffolding to enable the learners to respond appropriately.

Teachers' questions are a way of finding out how much the learner knows. Learners' responses may reveal errors which may vary in their seriousness. How the teacher deals with errors so that learning occurs and the learners are not made to feel a loss of face may be instrumental in determining whether they will contribute in further interaction. The way teachers handle errors of production from the learners will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

In a situation where one speaker has the power of knowledge which s/he intends to impart to enhance the other's learning for an educational purpose, reliance on the IRF may be seen as an obstruction to a more 'natural' mode of communication (Seedhouse, 1996) because the perceived pedagogical imperative will impede a more 'conversation-like' exchange. Seedhouse's argument that '... it is, in theory, not possible for teachers to replicate conversation in the classroom as part of a lesson' (p. 18) appears to stem from his belief that the purpose of talk in the classroom is wholly pedagogical. Even when encouraged by the teacher to talk freely, both learners and teachers may find it difficult to speak as naturally as they would outside the classroom. This may be because of the differences in proficiency in using the language which lead learners to think that their utterances will be evaluated by the more knowledgeable teacher, particularly if this has been the pattern in the classroom to date.

This section has discussed the role of interaction and identified what has been recognised as the main framework for interaction that takes place in the classroom. The IRF framework dates from a time 35 years ago when classes were very much teacher-centred. Since then there has been a move towards learner-centred methodology which

does not seem to sit so comfortably with the IRF model. In ML classrooms the IRF model of interaction appears to be still prevalent (Nassaji & Wells, 2000). This chapter will now focus on what the research literature says about actions that teachers take in an interactional setting which have been considered helpful or not in facilitating pupils' learning of a foreign language, bearing in mind that the learners in the study are adolescents in a secondary school.

#### **2.4.6 Teacher Role in Promoting Interaction: Motivation**

This study aimed to identify strategies which teachers can adopt to increase learners' TL contributions in interaction. Bearing in mind the context of the research, that is, the secondary school classroom, with learners who had no choice as to whether they were there or not, motivation may be considered a crucial factor for adolescent learners to actively take part in interaction, particularly in a foreign language in which they may feel less than proficient. The question of motivation is multi-faceted and has been the subject of a great deal of research. However, given the limits of space in this thesis, it has been necessary to restrict this section to a brief summary of some of the main points in the research literature relating to motivating learners in the ML classroom. However, in previous and subsequent sections the issue of motivation is also implicitly addressed, particularly within the fourth section of this review of the literature, which focuses on collaborative practices between teachers and learners.

Dörnyei (2001) and Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) offer advice on creating a group dynamic which is conducive to language production and learning, such as showing enthusiasm, listening to the students, having high but realistic expectations, constructing positive relationships with the learners and their parents and creating and maintaining group norms. Although their strategies have been trialled mainly with adult learners learning English, UK adolescent school pupils learning a modern foreign language, who may be demotivated and consequently disruptive, may also benefit from their suggestions.



For teachers in many UK secondary classrooms, where learners may not be intrinsically motivated and discipline can be an issue, good management of pupil behaviour is seen as a prerequisite (Barton 2006, Cowley 2001). The majority of studies into second language acquisition have not included the issue of discipline, focusing instead on acquisition of lexis, phonology and syntax, perhaps because most studies have involved adult learners. If adult learners lose their motivation, they are more likely to 'vote with their feet' and leave the class rather than stay and be disruptive. Discipline problems are also less likely to occur if the learners are interested in what they are learning and see the point in what they are doing (Harmer, 2006).

Puchta and Schratz (1993) in their discussion of motivation of teenage learners suggest teachers adopt strategies which incorporate learners' interests to diminish potential discipline issues and underline the importance of communication between the teacher and pupils to keep them motivated. Dörnyei (2001) suggests involving learners in dialogue about the goals of lessons and programmes of study, celebrating success in achieving goals and making sure that what they learn is relevant. The relevance of what they learn is crucial: 'the red thread permeating activities' (Chambers, 1999: 37).

It may seem obvious to state that learners should be involved in decisions about what and how they learn but demands of examination syllabi may dictate the content of lessons and it may be difficult to justify including topics which may be seen as unrelated to their present needs in terms of examinations (Dörnyei, 2001). By involving the learners in discussion of why a particular topic may be useful to them, or how language and structures can be transferred to other areas, the relevance becomes more apparent and the learners should engage more in the learning process (Dörnyei, 2001). This practice was noticeable in the present study, as will be shown in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1981), relates to learner motivation and self-confidence. The affective filter is described as an emotional filter which subconsciously inhibits language learning because of negative feelings on the part of the learner, perhaps lack of confidence, which stops him/her from taking the risk of contributing, therefore

acquisition is impeded. If the affective filter is up, the learner is also prevented from benefiting from the input s/he receives. If the affective filter is low, the learner will feel more self-confident and will be able to take advantage of the learning opportunities offered. It is therefore the teacher's job to provide opportunities for learners to interact in a secure, supportive environment (Hall & Verplaetse, 2000:15) where errors they may make will not mean loss of face affecting their willingness to engage with the TL. The creation of an atmosphere which promotes learners' confidence to participate is crucial to avoid learner anxiety about contributing (Tsui, 1996).

#### **2.4.7 Interaction and Learner Anxiety**

As mentioned above, the language classroom is very different to other classrooms, because the lessons are conducted in a language in which the learners are far from proficient. This may have an effect on the learners' willingness to contribute in the TL due to anxiety about being asked to 'perform' in the foreign language in front of classmates, because it brings the risk of embarrassment (Jones, 2004). A perceived emphasis on 'getting it right' may hamper pupils' creativity and confidence in using the language, because they don't want to be seen to 'get it wrong' (Zhao & Morgan, 2004). Although privately secondary school pupils admit that making mistakes is part of the learning process (Crichton, 2006), they are at an age when their peers' opinions are significant and social factors such as their fear of ridicule for making mistakes is very prominent (Horwitz et al. 1986, Young 1999). This unease may be exacerbated by being asked to take the risk of making mistakes in front of their peers, whose opinion may well be regarded as central to the individual pupil's self esteem. In a study of secondary level students studying English in Hong Kong, Tsui (1996) found that 'fear of mistakes and derision' were two of the reasons given for their reluctance to speak in class. The foreign language speakers' fear of speaking English is replicated in Scottish learners' fear of speaking a foreign language. Williams (1994) describes the association between language and self:

Language, after all, belongs to a person's whole social being: it is part of one's identity, and is used to convey this identity to other people. (p.77)

The issue of errors and their correction will be discussed more fully below. However, it is important in this section to recognise that fear of making mistakes may affect many learners' confidence. Teachers, therefore, have to be sensitive to the learners' insecurity, while still offering opportunities for output (Ellis, 2005a). Pye (1998:92) uses the expression 'solicitous tenderness' to demonstrate how skilful teachers manage to create a sympathetic and caring atmosphere and to establish an environment between the teacher and learners so that the learners feel valued and at ease contributing to the interaction of the class (Dörnyei, 2001). A critical skill for teachers is to be effective in establishing an atmosphere of collaboration:

It is easy to tell when the "pleasant-and -supportive classroom-atmosphere" is there - you can sense it after a few minutes' stay in the particular class. There is no tension in the air; students are at ease; ...there is mutual trust and respect. No need for anyone to feel anxious or insecure. (Dörnyei, 2001: 41)

Brown and Yule (1983a) also argue that learners are most likely to produce good language when they are under least "communicative stress" (p.34), a view supported by Kristmanson (2000), who describes the successful language learning environment as 'an atmosphere in which anxiety levels are low and comfort levels are high' (p.1). Allwright (1984) suggests that learners with enhanced self-respect will be more effective learners. Exploring how teachers go about creating an atmosphere where the pupils' affective filter appears to be low when asked to respond in the TL despite their limited language resource was one of the aims of the present study; and the findings reveal how the teachers acted to create such an ethos. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the strategies the teachers used, which appeared designed to underline the respect they held for the learners and the interest they showed in them.

This section has looked at the role of the teacher in providing a motivational mood which makes the learners want to take part in the interaction which takes place in the ML classroom. The teacher's role in promoting relevant experiences and being responsive to learners' perceived needs is seen as crucial to guarantee a positive learning experience

for the pupils as both parties collaborate to construct a learning environment. The next part of this section will consider the way teachers handle learners' errors of production.

#### **2.4.8 Error Correction**

Learners will inevitably make errors when they produce language, particularly if the teacher's initiation requires an unprepared answer. Errors may occur as a result of MT interference, an overgeneralisation of TL grammatical rules or lack of experience in the language (Richards, 1971). Nervousness about accuracy may mean that the affective filter is up and learners avoid speaking out. The teacher, therefore, has to deal with errors sensitively in order to save the learners' face.

The way errors of production are analysed and corrected is seen as significant in assisting learners' output development (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Teachers' responses to learners' contributions in the foreign language provide not only cognitive feedback, but also affective feedback, demonstrating approval or disapproval. Lynch (1996) points out that unless carefully managed, the act of correcting may impose an emotional burden on the learner and suggests that implicit negative feedback, such as a request for clarification, can be a more effective teaching device than explicit correction. Lyster and Ranta (1997:46) categorise six different types of corrective feedback, which are defined below:

- Explicit correction; the teacher draws attention to the error and tells the pupil the correct answer.
- Recast: the teacher reformulates the pupil's answer in the correct form, without drawing attention to the error.
- Clarification request; the teacher asks the pupil to reformulate his/her utterance by indicating that s/he has not understood.
- Metalinguistic clues; without explicitly saying what is wrong with the utterance, the teacher prompts the pupil to think about form or pronunciation.

- Elicitation; the teacher prompts the pupil to answer by starting an utterance which s/he expects the pupil to finish.
- Repetition; the teacher repeats the pupil's error with rising intonation which focuses on the error.

The corrective moves identified above will be further discussed in relation to the present study in the chapters describing the analysis of the data.

Lyster and Ranta found that recasts, that is, repetition of the learner's utterance with the error corrected, were the most common type of corrective feedback. However they also found that recasts were the most likely of the negative feedback techniques to be ignored by the learners. Teachers have to balance negative feedback with positive encouragement to pupils to continue their efforts but should also take care that in their determination to facilitate the latter, pupils do not ignore the feedback they get.

Mendelsohn (1990) categorises error correction under two broad headings; linguistic correction and sociolinguistic correction, which includes non-verbal communication, for example, a nod or shake of the head or a hand gesture, and paralinguistic features such as tone and intonation, when the teacher may repeat the learner's error emphasising the faulty utterance with rising intonation. Sociolinguistic correction is seen as being as important as linguistic correction since it softens the effect of the negative language, taking into account face concerns, thus should not inhibit future contributions. Overt linguistic correction, without the sociolinguistic features mentioned above, may have a negative effect on a learner's confidence with the result that s/he will discontinue attempts to communicate (Allan, 1991).

Many adult learners expect and seek correction (Chenoweth et al., 1983) but when the learners are adolescents, teachers may have to be sensitive when dealing with errors. The key message from the literature cited above is the sensitivity with which teachers should approach error correction. Teachers' repetition, either in the form of recasts or with rising intonation as a prompt to learners to reflect on an erroneous utterance, has been

acknowledged as a correction device (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). The next part of this section will consider further uses of teacher repetition.

#### **2.4.9 Repetition**

Hellerman's (2003) view of repetition in the IRF framework is that the third turn is generally classed as a confirmatory move, validating the pupil's answer. However, repetition can have additional functions in interactive exchanges. As mentioned above, repetition with a rising intonation may alert the learner to the fact that s/he has made a mistake and offers the chance to self-correct (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

Many teachers use repetition to echo the utterances of individual pupils so that the whole class can hear what was said, although this amplification has been seen by some as intruding into the flow of discourse and to be discouraged (Walsh, 2002). However, in a secondary classroom where the learners may not speak up clearly it is essential for other learners to hear, as well as offering the teacher the opportunity to recast, if necessary, errors of pronunciation or syntax.

Repetition of a pupil's utterances may give the teacher time to reflect whether to develop the exchange or to move to another pupil. It may also give the pupils not taking part in the exchange more 'thinking time' to decode the utterance (Tannen, 2007). Teachers' repetition of learners' speech may also serve to inform them that their communication has been received (Schegloff, 1997).

Pica (1994) found that repetition and reformulation of teachers' utterances gave learners more opportunities to detect the features of the language they were learning. Expressions that the teacher repeats continuously and consistently in the classroom allow the learners to recognise and assimilate sequences of language 'strings' which they can then employ in an appropriate manner, as the constant repetition may help learners to automaticise language they hear (Schneider & Chein, 2003). The use of repetition of recurring language items also gives learners access to formulaic language, which may help learners to become more fluent (Wood, 2001, 2006).

The aim of this study was to identify strategies which teachers used to engage learners in interaction. The literature discussed in this section has focused on types of TL interaction in the language classroom. Teachers may use a variety of moves in interaction: questioning in order to learn the extent of the learners' knowledge and understanding; sensitive error correction so that the learners continue to make efforts to develop their communicative skills; repetition to underscore and allow the learners further time to make sense of correct language usage and build up a stock of language which can be put to use in interactive sequences in preparation for exchanges with native speakers.

It has been noted that the role of the teacher is central in providing opportunities for pupils not only to interact, but to acquire a reserve of useful language. The following section will focus on the contexts in the ML lesson within which TL interaction takes place and types of interactive sequences which may occur in different phases of the lesson.

#### **2.4.10 Interactional Contexts Within the Lesson**

There appears to be agreement in the research literature that interaction is essential in the development of learners' communication skills. Within the classroom, the interaction has been viewed as being of different analytical types, (Ellis 1984, van Lier 1988, Tsui 1997), frames (Abdesslem, 1993) or contexts (Seedhouse, 2004), depending on the focus of the lesson. Although the number of categories, and their titles and descriptions are different according to the preferences of the individual researcher, there are elements of similarity in the descriptive terms used to explain them (Seedhouse, 2004). There appears to be a distinction between whether interactional language is either topic oriented or activity oriented (van Lier, 1988) and if the interaction is centred on the medium or the message (Ellis 1984, Abdesslem 1993). In Chapter 3 there is greater discussion of the way pedagogical foci of the lesson influence the language used in interaction. In seeking to identify strategies teachers use to promote TL interaction with the learners, it is important to take into account the focus of the lesson when interaction

takes place. The next sections consider particular contexts for learning, in which greater emphasis may be placed on the medium or the message.

#### **2.4.11 Practice**

As noted earlier, a common approach in CLT is Presentation, Practice and Production. The teacher presents new vocabulary or structures to the learners which they then practise in a number of controlled reinforcement exercises until the language is consolidated and ready to be used ‘naturally’ in conversation with native speakers. Perhaps the greatest amount of time spent in a language classroom is on practising the language in a variety of tasks, which may be carefully scaffolded to develop the learners’ confidence in communicating meaning accurately. The need for practice in language learning was made by Leibniz as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century in his assertion that language was acquired through practice and merely perfected through grammar. In order to give learners opportunities to practise using the TL, teachers may make use of activities such as games and speaking tasks, for example ‘information gap’ exercises, where individuals have to convey information to a partner or others in a group. Role plays and simulations can also be used as well as problem solving exercises, discussions and descriptions in order to give the learners the opportunity to practise and improve their output (Ur 1995). Ur contends:

Practice ...is arguably the most important of all the stages of learning; hence the most important classroom activity of the teacher is to initiate and manage activities that provide students with opportunities for effective practice. (p.20)

To illustrate the need for practice, Belchamber (2007) draws the analogy of a nurse practising injections on pieces of fruit before actually injecting a real person. In the same way, language learners practise their communication skills in the context of the classroom, where they will receive feedback, before using their knowledge to communicate with native speakers outside the classroom. The framework within which this controlled practice usually takes place is the IRF framework (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975).



Cook (2001) argues that language practice in the classroom using the IRF sequence to offer feedback on the learners' utterances only equips them to participate in other language classrooms, a claim based on the assumption that the classroom has its own 'genre' of interaction and that the teacher's use of the TL can never replicate the wide variety of language as it is used outside the classroom. However, he does not appear to offer an alternative to language practice as a way of developing competence in communicating meaning, which begs the question: if learners are to become proficient communicators in a foreign language, how can they rehearse the language they will need to perform in the target situation?

Number 7 in Ellis's 10 Principles for Instructed Language Learning (2005b) states 'Successful instructed language learning also requires opportunities for output'. Principle number 8 states: 'The opportunity to interact in the L2 is central to developing L2 proficiency'. Although practice of language systems is viewed as important, learners must also be encouraged to make meaning through using language for their own purposes. Ellis (2005b) cites Johnson's four key requirements for acquisition through interaction (1995), two of which are particularly relevant to the present study: creating contexts of language use where students have a reason to attend to language and providing opportunities for learners to use the language to express their own personal meanings.

#### **2.4.12 Communicative Tasks**

In the field of teaching English as a foreign language, task-based learning has become popular, offering learners opportunities to use the language through the setting up of communicative tasks where the learners work either in pairs or groups with the goal of sharing information. Nunan (1991) lists five features of the sort of tasks that teachers use within a Communicative Language Approach :

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
2. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.

3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the Learning Management process.
4. An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom. (p. 279)

Tasks which incorporate the features above have been chosen for the learners because they reflect the kind of language they will have to use when communicating with native speakers outside the classroom. They also address the need for a grammatical underpinning for most effective communication.

A genuinely communicative activity as described by Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) '... involves at least two participants working together to complete a task by exchanging information possessed by one and not the other' (p.331). However, although such an activity may be designated genuinely communicative, learners do not achieve 'genuine' communication by working through an 'information gap' type activity which has been set up by the teacher and therefore has a predictable correct answer, but rather when they need to seek the information, which may involve having to use language which they have to retrieve from earlier learning experiences to negotiate understanding by the other party, whether it is another pupil or the teacher.

#### **2.4.13 Negotiation of Meaning**

Empirical studies have demonstrated the importance of negotiation of meaning in language learning (Gass & Varonis 1994, Ellis et al. 1994). By having to use the TL to negotiate meaning, the learners develop their production skills (Swain, 2000). Negotiation of meaning occurs in a conversational exchange where speakers work together to create understanding. This may happen where there is a breakdown of communication owing to problems in understanding. When this happens, meaning has to be negotiated by the participants to resolve the impasse. Negotiation of meaning has

been credited with facilitating acquisition, 'setting the scene for potential learning' (Gass et al., 1998: 304).

Linked to negotiation of meaning theories, Long's (1996) updated version of his Interaction Hypothesis highlights the role of implied negative feedback in facilitating language acquisition. As learners are given negative cues by their listeners, through requests for clarification, they are obliged to negotiate meaning until a satisfactory result has been achieved, through the learner's retrieval of previously learned structures and vocabulary and the interlocutor's modification of input to make it more comprehensible. Although various studies have supported the idea of negotiation of meaning (Gass & Varonis 1994, Pica 1994) as facilitating acquisition, Gass (1997) points out that improvement in language production development may not be seen immediately.

However, most of the research into meaning negotiation has been done with native/ non-native speaker dyads or non-native speaker adult learners working in pairs, which may be less helpful when looking at the way secondary teachers use the language to draw their pupils into an interactive exchange. It may be problematic to generate opportunities for the transfer of 'genuine' communication in a secondary school classroom, where the learners know each other well and may resort to the common MT rather than negotiate meaning in the TL.

In the ML secondary classroom where there are up to thirty-three novice learners and one expert, negotiation of meaning between the learners may be less prevalent than in an adult learning environment. Hawkins (1985) showed that learners frequently pretended they had understood when in fact they had not. Foster (1998), in a study of adult learners, found that many of her subjects made few, if any, attempts to negotiate for meaning. She suggested that the reality of the classroom may not reflect the academic results achieved by research using controlled experimental tasks. The adult classroom that she describes may be reflected or indeed amplified in a secondary classroom situation, where learners have no choice whether they are there or not. This study was undertaken to identify strategies teachers use to stimulate pupil interaction in the TL. If

learners do not voluntarily contribute to the learning process, the way the teacher uses the TL may be crucial in providing a model and a stimulus which makes learners want to interact. Teachers should therefore be ready to link the pedagogic purpose of the lesson to the provision of learning opportunities for the active construction of TL talk (Walsh, 2002).

Drawing on Hymes's (1972) theory of communicative competence, Mitchell and Myles (1998) have drawn attention to the difference between 'using' and 'learning' (p. 21) language. They suggest that there are two perspectives on interaction: psycholinguistic, in which interaction allows the learner to perfect the language through the modifications they make during negotiating meaning and negative feedback; and sociolinguistic, which relates to Vygotsky's (1978, 1986) and Bruner's (1983) theories of socially constructed learning through scaffolded interaction. Firth and Wagner (1997), also drawing on Hymes's theories, highlight the fact that communication in a variety of social situations can be achieved through whatever means the speaker has at his/her disposal. The notion of the superiority of the 'native speaker', whose language level is seen as the benchmark to which learners should aspire, may not always be appropriate. In the secondary school context, where accuracy will play a part in pupils' assessment in examinations, the teacher has to find a balance between encouraging communicative interaction and focusing on the form of the language.

#### **2.4.14 'Comprehensible Output Hypothesis'**

Although there may be errors of syntax, negotiation of meaning presupposes that learners will use the TL and structures they know to transmit meaning. Swain's 'Comprehensible Output Hypothesis' (1985) argues that 'getting one's message across' (p. 248) is not enough and more focus on accuracy and appropriate language is necessary for acquisition. A study conducted by Swain & Lapkin (1995) found that, through noticing that they did not know how to say what they wanted to in the TL, learners were forced to think of the form of the language they wished to use. Output is now seen as a way that the learners can test their hypotheses about how to form language utterances

accurately to convey meaning and gain feedback on their effectiveness from the more knowledgeable interlocutor (Gass, 1997). In the secondary ML classroom the teacher is recognised as the 'knower' (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) but because s/he is working with adolescents may have to ensure that any negative feedback does not engender a negative response from the learner, which might impede their language learning.

It has been suggested by Pica (1987) that activities in which learners have to exchange information may increase the amount of TL negotiation that takes place in the classroom. This may be achievable with motivated adult learners who come from different language backgrounds; in a secondary school, where the learners share a first language, it may be less feasible, with the result that the responsibility for providing negotiation moves would fall to the teacher. In the secondary classroom the teacher provides the bulk of the TL that pupils have to attend to; it may be problematic to engage enough learners in enough modified interaction in the short time available for a lesson to ensure that they and other pupils will notice the language that they need to develop, particularly since the interactional modifications described by Long (1996) and others may take some time to achieve. In the UK secondary school context there are competing pressures in a ML lesson, for example, progress through the course syllabus or preparation for future examinations. TL strategies, such as the ones identified in this research, may increase teachers' effectiveness in developing learners' TL communicative skills, while not neglecting other perceived demands on teaching time.

In the ML classroom, where learners are expected to take an active part in the interaction, the teacher will play the part of the interlocutor, pushing the learners to respond by collaborating with them to make meaning in the foreign language. If there are large numbers of pupils, this may mean that individual learners' opportunities to interact meaningfully may be limited (Mackey, 1999). However, the 'overhearers' of the interaction may also benefit as teachers direct their language to both addressee and auditors (Ohta, 2001).

If learners are actively listening and paying attention to the dialogue, they are providing an ‘active response’ (van Lier, 1996: 49). Although they may not be contributing verbally to interaction, while they are listening the learners are working to make sense of the teacher’s comprehensible input and, as noted earlier in this chapter, may ‘notice’ certain structures or vocabulary items which s/he employs, which they may subsequently use themselves (Schmidt, 2001). They may also, through the use of non-verbal communication, such as eye contact, nods or facial expression, signal that they are following the teacher’s talk and therefore the interaction may not be said to be one-sided. The importance of teachers’ TL as a resource for pupils who are not taking part verbally in interaction is discussed more fully in Chapter 6.

This section of the review of the literature has focused on theories of interaction and the contexts which influence types and functions of interaction in the ML classroom. The setting for the interaction which takes place, that is, the classroom, may be an important influential factor in shaping the learning experiences of the pupils. The research which informs this thesis aimed to identify how teachers, through their use of TL, created a classroom environment which contributed to an overarching ethos of TL interaction, where it appeared natural for the learners to collaborate in the learning process. The next section examines research findings into interaction in the special context that is the language classroom environment and the importance of collaborative practices which sustain TL interaction. Although the majority of this research has been conducted in an English language setting, the findings were considered significant because they highlight

## **2.5 The Second Language Classroom Environment: Creating a Collaborative Atmosphere**

### **2.5.1 Institutional Interaction**

The classroom is an institutional context, and has its own terminology and discourse conventions (Seedhouse, 2004). When compared to the relatively stress-free atmosphere in which first language acquisition usually takes place as language is made part of the self (Krashen, 1988), the ML classroom may be described as an artificial context for

language learning (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). Not only is TL the subject of instruction, but if the teacher speaks in the TL exclusively or extensively in the classroom, it is also the means by which it is taught (Taylor, 1994), which makes it different from other subject classrooms. Another key difference from other classrooms may be the disparity of skill in the TL used for dialogue between the two main parties in the classroom, which means that the nature of the interaction that the teacher institutes is crucial. The focus of this study is on the way good practitioners adapt their TL so that learners not only understand but are supported to respond using the TL themselves in a supportive and collaborative atmosphere.

While the classroom may be judged an artificial situation compared to the way first language is acquired (Allwright & Bailey, 1991), it represents a very real environment to the pupils and teachers, who spend a large part of their day in school, and it will be as familiar to them as other areas of their lives. For this reason, some of the interaction that takes place may not appear to have an overtly pedagogical aim. It may be that the teacher's use of the TL to instigate more informal dialogue, while not appearing explicitly instructive, also supports pupils' acquisition of language structures and vocabulary, particularly when pupils are called upon to respond. In acknowledging that learners co-construct to a greater or lesser extent what happens in the classroom, Schunk (1992) advises teachers to be adaptive to the dynamic in the classroom, by keeping the dialogue focused. Erikson (1982) describes this as 'the collective improvisation of meaning and social organisation from moment to moment' (p.153).

Drawing on Zimmerman's (1998) categorisation of aspects of identity, Richards (2006) proposes that 'transportable identity' (Zimmerman, 1998:91), which is a recognition of teachers' and learners' other identities, for example, as a son or daughter, or as a keen footballer, may change the 'institutional talk' to interaction resembling more of a conversation. In order to achieve greater teacher/pupil interaction on a personal level, Richards argues, the teacher him/herself must be prepared to give the pupils more personal information, about his/her other identities, although he recognises that some

teachers may be reluctant to present this information, fearing a loss of discipline as a result.

Even if the teacher is prepared to reveal personal details in order to establish a less formal atmosphere and support an apparently more informal interaction, it is not considered an easy task to achieve. 'Natural' patterns of interaction in the classroom, such as conversation-type language may be difficult for the teacher to bring about:

[R]esearch studies ... show that even teachers who are committed to communicative language teaching can fail to create opportunities for genuine interaction in the language classroom.

(Kumaravadivelu, 1993: 12)

Takahashi et al. (2000) use the phrase 'instructional conversations' (p.143), which appear 'natural and spontaneous' (p.144) but are in fact directed and scaffolded by the teacher for pedagogical purposes to develop the communicative competence of the learners, so that they not only become more proficient in using the language correctly, they also learn when to use it appropriately, echoing Hymes's (1972) sociolinguistic concept of 'communicative competence', which also underlined the importance of learning to use TL appropriately in addition to learning to use it accurately.

An extreme sociolinguistic position is that it is impossible to have a conversation that has a pedagogical purpose in a classroom. For dialogue to be termed conversation, speakers must be able to nominate turns and topics on an equal basis (Seedhouse, 1996). Nunan (1987) describes 'genuine' communication as situations when '... decisions about who says what to whom and when are up for grabs' (p.137). However, despite his critical attitude, it could be argued that classroom discourse is genuine communication of a particular kind, although it may not be termed 'genuine conversation'. Cullen (1998) counters Nunan's definition of 'genuine' communication by citing formal situations where conversational turns are not 'up for grabs', such as boardrooms, where there are strict rules governing the discourse patterns, but within which genuine communication takes place.



When teachers and learners engage in dialogue in the classroom, even in a practice drill, they are still producing language which is original and unique to that moment. It may be institutional dialogue, but it is certainly authentic.

...attempts to define communicative talk in the classroom must be based primarily on what is or is not communicative in the context of the classroom itself, rather than what may or may not be communicative in other contexts (Cullen, 1998: 180)

The interaction that takes place in the classroom, therefore, could be viewed as authentic to that context. Breen (1985) describes the authenticity of the classroom as a 'rather special social event and environment' (p.67) where the main purpose is learning. The communication which happens is controlled by the teacher with a view to facilitating pupils' learning and may lack the spontaneity of that which occurs in 'natural' situations but, as Widdowson (1990) argues, the whole point of a classroom is that it is not a natural situation. Its purpose is teaching and learning. Learners, as they will do with other school subjects, will apply what they have learned in other contexts (Taylor, 1994) when they need to interact with native speakers. The purpose of the study is to examine the way teachers prepare their learners to apply their learning to communicate meaning effectively in the TL through exploiting a collaborative ethos they have created.

### **2.5.2 Collaboration in the ML Classroom**

Earlier in this chapter, involvement of learners in discussion of their learning was seen as beneficial for motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). Allwright and Bailey (1991) state that language lessons are always "co-productions", the result of the interaction of all the people present, not just the result of the teacher's lesson plan. Interaction is not something that is "done" to the pupils, but something that is done collectively involving collaboration between the teacher and the pupils (Mercer, 1995). In the classroom this will determine the learning opportunities. Teachers and learners will view the classroom through their own frames of reference so it is important that different understandings are

resolved so that the learners can be helped to construct their own understanding through their participation in the learning process (Barnes, 1976).

If a social-constructivist view of learning is taken, lessons are co-constructed as learners and the teacher interact through talk (Vygotsky 1978, 1986, Mercer 1995). Effective teaching and learning takes place when the teacher is successful in engaging the learners so that they collaborate in the process of constructing knowledge (Allwright & Bailey 1991, Mercer 2000, Nassaji & Wells, 2000).

As stated earlier, although not usually in general practice in some other countries, for example, Confucian Heritage Culture countries, socio-cultural learning theories stress the importance of learning as a social activity, as learners construct their learning either collaboratively or individually, with the support of a more knowledgeable 'mentor' who guides the learning process (Walsh, 2006). Language is the resource used to mediate cognitive development through social interaction with another more skilled practitioner helping the learner to reflect until s/he is able verbalise what s/he has learned (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986).

Vygotsky's view was that social interaction was a key factor in children's cognitive development and that, through talk, learners played an active role in learning within a collaborative framework, either with the teacher or their peers. Learning is seen as a joint enterprise with, rather than transmission from, the 'more knowledgeable other'. As noted in section 2 of this review of the literature, the process through which the learner is assisted in co-constructing his/her understanding was termed by Vygotsky the 'Zone of Proximal Development'.

[The Zone of Proximal Development] is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978: 86)

Initially the teacher takes greater responsibility for providing assistance, through questioning or initiating discussion, which scaffolds the pupil's construction of understanding. The level of support is then adjusted gradually, until the learner is able to take responsibility him/herself, when it diminishes completely. The engagement with the 'more knowledgeable other' allows the pupil to perform at a level higher than that which s/he would achieve individually; as a result s/he will refine his/her thinking and therefore perform more effectively on subsequent occasions.

The exploitation of the Vygotskian model in the ML classroom suggests that teachers create opportunities for interaction with the learners in order to scaffold their production of the TL, by scoping down each task into more manageable parts, lessening and then removing the support supplied as learners become more proficient and able to move on to the next stage of the process through 'dialogic inquiry' (Wells, 1999).

The interpersonal process of discussion which takes place on a social level during the completion of tasks leads to an intrapersonal one as the child reflects on what has been learned and internalises it as his/her understanding develops, not in a linear manner, but in a spiral, which means that the child revisits previous learning each time s/he moves to a higher level (Vygotsky, 1978: 56). The recycling of TL structures and vocabulary in the ML classroom as learners progress may be instrumental in reinforcing prior learning, as the pupils hear and use familiar language in a variety of more complex situations (Nunan, 2006). Using previously learned structures and vocabulary as a base on which to construct new understandings means that previously learned language is constantly reinforced, as the teacher then helps learners develop their knowledge through building on prior learning (Bruner, 1978). 'What is the ZPD of today is the actual developmental level tomorrow' (Vygotsky, 1978: 87).

Mercer (2000) describes the process of co-constructing knowledge as an 'Intermental Development Zone' (p.141) which, he argues, more aptly illustrates the collaborative nature of meaning-making between the novice and the more experienced practitioner, rather than focusing on instruction given to the learner by the mentor in the ZPD. Both

Vygotsky's and Mercer's descriptions of the co-construction of knowledge make clear that interactive procedures in the classroom should contribute to learners' cognitive development.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

In reviewing the literature regarding how the acquisition of second languages is supported by the teacher's use of TL for interaction with the learners, the aim has been to provide justification, and a theoretical context for the study, by focusing on what the research says regarding interaction in the ML classroom. There appears to be a lack of research into just what happens in the secondary school ML classroom, where the subject is compulsory. Adolescent learners will require different handling to adult learners of English if the teacher is to get the best out of them. In the review of the literature, the importance of co-operation and collaboration for effective teaching and learning has been clear. What is less clear is how this is achieved in the classroom where the teacher is speaking a different language to the learners' MT, a language in which they are not proficient or particularly confident. Several factors which appeared to be influential in promoting effective learning and teaching were evident in the literature and were considered important during the analysis of the data.

A main consideration of the study was to identify how teachers created an atmosphere where they worked together collaboratively with the learners to construct knowledge through interaction in the foreign language within a communicative approach. Theories of first and second language acquisition suggest that interaction with a more knowledgeable other is fundamental to acquiring the requisite skills and knowledge for effective communication. This inevitably necessitates looking at the way teachers use language to make meaning with learners and also how, as experienced speakers of the language, they support learners to contribute meaningfully to the interaction so that development of their communication skills can take place.

Socio-cultural theories of learning also emphasise the significance of interaction in learners' development, therefore, the scaffolding that the teachers make available to the

learners through their use of language should be examined to understand just how they facilitate the learners' progress in communicating meaning, while not neglecting the form of the language.

The research literature also makes clear the importance of affect in the establishment and maintenance of motivational conditions for interaction. This is particularly important when the class comprises adolescent learners, for whom the notion of face is central. It is therefore essential to consider the way the teachers use the TL to convey the existence of a cordial yet businesslike dynamic, where the learners feel at ease with a low affective filter.

The overarching themes of collaboration, interaction and affect inform the analysis of the data which will be discussed in Chapters, 4, 5 and 6.

## **Chapter 3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Underpinning this chapter is a concern to provide a clear rationale for the chosen methodology and clear explanations of the methods chosen to collect and analyse the data gathered in this exploratory study so that as trustworthy as possible an account may be tendered. Accordingly, in this chapter the methodology employed in the study is presented. There will be justification for the choices of methods and discussion of issues around those choices, observation, supported by teacher and pupil interviews, as well as reflection on subsequent decisions taken in the light of emerging themes and findings arising from initial analysis of the data set. This chapter provides detailed information relating to the collection of the data and explanation for choices taken regarding participants, the institutions and the contexts for the research. Definitions of terms used in the analysis of the data will be offered. There will be justification of frameworks used which give a clear picture of the way the teachers assisted the learners to develop their spoken language skills and move towards using the TL to make their own meaning. Questions of validity and reliability of the findings will be considered and an account of the stages taken in analysing the data will be provided. Measures taken to conduct the study in an ethical manner will also be described.

### **3.2 Research questions**

The rationale behind the study and the research questions has been explained in Chapter 1. A review of the research literature in Chapter 2 provided a context within which the study is situated and informed the research questions, which focus on the interaction that takes place in the ML classroom with a view to identifying teachers' strategies for involving and sustaining interaction with their learners in the TL.

- What TL strategies are employed by teachers to develop an active response from the learners, specifically, what do the teachers do to enable pupils to use the language for a communicative purpose in the Scottish secondary ML classroom?
- How do teachers exploit the social nature of the classroom encounter to create opportunities to involve the pupils in interaction in the TL?

In order to answer the research questions effectively, the study employed a variety of approaches within an overarching qualitative methodology; the data were collected principally through observation and audio recording of teachers' lessons, supported by interviews with them and a selection of their pupils. However, as the analysis got underway, it became obvious that the addition of quantitative methods would complement the qualitative methodology planned for the study by providing a clearer picture of the teachers' and pupils' TL use. The relative value of using methods from different paradigms will be discussed thoroughly in the second part of this chapter, where the process of the analysis of the data is discussed. However, it should be noted here that, despite employing quantitative methods, the intention was not to test a set of hypotheses using predefined coding schemes in a top-down model. Rather, the objective involved the process of uncovering schemes of categorising the data which would allow deeper inductive interpretation to take place. In the first section below, details of the participants and collection of the data and related issues will be described.

Given that the aim of the study was to identify successful strategies in promoting interaction in the TL, the research questions necessitated close observation. The observations provided the main source of data. However, interviews with teachers and pupils were considered important as a secondary source of information, a background to the foreground the observations provided. The following sections will explain further the choices of observation and interviews and the way they were carried out, as well as providing a rationale for the choice of teachers.

### **3.3 The Teacher and Pupil Sample**

The stated aim of the study, as defined in the research questions, determined the choice of teachers. Four ML teachers chosen as examples of good practice, who used the TL extensively, were observed and recorded teaching on five occasions. Details of their classes and the schools in which they worked will be provided after the reasons behind the choice of teachers have been presented.

As stated above, the purpose of the study defined the choice of models of ‘good practice’ and the way the data were collected. As an exploratory study, there was no element of intervention planned; choosing experts meant that there was less chance of confounding differences between the teachers’ levels of skills and experience with differences of approach.

The concept of ‘best practice’ in teaching has been attacked as being unacceptable by Edge & Richards (1998) who argue that the general application of such an expression as a benchmark to which teachers should aspire, does not take into account the diversity of each educational context, which may be crucial to the approach taken by a teacher. Furthermore, they argue that the identification of practices deemed ‘best’ may result in a de-skilling of teachers, who may feel obliged to change practices, which may already be very effective in their classrooms, in order to conform to what has been deemed ‘best practice’ in other contexts. Concern is also expressed that definitions of what may be termed ‘best practice’ may lead to ‘checklists’ of procedures which are then used to assess teachers, perhaps by non-educators. ‘The best is the enemy of the good’ (p.571). For this reason, bearing in mind the different contexts in which they worked, I was keen to select teachers who could be considered examples of ‘good practice’ *within their particular context*.

The research and professional literature, although at variance on some aspects of teaching and learning ML, appears to concur regarding many of the characteristics of a ‘good’ ML classroom and good practice in teaching ML, identifying certain features of effective ML teaching: a communicative methodology; extensive comprehensible TL; the creation of a collaborative atmosphere where learners are disposed to answer using the TL; opportunities for the learners to interact using the TL. Since the study aimed to identify successful strategies employed by ‘good’ teachers which could be used to support beginning as well as more experienced teachers, the factors above were used as a pattern to determine a model of ‘good practice’. Four teachers were then identified who appeared to fulfil the criteria.



The four teachers were all known to me through my work as a teacher educator. Although I had not seen them teach before commencing the study, two things influenced my assessment of their teaching skills: feedback from student teachers who had been placed in their classrooms and my own opinions of their pupils' oral skills. Student teachers all mentioned the congenial atmosphere and the amount of TL used in the classroom by both teachers and pupils. On visits to the classrooms of these teachers to assess students' progress, my impression of the pupils was that they were well grounded in the structures underpinning the language and that they readily answered questions put to them in the TL, which suggested that they were not only used to hearing and speaking in the TL but were also able to formulate utterances fairly accurately. Another factor influenced my choice of teachers for which it was more difficult to provide evidence: in each of the teachers' classrooms the pupils appeared stress-free and willing to engage in the TL. Even if they seemed unsure of an answer, they generally made an effort to use the TL to communicate and did not appear daunted by errors. This atmosphere, in my estimation, demonstrated the existence of a classroom culture where the pupils felt secure and supported.

However, aware that my beliefs might be viewed differently by others, I sought corroboration from sources which could be viewed as more objective, HMIe and Local Authority Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs), both of whom operate using strict criteria when conducting inspections or reviews. HMIe reports of the ML departments in which the teachers worked indicated that they were operating at a 'very good' level. Local Authority QIOs also affirmed the high regard in which they held the teachers, having observed them teach during school reviews. In all the schools the results for ML examinations compared favourably to other subjects and there were proportionally larger than average numbers of pupils opting to continue studying a language post 16, compared to other elective subjects.

I approached the teachers initially by email, defining the proposed study as an investigation of good practice in ML teaching and requesting a meeting with them if they were interested in taking part. When we met to discuss the possibility of their classes being observed, all agreed enthusiastically. They were all assured that they could withdraw from the study at any time if they wished and that all information which could identify them or their schools would be anonymised. Having gained their agreement, I wrote to each head teacher providing an outline of the proposed study and my own details, requesting permission to observe and record a sample of classes and also to interview a sample of pupils. Once permission was granted I then prepared a letter to the parents of the pupils selected for interview asking for permission to interview them to obtain their views on effective modern language teaching. In all but one of the cases, the parents agreed. The interviews with both teachers and pupils and ethical issues involved in conducting the observations and interviews will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

The teachers were all qualified in French and German and comprised four females and one male, demonstrating a range of experience. They all believed strongly that extensive use of the TL in the classroom was crucial for the pupils' development of their communication skills and were committed to make every effort to promote it as the lingua franca of the classroom. The study was not one-language specific; Teachers 1, 2 and 4 were observed teaching French classes; Teacher 3 was observed teaching a German class. The decision was taken to include both languages as they are the most common foreign languages taught in Scottish secondary schools and many teachers are qualified in both. In examining more than one language I was seeking to pre-empt any reaction by practitioners that these findings might be true for French but perhaps questioning their relevance for other languages.

The teachers' classes which were observed in the study were mixed-sex and in their third year (S3) of learning the TL in secondary school. Pupils at this stage are usually aged 14-15. S3 classes were chosen because of the level of language to which they had

already been exposed in the previous two years of learning. By this stage their language level could be termed Basic User level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2002), that is, they knew enough TL to be able to communicate with native speakers using simple language constructions and lexis. I considered that the work of S4 and S5 classes would be focused on examinations and therefore the range and types of communicative activities might be restricted to examination practice.

Each class represented a different level of proficiency. Teacher 3's class was a top performing set in German; Teacher 1 was observed teaching a middle-to-top performing class; Teacher 2 taught a mixed-ability French class, which she grouped according to the pupils' level of performance; Teacher 4 was observed with a lower proficiency French set. The distribution of proficiency levels was serendipitous: the classes observed were dictated by the teachers' timetables that year; most had only one S3 class. The variety of classes was viewed as an advantage because I was keen to determine if there were strategies which were deployed with all learners, rather than ones operating at a particular level. The range of pupil aptitude also meant that techniques the teachers used to stimulate and support pupils' contributions which were appropriate for specific levels might be identified and commonalities noted. These issues will be explored in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Each teacher was observed and the lesson recorded on five occasions. The timing of the observations was determined by the school timetable and my own teaching and other work-related commitments. The data were collected over a period of nine months from September 2005 to June 2006. Originally the plan was to observe each teacher teaching a series of consecutive lessons, with the intention that some insight might be provided into any use pupils made in subsequent lessons of structures and vocabulary to which they had been exposed. However, this proved too difficult to organise. Conditions in the schools, which included examinations and their preparation, inspections and 'special events', meant that planned observations had to be postponed. My own schedule also

meant that it was impossible to attend classes at certain times. Issues arising from the discontinuity of the observations will be discussed in a later section of this chapter. The details of the teachers, classes and the observations can be seen in table 3.1.

**Table 3.1. Details of teachers, schools, classes, interviews and observations**

<b>Teacher Experience</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Number of pupils interviewed</b>
Teacher 1 (male): 31 years experience	Comprehensive serving an area of mainly owner/occupier housing in Edinburgh	second top set (26 pupils)	French	5	9
Teacher 2 (female): 14 years experience	Comprehensive serving an area of mixed housing in Edinburgh	mixed ability seated in ability groups (24 pupils)	French	5	7
Teacher 3 (female): 28 years experience	Comprehensive serving an area of mainly owner/occupier housing in Edinburgh	top set (28 pupils)	German	5	9
Teacher 4 (female): 9 years experience	Comprehensive serving an area of mixed housing in Glasgow	bottom set (22 pupils)	French	5	5

It should be noted that the grouping of Teacher 2's class by her perception of their ability meant that there was little evidence gathered of whole class interaction in her classroom, since she tended to follow a rotational plan for each lesson, each group working through activities for a third of the lesson before moving on to the next. The programme of work she had planned always included oral work with her as one of the activities, which meant that the majority of interaction which took place was in groups

of six to eight pupils. In fact, Teacher 2 performed whole class teaching once a week, but due to constraints I was unable to observe the class at this time.

### **3.4 The Pupils**

The pupils were aware that I was in class to observe a series of lessons; they had been told by the teachers that I was researching effective methods of teaching a foreign language, a statement I reiterated when I conducted interviews with them subsequently. They could see that the teacher was wearing a radio microphone but may not have been aware that what they said could be picked up, for the most part, clearly. Because they had been told that the focus was on the teacher it was hoped that they would behave 'normally'. Interviews with the pupils, which will be described in a later section of this chapter, were particularly valuable in supporting the data collected by the observations.

### **3.5 Observations**

'[T]he observational method has often been the chosen method to understand another culture ...' (Silverman, 2005). This method seems particularly appropriate if an understanding of the very special nature of the social culture of the classroom setting is to be achieved. Observations also permit the collection of information which might not be divulged in an interview or questionnaire through 'using [one's] eyes' (Silverman, 2005: 175).

The data from observations consist of detailed descriptions of people's activities, behaviour, actions, and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organisational processes that are part of observable human experience. (Patton, 2002: 4)

Observation gives several advantages, which are outlined by Patton (2002) and summarised below. Firstly, observations give a deeper understanding of the context. In the classroom it was important to gain awareness of the classroom dynamic and the relationships not only that the teacher appeared to have with the learners, but also that the learners appeared to have with each other. The physical context, that is, the seating arrangements which each teacher favoured and observations concerning teachers' and

pupils' body language, were recorded in the field notes. The second advantage of observation that Patton identifies is that the researcher may discern underlying patterns of behaviour which the participants take for granted or appear to perform intuitively. The experience that the teachers had accrued over the years may have resulted in many of their interactive practices becoming 'automatic' and difficult to analyse for themselves. The recording of the interaction between the teachers and learners, supported by the field notes, meant that the data could be revisited when considering the teachers' and learners' actions and possible reasons for them in a continuous fine grained analysis of the transcripts. It was envisaged that successful analysis of the transcripts would lead to the third advantage identified by Patton '... the discovery of things no one else has ever really paid attention to.' (Patton, 2002:263).

The primary disadvantage of observation is the 'observer's paradox' (Labov, 1972) when those being observed alter their behaviour as a result of the observation. In the observations of the teachers in this study, it may have been that the teachers used more TL than normal when the observations took place. This was why interviews with the teachers, but more particularly with the pupils, were considered valuable in corroborating or contradicting the observational data. The pupils may also have behaved differently as a consequence of the observer's presence. However, the fact that they were accustomed to visits from inspectors, teaching students, classroom assistants and other members of staff for the purpose of sharing practice may have lessened the impact of someone watching them. I sat at the back of the classroom, out of the sightlines of the pupils, and tried to be as unobtrusive and still as possible so that there was less chance of them being distracted.

The intention was that the data from the observations would be the principal source of information for analysis. For this reason, the radio-microphone that the teachers wore recorded all their utterances and the majority of the learners' contributions, which was particularly useful when examining strategies the teachers used to elicit responses. Video recording as a means of collecting data was rejected as too intrusive, possibly

resulting in changed behavioural patterns of the pupils in particular. It has been noted that detailed field notes were taken regarding the teachers' and pupils' behaviour and actions in the classroom, so that the interaction which took place could be seen in the context of the atmosphere they had created not only through their use of language but also through non-verbal and paralinguistic features of their communication. The field notes were planned as a support for the recorded data to support or challenge any premises which might arise during the analysis stage. 'Fieldnotes inevitably reflect ... background knowledge, or tacit beliefs.' (Wolfinger, 2002: 93). Particularly because I was very familiar with ML classrooms and teaching methodology, I made every effort to be reflexive, alert to the danger of assigning motives to the teachers' actions which could be questioned. After each observation was completed, I transcribed it as soon as possible.

### **3.6 Transcription of the Data**

Transcription of data obtained by audio recording is considered by Atkinson and Heritage (1984) as an integral part of the research process. By repeatedly listening to the audio tape the transcriber may pick out patterns which are not necessarily conspicuous on the page (Silverman, 2006). Cook (1990) states that '... all transcription is in some sense interpretation' (p.12). Bearing the above in mind, and so that the transcription would lend itself to as reliable an interpretation as possible, my aim was to provide as close an account of the language used in the classroom as possible, '...a faithful reproduction of the aural record ... the embodiment of truth of the indisputable record of the [observation]' (Poland, 1995: 291) on which to base interpretation of the language in the transcripts.

However, Kvale (1996) argues that '... verbatim (interview) transcriptions produce hybrids, artificial constructs that are adequate to neither the lived oral conversation nor the formal written style of texts' (p.166). Although his argument concerns the transcription of interviews and underlines the need to be aware of the nuances of non-verbal communication and paralinguistic features such as tone, pitch and pausing, which

may influence interpretation of the interviewees' intentions, the preparation of observation transcripts is subject to similar concerns. I was careful to refer to my field notes on paralinguistic features of the teachers' and learners' language and document where they occurred in the transcripts. Kvale argues that transcription is '... an impoverished basis for interpretation' (p.167), due to the lack of information included about context and possible unreliability in the transcription process. Unreliability may come about if someone other than the researcher prepares the transcripts. This was not considered an option in this study since, firstly, the interaction took place almost exclusively in the TL, which would have required a specialist linguist transcriber. Secondly, I was keen to have as close a representation of the original interaction as possible, which involved listening to the tapes repeatedly before I was satisfied that I had captured the interaction that took place, something a professional transcriber might not be able to do, due to either time constraints or lack of contextual knowledge.

The transcription stage is two steps removed from the interaction: first there is the interaction which actually occurred, of which each participant may have a different view; the audio recording is made, which is one step removed from the occurrences that it records and attempts to re-present. Finally there is the third step, the transcription, which is another re-presentation of the original interaction (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). Lapadat and Lindsay argue that 'every attempt to re-present results in another original creation' (p.76) different from the original because of the loss of the context within which the original interaction takes place.

... transcription represents an audiotaped or videotaped record, and the record itself represents an interactive event. Acknowledging transcription as representational avoids the mistake of taking the written record as the event and opens the transcription process for examination of its trustworthiness as an interpretive act. (Lapadat & Lindsay 1999: 81)

It is therefore important to stay reflective and critical about the procedure of transcribing to ensure that the transcripts are as accurate as possible reports of interaction and that the analytical processes resulting from it acknowledge the interpretive nature of



transcribing. (Poland 1995, Mishler 1991). It is also important that transcripts should not be reified, remembering that the transcript is a representation of what happened, ‘... transcription represents an audiotaped ... record and the record itself represents an interactive event’ (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999: 81). It was a matter of importance that the transcripts should be accepted as trustworthy representations of the interaction that had taken place in the classroom and the interpretation of meanings within them in the analysis process should be accepted as dependable.

If transcription is carried out by a transcriber who is not the actual researcher there is the danger that the data may become contaminated by misrepresentation or ‘accidental errors’ such as mishearing words or phrases or paraphrasing language (Poland, 1995: 298). Part of the ‘interpretation’ should also take account of the importance of punctuation which accurately reflects pauses, questions, exclamations and the structure of the utterances, since a misplaced period or comma may alter the understanding of the transcript by the researcher (Poland 1995). For this reason I transcribed each recorded lesson personally, as quickly as possible after each observation, so that listening to the language which had been experienced a short time before brought the picture of the classroom back into focus in my mind’s eye and any further recollections which were regarded as significant prompted by listening to the tapes could be added to the field notes. Although the process of transcribing was very time consuming it was important that as faithful a record as could be achieved of what was said in the classroom was offered as a means of establishing the trustworthiness of the data.

The transcripts were written by hand on the right-hand page of spiral-bound notepads. This enabled me to make notes on the left-hand page about tone, pauses and possible functions of the language chosen by the teacher, as well as matching the field notes to relevant sections as I re-listened to the tapes. After the initial transcription, I allowed a short period of time to elapse, usually around a week, and then I returned to the audio-tape and listened to it again, with the transcript, to check that my rendering of the teachers’ and pupils’ language was correct. The second listening allowed me to make

further notes on the tone of voice that the pupils and teachers used and also to fill in gaps where, on the first listening, I had been unable to distinguish what had been said. Breaks in the transcript usually related to pupils' utterances which were too indistinct for the radio microphone to pick up. Although the second listening did not fill all the gaps, it enabled me to complete a number of utterances. The same process of transcription was followed for the teacher and pupil interviews which are described below.

### **3.7 Interviews**

Interviews with the teachers and a sample of their pupils were considered important as a means of verifying or disconfirming the research findings. The interviews were recorded on audiotape after all the observations had been completed and lasted no more than 35 minutes. I was concerned that the interviews should be 'a meaningful conversation' (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004: 301) and should not be overtly directed by my agenda. Although I had prepared a series of questions it was essential that both teachers and pupils felt that they could develop points which appeared important to them, so that they could be confident that they had been able to construct a clear description of their view of the reality of the classroom. I was keen that the interviews should be 'spontaneous, yet structured – focused within the loose parameters provided by the interviewer, who is also an active participant' (Weinberg, 2002: 121). The way the teacher and pupil interviews were conducted is described in the next two sections.

### **3.8 Teacher Interviews**

The purpose of the teacher interviews was to discover if their responses were congruent with what had been observed in the classroom and to probe any areas of interest which had arisen from the recorded observational data. The interviews were semi-structured, with a series of questions covering a number of areas which were posed to all the teachers (see Appendix 1 for the interview schedule). They were encouraged to develop responses and were all asked at the end of the interview if they wished to add anything about their practice that they felt was relevant.

The interview questions centred round their philosophy of teaching and teaching practices. There were also questions about incidents in the lessons which had been observed, so that the teachers were obliged to reflect on actions which they appeared to perform intuitively. It was essential that the teachers felt that they could speak freely. Agreeing to be observed teaching their classes for the purposes of research already displayed a trust which was important to preserve. Before the study had begun a relationship of professional rapport had already existed and I hoped that this would facilitate 'the free flow of information' (Spradley, 1979:78).

All the teachers knew that I had been a teacher myself. The questions were as open and non-directive as possible to allow the teachers to answer without feeling pressure to conform to any preconceived notions of what they might feel to be an 'acceptable' answer. It could be argued that the pre-existing relationship meant that they were confident that they could speak without restraint to a fellow professional who rated them highly and understood their position. Interviews are unavoidably collaborative (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004) and I hoped that shared background understanding might mean that the teachers felt that the construction of meaning was facilitated by engaging with a 'knowledgeable outsider'.

Although the teacher interviews were considered very useful in providing evidence which could support or challenge the findings, the pupil interviews were viewed as even more helpful, since the teachers were aware of what, in theory, constituted good practice which could have perhaps influenced their responses. It was assumed that the pupils in their classes, however, would have no explicit knowledge of ML teaching theory and their responses, therefore, would reflect their experiences in the teachers' classrooms. The next section provides an account of the way the pupil interviews were carried out.

### **3.9 Pupil Interviews**

The sample of pupils from each teacher's class which was interviewed was not randomly selected. In consultation with the teachers I chose between five and nine pupils,

depending on the size of the class, for interview. This number represented approximately a third of the class and was chosen in order to enable as wide a range of opinions to be expressed as possible. As the interviews took place after all the observations had been completed, I knew the pupils' names and had formed opinions of how much they spoke in class. Each group reflected the gender mix in the class. I was keen to seek the opinions not only of more outgoing characters who volunteered to answer but also of those who were quieter in class and responded only to targeted questions. I hoped that the size of the sample would mean that it was possible for a variety of views to emerge in the interviews. Because of my presence in class during the observations, I hoped that they would not see me as a complete stranger and would respond openly. Although Teacher 4's class had nominally 22 pupils, in reality there were rarely more than 15 present. Their rate of absence in other classes was similar and was not a reflection on the French class. The high level of absence accounts for the smaller interview group from her class.

The pupil interviews were conducted in groups and were audio-recorded. Although there are advantages to group interviewing, which are described below, the principal reason for interviewing the pupils in groups was time. I was keen to include as many pupils as possible to warrant a measure of triangulation which would complement the observations that had taken place by allowing 'the human element of the voices of multiple subjects' (Frey & Fontana, 1991: 178) to provide a further source of data. The information that the pupils offered might reflect diverse views about the way they were taught, which could be used to support or disconfirm the findings. Another reason for conducting group interviews was that it seemed likely that pupils would be more forthcoming and the talk would be more natural in a group of their peers (Lewis, 1992). The pupils were asked semi-structured questions which were related to their ML learning. They were also asked to explain some of the events which occurred in class (see Appendix 2 for the interview schedule).

Group interviews have been described as ‘a group conversational encounter with a research purpose’ (Lewis, 1992: 413) and the aim was that the pupils should see the interview as a chat about language learning, rather than a formal interview. Cooklin and Ramsden (2004) suggest that children are inclined to comply with perceived adult expectations. For this reason, the interview questions were open, using questions such as: ‘What happens...?’ ‘How do you feel about ...?’ ‘What does the teacher do ...?’ I also made a point of paraphrasing certain responses to ensure that they felt that they would be accurately represented by asking questions such as: ‘Ok, now, if I’ve got that right, you’re saying that ...?’ or ‘I’m getting the impression that most of you think ... Is that correct?’

Although one of the advantages of group interviews is the richness of the information collected through the synergy which takes place as group members interact (Rabiee, 2004), it was also important to be alert to any negative effect of the group dynamics and take measures to avoid any suggestion of the imposition of any one person’s opinions on the others in order to allow everyone’s views to be heard (Frey & Fontana, 1991). Pupils were asked questions such as ‘Do you think everyone in the class thinks this?’ or ‘Do you think other people in the class might hold a different opinion?’ in order that they might feel able to put forward alternative viewpoints. The pupils were assured that everything they said would be treated as confidential, they would not be identified and no one would have access to the data they provided, apart from me and my colleague at the university (my supervisor), who would only know them as Pupil 1, 2, 3 and so on.

The teacher and pupil interviews were transcribed as soon as possible after they were conducted, following the same procedure as described for the observational data. The next section addresses issues of validity and reliability in the collection and analysis of the data.

### **3.10 Validity and Reliability**

In the quantitative paradigm issues of validity and reliability are seen as crucial for research findings to be taken seriously in the wider research community. In addressing issues of validity and reliability, qualitative researchers suggest that ‘trustworthiness’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) may be a more appropriate term: ‘How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 290).

Validity, it may be argued by adherents of positivist methodology, cannot be assured in qualitative studies because the researcher is not divorced from the data collected to analyse them objectively and threats to validity are not minimised through strict controls. The interpretivist paradigm sets out, not to anonymise or take random samples, but to explore ‘real world’ situations (Patton 2002: 39) with a view to providing clear description and possible explanations for what happens in those situations. How then to ensure some measure of rigour which will persuade the reader that the study is a piece of ‘good research’? Triangulation, accomplished by the mix of methods and methodological paradigms in the study, meant that the research questions were approached from different perspectives in order to ensure that the findings would be as credible as possible. The use of a variety of methods to achieve triangulation has been compared to the presentation of legal argument, the success of which is proved if the jury, that is, the reader, is persuaded by the evidence presented ‘beyond reasonable doubt’ (Johnstone, 2007).

It has been suggested that if there is transparency at all steps of the research process and justification for decisions is given which makes sense to and is accepted by the reader, then the study may be considered ‘trustworthy’ (Altheide & Johnson 1994, Hammersley 1992). Mishler’s position (1990) is that if other researchers view the findings and use them to further their own research, then the findings may be considered ‘validated’ or ‘trustworthy’. If his view is accepted, validity could therefore be said to be dependent on the views of the community within which the research is based. In qualitative research

the researcher may be part of that community and therefore aware of the contexts within which the findings may be viewed. Adopting Mishler's approach and being aware of and attentive to any particular issues that might be raised in critique of the findings by practitioners in the knowledge community, that is, the field of modern languages education, helped me to address issues of validity in the study by constantly interrogating the data. '[D]ata in themselves cannot be valid or invalid; what is at issue is the inferences drawn from them' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983: 191). So that the account may be considered 'trustworthy', as clear and transparent descriptions of the methods used in the study as can be achieved are provided together with evidence of the thinking behind decisions taken to employ those methods. Detailed description of the analytical process to identify teacher strategies which appeared to stimulate pupils' responses in the TL has also been provided.

Within the positivist tradition there are strict 'rules' about replicability; if other researchers, taking the same actions under the same conditions arrive at the same conclusions, then the study will be deemed reliable. However, in a 'naturalistic' study this may be difficult if not impossible to replicate due to the number of variables which may affect behaviour. Credibility of qualitative research is demonstrated, not through the construction of the instruments but through the skills and endeavours of the researcher (Golafshani, 2003). '[T]he researcher is the instrument' (Patton, 2002: 14). Patton's view is supported by Mishler (1990), who suggests questions that may be asked of a study to determine whether it can be considered trustworthy or credible:

What are the warrants for my claims? Could any other investigators make a reasonable judgement of their adequacy? Would they be able to determine how my findings and interpretations were 'produced' and on that basis, decide whether they were trustworthy enough to be relied upon for their own work? (p.429),

Throughout the analysis process I used Mishler's questions above as an 'angel on my shoulder' in an endeavour to make the account as trustworthy as possible and as a means of warranting any claims made. I was aware that my position as a teacher educator

meant that I had specialist knowledge which had informed my attitudes to the phenomenon being studied, that is, what happens in a ML classroom where the teacher uses the TL extensively; however, by continuously referring back to Mishler's questions above, I sought to make the account rendered in this study as trustworthy as possible so that it could be considered meaningful and therefore 'credible' in the views of practitioners in the light of their experience (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 1999). Ethical issues also had to be borne in mind. The following section addresses ethical issues relating to the study.

### **3.11 Ethical Issues**

The process of obtaining written permissions necessary to conduct the study has already been described above. The observations and pupil interviews had been approved by the head teacher. Nonetheless, the pupils chosen for interview were encouraged to discuss the written request for consent with their teacher and their parents, who were provided with my email address and telephone number so that they could clarify any concerns or questions.

Throughout the study, the need to treat the participants with respect was a key consideration. Research ethical codes of practice are usually based on the Kantian moral philosophy of respect for persons (Evans & Jakupec, 1996). Much social research is undertaken within a 'rights-based' or 'principle-based' framework (Wiles et al., 2006). A rights-based framework takes as its starting point the rights of the individual and his/her entitlement to respect and protection from harm while participating in the study (Alderson, 2004); a principle-based framework adheres to a number of moral principles which include protection from harm, that the research should be of benefit to others, equality of treatment and autonomy of subjects to decide whether to participate, after receiving clear information from the researcher (Wiles et al., 2005: 7). Trust built on open and continuous interaction between the researcher and the participants appears to be the key to successful research (Cornet et al., 1990), thus informed consent is seen as fundamental in research involving human participants (British Sociological Association,



2002). It was imperative, therefore, that both teachers and pupils were aware of the aims of the research and their right to withdraw from the study at any time, without prejudice. As I have explained, the pupils and the teachers had been told that I was investigating effective ways of teaching ML. The four teachers and the pupils who took part in the interviews were also assured that their views would be kept confidential and that nothing that was recorded could be attributed to particular individuals; their anonymity would be preserved and that there would be nothing in the write-up which could be used to identify either them or the schools.

The first part of this chapter has discussed the way the collection of the data was organised and has addressed questions of validity, reliability and ethics in the conduct of the study. The next part will describe the process of analysing the data and provide justification for the methodological decisions taken and the frameworks for analysis.

### **3.12 Analysis of the Data: A Mix of Approaches**

This section describes the reasons for choices made relating to analysis of the data, so that each stage in the analysis can be seen to be part of a logical whole and the findings may be considered robust. The study was situated within a qualitative paradigm, and because of the exploratory nature of the research a number of approaches had to be incorporated so that as clear a picture as possible of what happens in a ML classroom where the teacher uses the TL extensively could emerge. Explanation of the different approaches will be provided in the appropriate sections of this chapter where discussion of the analytical processes takes place. The overriding concern in conducting this research was with *what* was being said by the teachers and *how* they said it, so that there could emerge a clear sense of the functions their TL performed and the strategies they used to stimulate interaction with learners within particular frameworks in the classroom.

I did not approach the task of analysing the data with pre-conceived hypotheses which were there to be proven or challenged; a more grounded approach seemed appropriate,

so that through inductive analysis, themes and patterns might emerge from the data which would form the basis for a clearer understanding of the very complex interaction which takes place between teachers who use the TL extensively and their learners in the ML classroom. 'Inductive analysis means that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis' (Patton, 1980: 306). Nonetheless, because of my previous background as a ML teacher and current teacher educator, I did not come to the analysis of the data with no prior knowledge. Blumer (1954) conceived the term 'sensitising concepts', which 'give[s] the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances.' (p.7) and which are recognised as starting points for interpretation of data (Padgett, 2004). 'Research usually begins with such concepts, whether researchers state this or not and whether they are aware of them or not' (Gilgun 2004: 2). Sensitising concepts refer to the researchers' background knowledge which is often used to define the issue under investigation and may be used as 'points of departure' when beginning the analysis of the data (Charmaz, 2003: 259).

A review of the research literature and previous practical knowledge of what is entailed in teaching and learning ML meant that I had to remain aware of the possibility of actively constructing meaning influenced by fixed notions of what I might expect to find in the data. 'Reflexivity requires an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' one's subject matter while conducting research.' (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999: 228). However, while bearing in mind the need to maintain a reflexive attitude, it seemed inappropriate, if not impossible, to attempt to ignore what prior knowledge might bring to the analysis.

### **3.13 Quantitative Approaches Within a Qualitative Study**

In conducting the analysis of the transcripts, I was concerned to work at different grains of description. It was considered important not only to give a sense of what was happening quite minutely in individual turns at a micro-level but also to characterise the

overall nature of the interaction at a macro-level. The teachers' TL had multiple functions; one utterance could have a number of purposes, for example, face saving strategies were woven throughout the teachers' contributions to the classroom interaction. The 'messiness' of the data and the relative novelty of the undertaking required a mix of approaches to identify themes arising from the data which would suggest strategies the teachers might employ to create an atmosphere of collaboration within the classroom and to stimulate pupil responses.

The exploratory nature of the study demanded that some aspects of the transcripts had to be measured quantitatively, not, as stated earlier, in order to test some pre-determined hypothesis, but rather to confirm or not impressions of relative amounts of teacher TL, pupil TL and other aspects of teacher talk by counting. However, 'If one uses numbers, interpretation is still involved. If one's data are texts, counting may still be appropriate' (Bazeley, 2004: 2). Although not technically a 'mixed methods' study, in this relatively novel domain the adoption of certain quantitative approaches was helpful in developing a clear picture of the way the teachers used the TL. Qualitative methods, such as interviews, may be used to support or challenge initial findings reached from analysis of quantitatively collected data (Brannen, 2005). In contrast, in this study the predominantly qualitative analysis of the data was supplemented by data analysed quantitatively. Quantitative methods were therefore used within an overarching qualitative paradigm to enhance the analytical process.

...simple counting techniques can offer a means to survey the whole corpus of data ordinarily lost in intensive qualitative research. Instead of taking the researcher's word for it, the reader has a chance to gain a sense of the flavour of the data as a whole. In turn, researchers are able to test and to revise their generalisations, removing nagging doubts about the accuracy of their impressions of the data. (Silverman, 2006:52)

In order to verify if the teachers' TL was as extensive as I believed, I counted the instances of its occurrence in the teachers' turns as a basis for comparison with their English utterances. There has been much discussion about what constitutes a turn in

discourse and what turn-taking constitutes (Warren, 2006). In this study, a turn may be described as 'continuous talk by one speaker, uninterrupted by the other speaker' (Taboada, 2006: 5) before the speaker changes. A number of teacher TL turns also contained English interjections. So that a clear picture of the teachers' TL could be obtained, each turn was therefore designated *TL; English;* or *TL with English interjection*. The language pupils used to respond or initiate was also counted. Interpretation of the results of the calculations of teacher and pupil TL and English is discussed in Chapter 5. Similar measurements of different types of TL used in the lessons were also made, according to the TL 'meaning segments' within each teacher's turn, discussion of which also takes place in Chapter 5. A definition of what is meant by 'meaning segments' is given in a later section of this chapter.

Counting techniques also appeared a good way to get a notion of pace. Two three-minute extracts from the transcripts of two of the teachers, one of whom used 'wait time' after an initiation and the other who did not, were selected and the number of initiations and pupil responses measured and compared, with a view to assessing whether the pace was actually as brisk as it appeared from my impressions during the observations and whether there was a difference in pace between the two teachers, due to their different questioning techniques. Although not 'alike', both extracts reflected what could be considered 'typical' interactional sequences, the first taken from whole class correction of homework, which was a feature of all the teachers' lessons, the second focusing on an exercise designed to practise language, another important part of all the teachers' lessons. Discussion of what the findings arising from analysis of the three-minute extracts within a wider qualitative picture might mean can be found in Chapter 4.

Given the concern not only to look at the use of TL itself but also to gain a clear sense of patterns of social interaction, and identify frameworks which appeared to be in evidence in the classroom, it was considered necessary during the close analysis of the transcripts to draw on a number of areas of linguistics and sociolinguistics. Selective use of

conversation analysis was made to describe the way the interaction between the teachers and pupils was organised in turns and ‘boundary tones’ to distinguish different meanings within a turn. However, due to the particular nature of classroom TL discourse, where a teacher’s turn might include a number of ‘meaning segments’, the difference in status between each party to the interaction and the need to take pedagogical foci into account, sensitivity to the context had to be displayed in the analysis of the transcripts. This meant that central features of conversation analysis such as turn-taking and adjacency pairs were not considered appropriate analytical tools. What is understood in this study by the term ‘meaning segment’ will be defined in the next section of this chapter.

It seemed important to lay emphasis on the social context in which the talk occurred so that the functions of the teachers’ language could be adequately described. Within individual turns, the teachers’ TL frequently performed a variety of functions. ‘Utterances *do* things rather than just *mean* things’ (Sinclair, 1996: 24). The multiple functions in the teachers’ individual turns were not necessarily easily susceptible to very clear-cut formal categorisation which would at the same time remain true to the data. It was necessary to look carefully at the appropriateness of the teachers’ and pupils’ language to the context in which it was generated and participation frameworks which might explain satisfactorily what was happening in the interaction.

Sociolinguistic theory, as discussed in the literature review, particularly in relation to Hymes’s concept of the development of communicative competence (1972), appeared to offer an appropriate lens through which the data could be viewed in order to provide greater clarity regarding the teachers’ purposes in using particular language to stimulate interaction with learners, in a way that they were enabled to contribute to the dialogue. An appropriate participation framework therefore had to be used to give a clear sense of what was happening during TL interactional sequences during the lessons. Discussion of the participation frameworks used in this study takes place in a later section of this chapter.

Block (2003) makes a plea for ‘a broader, socially informed and more sociolinguistically oriented SLA that does not exclude the more mainstream psycholinguistic one, but instead takes on board the complexity of context, the multi-layered nature of language ...’ (p.4). A large number of studies have approached second or foreign language learning from a psycholinguistic perspective, which focuses on the examination of evidence of the learners’ cognitive development. This is done under controlled conditions using a default model which highlights learners’ success or failure to achieve native speaker competence from an etic perspective. In the last fifteen years there has been a growing influence of sociolinguistic perspectives used in analysis of second language acquisition (Firth & Wagner 1997, Block 1996), which consider the effect of social factors on communication. A focus on achieving communication means that there is less emphasis on the learners’ acquisition of accurate forms of the language and more interest in how communication is achieved through social interaction. In this study, deconstructing the teachers’ interactional moves from a sociolinguistic perspective was considered useful to determine whether the learners were being assisted to use their limited language resource effectively to express real meaning or whether the aim was to allow them merely to display mastery of particular structures. It was important to examine the teachers’ TL utterances, therefore, to understand how they were used to create an ethos in the classroom where learners felt disposed to make an effort to communicate.

### **3.14 ‘Meaning Segments’**

In close analysis of the teachers’ TL in order to gain understanding of possible functions of their utterances, it became clear that within any one turn, there might be a number of ‘sentences’ or phrases, interspersed with questions or comments, each of which might perform a different function, or functions, such was the complexity of the teachers’ language. An utterance has been described as ‘one independent unit of verbal communication together with any other units that are dependent on it’ (Wells, 1985: 60). Due to the multiplicity of independent units of ‘meaning segments’ within some of the teachers’ longer turns, it seemed appropriate to examine carefully each ‘meaning

segment' within the teachers' turns, rather than try to allocate one meaning to the turns themselves. An example of the meaning segments from one of the teacher's turns is given below as an illustration.

### **Extract 3.1**

*T1: Très bien.*

*Ok,*

*maintenant les devoirs.*

*Vous tournez ça s'il vous plait.*

*Tournez la fiche.*

*C'est bien?*

*Tu peux écrire ici.*

*Alors, pour les devoirs il fallait faire exercices 1, 2 et 3,*

*oui?*

Detailed analysis of this extract will be conducted in the next section of this chapter to demonstrate how the coding was carried out. A 'meaning segment' in this study, therefore, describes a word, phrase or sentence which carries a coherent message; it also follows the teacher's phrasing, as each complex turn is divided up and is signalled by 'boundary tones' (Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg, 1990), represented either by questions or pauses. A turn may include one or several 'meaning segments', each one of which may signal a different message or reinforce, through rephrasing or repetition, a previous message. Some examples of messages contained in a 'meaning segment' may be a (possibly humorous) aside, an instruction, affirmation, explanation or a question. In order to organise the data so that any patterns in the teachers' language could be discerned, it was necessary to devise a system of coding, which took into account the messages transmitted in each meaning segment, which could be used as a basis for development of the analysis.

### 3.15 Coding

'[T]he segmenting and coding of data are often taken-for-granted parts of the qualitative research process. All researchers need to be able to organize, manage, and retrieve the most meaningful bits of our data.' (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996: 26). During the process of coding, the data are subdivided and organised into categories, each one of which has a common theme (Dey, 1993) which allow meaning of the data to be constructed through description or inference (Basit, 2003). The codes should also be interlinked within a wider overarching context (Miles & Huberman, 1999). Tesch (1990) regards coding as an important means of organisation of qualitative data which is also part of the outcome, as the data are 'condensed' or 'distilled' and made more manageable as a result of interpretation. The process of 'distillation' that took place as initial codes were identified, interpreted and subsequently integrated within new categories is described below.

Although the research questions aimed to identify teachers' TL strategies which supported pupils' TL responses, all aspects of the teachers' language were regarded as important, whether they explicitly invited a response or not. While the field notes were useful in providing detail of non-verbal responses it was also important to try to gain a sense of 'the unobservable' (Tsui, 1998), that is, the thought processes and attitudes of the learners to the teachers' TL. Although teachers' conversation-type asides or comments, for example, might not produce an observable reaction from the pupils, it was possible that they could be useful in creating and maintaining a collaborative 'TL atmosphere', in which pupils felt disposed to talk. As previous paragraphs have noted, interviews with pupils were considered essential to determine their perceptions of the way the teachers' TL was used to engage their interest or not and were useful in confirming or disconfirming impressions which arose from study of the transcripts.

'When a word is spoken, all those within perceptual range of the event will have some sort of participation status relative to it' (Goffman, 1981: 3). During the coding process the focus was on the teachers' TL; however, it could not be studied in isolation as a



discrete element of the interaction but rather as part of the whole teacher/pupil interface. All the teachers' TL could be said to be generating responses from the learners, although they may not have been overt. The complexity of the teachers' TL meant that their language was not only used to prompt verbal responses but was also used extensively to prompt non-verbal responses, for example, through instructions or tag questions. Pupils' responses were therefore coded as non-verbal, TL, with subsets depending on the pedagogical focus, or English.

### **3.16 Early Stages of Coding**

The process of coding was not a simple task due to the multifunctional nature of the teachers' language. Each line of each page of the spiral-bound notebooks in which the transcripts were recorded was carefully scrutinised and the possible functions of each meaning segment in the teachers' talk were noted as examples of particular language features. Each meaning segment within the teachers' TL turns was therefore allocated to a code, or codes, which described its perceived intention regarding the interaction the teacher initiated. Thereafter, I counted instances of each feature, so that as clear a picture as possible of the teachers' language functions, whether they appeared explicitly instrumental in stimulating pupils' responses or not, could be distinguished. The codes were not designated in advance; as stated earlier, the exploratory nature of the study meant that an inductive approach was taken with the data, 'noticing relevant phenomena; collecting examples of those phenomena; and analysing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns and structures.' (Basil, 2003: 144).

Initially there was a large number of codes. The original codes included linguistic features such as 'use of cognates', 'simple language', 'rephrasing' and also modes of delivery, for example, 'slow speed', 'body language/visual aids', 'addressing whole class when talking to one pupil'. Other features related to the affective atmosphere in the classrooms, for example, 'face-saving strategies', 'enthusiasm', 'humour'. After interrogating the data as meticulously as possible, I believed that the codes chosen classified the different features of the teachers' language as effectively as possible,

because the breadth of classifications, which included the way the teachers' TL was delivered, as well as aspects of the actual language they used and its possible purposes, could be regarded as addressing both the explicit and implicit patterns that had appeared evident in the teachers' talk. The meaning segments were multiply coded, as they performed a number of functions, for example, a meaning segment coded under 'personal information/anecdotes' might also be coded under 'humour', 'use of cognates' and 'informal /conversation type'.

Having identified the initial codes, the next stage was to group them under broad overarching categories, with which they could be considered associated. Like the codes, these categories were not pre-determined, but rather arose from the need to organise the codes for clarity of exposition. The initial codes were grouped together under the following categories:

- General Features of Language
- Delivery
- Interaction Language
- Responses to Pupil Interaction
- Focus of Language

A list of the original codes and category groupings may be seen in Appendix 5 and is explained below.

*General features of language:* This category described specific features of the teachers' TL which helped to make it comprehensible to the learners. In this category were placed codes including simple language, use of cognates, short phrases, rephrasing and repetition (both of the teachers' utterances and the learners' responses).

*Delivery:* My field notes were considered important in coding the teachers' TL, particularly so when classifying the way the teachers' TL was delivered. The transcripts were able to give some indication of the type and sense of the language, however, the

field notes were deemed crucial regarding its delivery. Features which had been noted, such as ‘slow speed’, ‘enthusiasm’, ‘humour’, ‘body language/visual aids’ ‘discipline’ were assigned to this category.

*Interaction language:* Although it could be said that all the teachers’ language was designed to maintain the learners’ focus, this category related to the way the teachers’ TL was used in interaction directed to the learners with a view to obtaining an active response, usually, but not necessarily, verbal. This might be done by directing a question to a pupil by name or exploiting background knowledge about pupils to personalise an exchange. Pupils might be offered assistance through the use of TL cues to enable them to respond appropriately and promptly. The teachers’ regular checks for comprehension were also coded under this category, as were interactive moves by the teachers which included anecdotes, thinking aloud or information of a personal nature about the teacher. These interjections, while not ostensibly prompting a verbal response, appeared, because of their personal ‘social’ nature, to engage the pupils’ interest.

*Responses to pupil interaction:* This could be considered a subset of the category above. However, where *Interaction Language* was concerned with the teachers’ initiations, in this category, the teachers’ language was related to responses they made to pupils’ responses and initiations. Within this classification were placed the teachers’ strategic moves to pupils’ TL or English responses and initiations, which could be considered crucial in keeping the pupils’ interest and motivation, for example, ‘attitude to errors’, ‘praise’, ‘interest in pupils’ responses’, ‘translation of pupils’ English responses’, ‘strategically responsive to pupils’ language’, ‘face-saving strategies’.

*Focus of language:* As the coding advanced, it appeared necessary to take a wider view of the preceding codes, shifting the attention from the immediate context of interactional moves from a more micro-view to consider the place of these meaning segments in the macro-context of the lesson. This final category comprised four contexts for which the TL was used: organisation, practice of structures, presentation and discussion of

grammar, and informal, conversation-type exchanges. What became obvious was the physical patterning of the lesson, where the four codes identified within this overarching category could be seen to be important organisers for the teachers' TL.

### **3.17 Final Stage of Coding**

While the original coding was important in identifying aspects of the teachers' TL which appeared to be key in prompting interaction, the recognition of four main contexts in which the interaction occurred meant that the data could be arranged so that each meaning segment could be seen in the context in which it had taken place. Each meaning segment was therefore designated a code according to how the response it prompted was related to a particular focus to which the teacher wanted learners to attend. These foci were developed from the original overarching category, '*Focus of language*' and might be associated with organisational matters, focus on form, activities designed to practise the language or a less formal type of interaction.

The teachers' TL also contained meaning segments which appeared to give the learners no option but to respond, such as requests for repetition or translation. I considered that the frequency with which these 'directives' were used meant that they should be coded separately. Another code was allocated to teachers' responses to pupils' initiations, the reason being that the teacher was then placed in the position of respondent rather than initiator, although very often the teachers' responses prompted further interaction. In all, eight main descriptive categories of the teachers' language emerged, within which all the teachers' TL could be placed. The eight codes can be seen below in Table 3.2. Thereafter an account of how they were arrived at will be presented.

**Table 3.2. Teachers' TL Codes**

<b>Teachers' TL Codes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organisational/instructions</li><li>• Focus on language</li><li>• Language used to practise structures and vocabulary</li><li>• Conversation-type language</li><li>• Requests for translation from the TL</li><li>• Requests for translation to the TL</li><li>• Requests for repetition</li><li>• Response to pupil initiation</li></ul>

The process of coding could not be considered a straightforward matter, due to the 'multilayered' (Jarvis & Robinson 1997: 225) nature of the teachers' interactional moves and the 'messiness' of the interaction which took place which meant that different codes could be and indeed had to be assigned to the same meaning segment. The transcripts were scrutinised again and each meaning segment within teacher TL turns in table 3.2 was recorded under one or more categories. The codes represent the main functions of the teachers' TL during lessons. An example of the way meaning segments in a teacher's turn were allocated to codes is provided in a later section of this chapter. The rationale for the choice of codes and a brief explanation of them are given below.

The first four codes in Table 3.2 represent the 'big' foci in which almost all the teachers' TL interaction took place. The first three, *Organisational/instructions*, *Focus on language* and *Language used to practise structures and vocabulary* had an explicit pedagogical focus. *Conversation-type language* may have had an implicit pedagogical function but it appeared a more 'natural' manner of communicating, using referential

questioning and offering little in the way of feedback on learners' language, only on meaning.

*Organisational/instructions:* This category included TL used to ensure that pupils clearly understood what was happening and about to happen regarding planned activities and the running of the classroom. It might relate to the distribution of resources, instructions about a particular exercise, checking attendance or refocusing moves.

*Focus on language:* Meaning segments of teacher TL in this category either explicated points of grammar or prompted a learner response to an initiation regarding the form of the language. This might be part of a grammar focus in the lesson or arising as a result of a pupil initiation or response.

*Language used to practise structures and vocabulary:* Within this category were placed questions the teachers asked, either as part of a formal teacher/pupil exchange where the purpose was to reinforce specific structures or expressions or in more isolated exchanges where the teachers' purpose appeared to be to remind learners of previously learning.

*Conversation-type language:* The teachers frequently made conversation-type asides and comments in the TL, the function of which could be interpreted as more social than pedagogical. At times they deviated from the pedagogical focus to initiate exchanges with pupils which were unpredictable both in terms of the questions they asked and the nature of the subject matter. Conversation-type TL language appeared very different to the categories above because it seemed unrelated to the work of the classroom; the teachers did not appear to view the pupils in their identity as learners, but interacted with them on a more 'sociable' level, focusing on the meaning that the pupils conveyed, without commenting on imperfect language.

The next three codes, *Requests for translation from the TL*, *Requests for translation to the TL* and *Requests for repetition* all relate to requests the teachers made to the learners

to respond within the three ‘big’ pedagogical foci. These requests were a common feature of the teachers’ TL which focused on the learners’ understanding of, ability to formulate responses in, and pronunciation of the TL in all but the *Conversation-type language* exchanges. Because of their prevalence in all the teachers’ TL interaction across different contexts, it was decided to code them individually, rather than subsume them into the different pedagogical foci, as they appeared to be strategies that the teachers used a great deal to get pupils to talk. Closer examination of when they were employed shed some light upon their possible contribution to development of the learners’ communicative competence.

The final code, *Response to pupil initiation*, was most frequently, but not exclusively, related to requests for clarification from pupils as to organisational matters and to questions about expression, but because of the teachers’ position of respondent rather than initiator it was felt important to code this separately. Issues surrounding multiple coding of the data will be discussed below after a brief description of each of the four codes identified above.

*Requests for translation from the TL:* Teachers frequently asked pupils to translate their TL utterances in *Organisational/instructions*, *Focus on language* and *Language used to practise structures and vocabulary* categories as a comprehension check and to reinforce the meaning to all pupils.

*Requests for translation to the TL:* Often as a result of pupils’ requests or responses in English, the teachers would ask them to reformulate the utterance in the TL. Other requests for translation to the TL appeared within *Focus on language* and *Language used to practise structures and vocabulary* categories when the teachers checked the learners’ understanding of what they had been taught, by asking them to produce TL translations.

*Requests for repetition:* Teachers often asked learners to repeat vocabulary items or whole sentences, either to assist pronunciation or to reinforce language. Requests for repetition were usually evident in *Focus on language* and *Language used to practise structures and vocabulary* categories.

*Response to pupil initiation:* Pupils might ask about procedural matters in order to check their understanding, request permissions or initiate an exchange. Meaning segments coded within this category might also be labelled in *Requests for translation to the TL*, *Conversation-type language*, *Focus on language* or *Organisational/instructions* categories.

The teachers' TL appeared to be used in a number of 'linguistic routines' (Farr, 2004: 115) which allowed them to 'get things done', such as organising activities and resources, or to impart information, but which also prompted the learners to respond in focused interactional moves. The categories in Table 3.2 were chosen because they were prevalent in all the teachers' TL used to communicate with the learners. Linguistic features, such as elicitation, praise, comprehension checks, discipline moves or repetition of learners' responses could all be matched to one or more of the codes depending on the focus. The codes were not mutually exclusive; as noted above, meaning segments could be categorised under more than one code, for example, requests for translation or repetition could also be labelled *Focus on language*, *Organisational language* or *Language used to practise structures and vocabulary* depending on the context within which the meaning segment appeared. The multiple coding reflected the multi-functional nature of the teachers' TL, which will be exemplified in the findings.

As each meaning segment was scrutinised and categorised the focus within which it occurred in the lesson began to emerge as an important factor in situating it appropriately. An example of the way meaning segments within teachers' turns were allocated to codes is illustrated below using Extract 3.1, so that the way the teachers' TL was categorised can be clearly understood.



<i>T1: Très bien.</i>	Organisational (teacher drawing previous topic to an end and focusing class).
<i>Ok,</i>	Organisational (teacher signalling new topic).
<i>maintenant les devoirs.</i>	Organisational (teacher giving information about the focus of the new topic).
<i>Vous tournez ça s'il vous plait.</i>	Organisational (teacher giving explicit instruction)
<i>Tournez la fiche.</i>	Organisational (teacher giving explicit instruction)
<i>C'est bien?</i>	Organisational (teacher checking comprehension of instructions)
<i>Tu peux écrire ici.</i>	Organisational (teacher giving explicit instruction to one pupil)
<i>Alors, pour les devoirs il fallait faire exercices 1, 2 et 3,</i>	Organisational (teacher recap to remind pupils of the context)
<i>oui?</i>	Organisational (teacher checking pupils' comprehension of previous meaning segment)

The extract above is an example of a straightforward organisational sequence; each meaning segment, although performing different functions, can be coded as organisational language. Meaning segments within other teacher turns might include a variety of codes. However, as well as detailed micro-analysis of the meaning segments within the teachers' turns, it was necessary to take a wider view of the frameworks within which specific interaction took place and which appeared to reflect patterns of

interaction during the passage of the lesson, as different pedagogical aims were realised through the teachers' TL. During the coding process, it became clear that the first four categories in which the teachers' meaning segments had been placed, which had been used to describe the 'big' foci of their lessons, could be viewed as important organisers for the data at a macro-level.

### **3.18 Foci of the Lesson**

Close examination of the transcripts showed a need to categorise and present clearly the fact that large patterns of interaction could be discerned within the transcripts. The majority of these patterns related to the three pedagogical foci already identified as a result of the coding procedure: *Organisational*, *Focus on language* and *Language used to practise structures and vocabulary*. For the purpose of describing their function in the lessons more succinctly and to reflect the role they played in the lessons they were re-named '*Operational*', '*Analysis of language*' and '*Practice*' foci. Categories similar to these foci of the lesson have been identified in previous research. Van Lier (1988) describes classroom interaction oriented in terms of more topic and less activity or less topic and more activity, that is, whether the focus is on the subject matter being studied or the process by which activities are accomplished. Ellis (1984) describes interactive categories in terms of goals: medium-centred; message-centred; activity centred; framework centred, when the focus is on management of classroom events, and social centred. Seedhouse (2004) uses 'contexts': procedural; form and accuracy; meaning and fluency; task oriented. Neil (1997) talks of 'content areas'. These different classifications have areas of correspondence and dissimilarity between them. There are also connections between some of the classifications above and the interaction which took place in the lessons in this study, for example, discrete grammar-centred, analysis of language sequences and phases in lessons where the emphasis is on operational matters are both identified by Ellis, Neil and Seedhouse.

The type of language associated with each pedagogical focus is described below. As noted in the description of coding, the complexity of the teachers' TL meant that its

constituent parts could not be put into mutually exclusive categories convenient for the analyst. In the same way as the meaning segments in the teachers' TL were subject to multiple coding, the codes themselves might be evident in TL sequences when another pedagogical aim was the main focus at that stage of the lesson.

Within the *Operational* focus, the teachers' aim was to organise, explain and set up activities. Features of the teachers' TL when the focus was operational usually included imperatives, immediate future constructions such as *on va*, *vous allez*, and requests such as *s'il vous plaît* and *bitte*. There were also many checks for comprehension, either through the use of tag questions, questions as to whether the learners had understood or requests for translation of the teachers' instructions and explanations.

*Analysis of language* centred round the study of particular grammatical structures, for example, irregular verb forms, tenses, German case endings or reflexive verbs. In this focus the teachers and pupils were more likely to use English as a meta-language, so that learners could be helped to understand grammatical concepts through references to their own language. Pupils were frequently asked to repeat or translate from or to the TL to show understanding. During analysis of language, interaction conformed to the IRF framework of participation (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), as teachers checked learners' understanding of the form of the language through the use of display questions.

*Practice* usually took the form of language drills, where information the pupils had acquired during the focus on analysis of language was practised in question and answer exercises with the teacher or in pairs in order to reinforce understanding. Language during these practice exercises tended to be highly predictable and focused on rehearsal of particular structures to ensure that learners were able to manipulate the language accurately. Requests for repetition of expressions and translation from and to the TL were also prevalent when the focus was on practice. Greater detail of the foci and the language employed by the teachers within each one will be provided in Chapters 4 and

5, where another pattern which emerged from the data, *conversation-type language*, is also explicated.

*Conversation-type language* in the TL initiated by the teachers did not belong exclusively to any of the pedagogical foci above, but appeared, seemingly at random, in short interactional sequences throughout the lesson. These sequences did not follow the IRF model of interaction but were more open, characterised by referential questioning by the teacher, who also provided scaffolding to support pupils' responses. Analysis of conversation-type interaction required an approach which could adequately explain just what the teachers were doing in these TL interactional sequences. The following section provides a rationale for the choice of a suitable format to explain the purposes underlying the teachers' conversation-type initiations.

### **3.19 Frameworks of Participation**

In the fine-grained analysis of the teacher-pupil interaction, a strong effort was made to ensure that the analytical tools employed were fit for the task in hand. In the analysis of the wider patterns of interaction I felt it was important to adopt participation frameworks which not only acknowledged the traditional roles of 'teacher' and 'pupil' but also looked beyond them, taking the 'social' environment within the classroom into account. In order to understand what was happening during the classroom TL interaction, a framework had to be employed which could be used to explain the teacher's role in scaffolding interaction, particularly in seemingly less formal dialogue. The next section describes participation frameworks not normally associated with the classroom which were considered appropriate to provide a clear picture of the way the teacher managed the TL interaction.

The IRF participation framework (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) was not considered sufficient to track how, once the teacher had chosen the language that would be most useful to the pupils, s/he scaffolded their progress in producing utterances in the TL. Quite a large proportion of the classroom talk could be seen to fall into the IRF

framework in the practice sequences which accounted for around two-thirds of the interaction in the classroom. However, the way the teachers facilitated the interaction between themselves and the learners in the TL could not always be described adequately within the IRF format. Often in more ‘conversation-type’ talk sequences, the teachers’ third move, which in the IRF framework is the follow-up, or evaluation, which gives the learners confirmation or otherwise of their response in the second turn, did not appear to be in evidence, as the teacher initiated another question or comment without referring to the learners’ response. It could be argued that the continuation of the dialogue by the teacher was, in fact, implicit validation of the learners’ response in the second turn.

However, one of the features of the interaction in the classroom, particularly noticeable in more informal language phases, was the way the support that teachers provided helped the learners perform in their ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). Close analysis of the talk revealed that during conversation-type interactional sequences they frequently offered a menu of options to learners, cues offered in anticipation of the pupils’ responses, which provided assistance to respond promptly and accurately. Teacher support for pupils’ responses does not seem to fit within the IRF framework. What was required, therefore, was a framework which demonstrated how the teachers facilitated the development of the learners’ communicative skills.

Goffman’s (1981) production format, put simply, divides speakers into 3 categories. Whenever someone makes an utterance, there are three distinctions possible: the distinctions describe the relationship between the utterance itself and the speaker: *animator*, *author* and *principal*. The *animator* is the person who produces the utterance, that is, the speech; the *author* is the person who is the originator of the content and form of that utterance (see also Clark (1996) who uses the term *formulator*); the *principal* is the person who is the one responsible for what is being said, that is, bears responsibility for the meaning being expressed (Goffman, 1981: 226). Metzger et al (2004) illustrate the format by reference to a professor giving a lecture. The professor is animator, author and principal of the language, as she delivers the lecture, having written the script,

taking responsibility for what she states. If someone else describes the lecture, that person will be the animator and the author, delivering the information in his own words. However, the professor remains the principal, because she has responsibility for the information. Metzger et al.'s position is that interpreters are nearly always animators or authors because interpreting involves relaying information that others generate. Similarly, language learners may be initially seen to be animators and authors because they are using language that the teacher has chosen and provided and adapting the form to fit their communicative needs. The teacher is responsible for the language that the learners produce in practice exercises, so remains the principal. However, in less formal exchanges, when learners appropriate the language they have learned to make their own meaning, it could be argued that, although they are using language originally provided by the teacher, through using it to make meaning which is unique to their situation, they become principals of their own utterances, since now the responsibility for the utterance can only be theirs.

In the ML classroom, particularly in the early stages of learning a language, if Goffman's production format is used, the teacher will be the animator, author and principal of most utterances. The teacher chooses which language structures to teach, usually in accordance with the syllabus and curricular demands, and takes responsibility for the utterances and the form of the language. The language used by the teacher in less formal, 'incidental' exchanges or conversation-type asides will also have been chosen to be comprehensible to the learners but presumably also potentially valuable to them as a resource, which they may be able to re-use themselves at a later stage to make their own meaning.

The pupil will be the animator of an utterance, particularly when learning a new structure or vocabulary, when repetition and practice of the new language is the main focus of the work in the classroom, moving on to being the author, as confidence grows in the ability to formulate a meaningful, syntactically correct utterance. The teacher's aim could be seen as the development of the pupils' skills so that they become the

principals of their utterances, taking responsibility for what is said and using the language for their own purposes. Within Goffman's production format the teacher may be said initially to be the principal of the learner's words, because it is the teacher who selects the language, reinforces it through repetition and persuades the learners to use it in exercises and drills to help make the language structures become more automatic. The teacher is also the principal in terms of ensuring correctness of form and pronunciation. However, as the pupils develop confidence in using the language meaningfully, they may use the language that has been learned from the teacher to become the principal of their own utterances, taking responsibility for what they say.

Some may argue that the learners will never be anything more than animators or authors, as the language structures and vocabulary have all emanated from the teacher and his/her choice of language. However, in the ML classroom pupils are not restricted to the animator or author role, but may generate their own meanings as principals having moved from merely repeating the teacher's utterances, as animators, through the author stage as they demonstrate knowledge of how to form the language, to the principal stage where they use the language they know to make explicit their own meaning.

If a dialogic view of language is taken, all language exists as a result of what has been said before and what will be said in the future, in anticipation of participants' responses (Bakhtin, 1981). Taking a dialogic viewpoint to look at the language used in the classroom to interact suggests that the teacher's language is also dependent on the pupils' responses, as both parties interact socially within the context that is the classroom, each person's contribution reflecting his/her own view of the world. The interdependence of each participant's language use is shown in their contributions which contain 'the half-concealed or completely concealed words of others' (Bakhtin 1981: 92). This is particularly relevant to the classroom situation, where the majority of the language that the learners hear will originate from the teacher.

What makes Goffman's participation framework particularly apposite for analysing classroom discourse is his recognition of 'overhearers' or 'ratified participants' (Goffman, 1981: 131) who are included in the talk, and who, although not necessarily contributing to it, are involved through being active listeners (Burns, 1992). This suggests that classroom dialogue may be viewed within a wider participation framework, which contains more than merely the two speakers engaged in the exchange, as is usually the case when using the IRF as a basis for analysis. The interaction which results as a consequence of the teacher's questions to individuals could be viewed as a resource which all other learners may exploit at a later occasion.

Wadensjö's (1998) 'reception format' complements Goffman's production format by distinguishing 3 different types of listener: reporter, recapitulator and responder. Although these classifications relate to translation and interpretation, they could be said to correspond to what is often viewed as the stages a pupil goes through when learning a ML. A 'reporter' is only expected to repeat what has been heard. This stage could correspond to the repetition phase within a lesson, when pupils are asked to listen to and repeat new vocabulary to reinforce pronunciation or to establish a structure. In the ML classroom this may lead to some measure of automaticity, so that pupils will be able to retrieve the language as they move to the next stage: a 'recapitulator', who is expected to give voice to a prior speaker's utterance in reauthoring another's (in this case the teacher's) message. This happens in the classroom when the pupils make use of the language they have learned to form utterances of their own, possibly in a guided communicative exercise, or through questioning by the teacher. The third type of listener, a 'responder', makes his own contribution to the discourse through using the language to play a part in a conversation, where his own views and thoughts are expressed, in relation to what has been said. This appears to correspond to Goffman's role of the principal of an utterance, as the pupil moves from being an animator, merely repeating what the teacher says, to being able to construct the correct form of the language as the author, then to being able to take responsibility for taking part in an interaction by using what has been learned to make his own contributions in interactions.



The teacher's role in classroom interaction also conforms to Wadensjö's 'reception format'. In the first instance, the teacher may repeat a learner's utterance in the role of reporter, although, as discussed in the review of the literature, repetition may perform a number of functions; while the reporter's role in translation is to provide an accurate representation of the principal's utterance, the teacher may wish to validate a pupil's answer, in which case s/he will repeat the pupil's contribution verbatim. If however, the learner has made a mistake, the teacher's repetition may contain a recast to correct the error, moving from the reporter's role to that of recapitulator.

While not exactly in the position of summarising the main points of a principal's utterance in Wadensjö's role of recapitulator, the notion of recapitulation may be considered appropriate to the teacher's position as the more experienced practitioner, particularly in practice phases of lessons, as s/he authors the learner's language that s/he hears, either through recasting any errors, or paraphrasing for the rest of the class, perhaps with a view to inviting other contributions.

Finally, the teacher acts in the role of responder to enter into seemingly 'natural' interaction as a result of the learners' utterances, giving them access to a rich store of language which they can use to take an active part in interactive sequences.

It could be that through interaction either as an active participant or an observer, the learner will 'appropriate' the language s/he has learned from the teacher, in order to use it for him/herself. Appropriation has been defined within a sociocultural framework as the way learners 'eventually take over ... new knowledge or skills into their individual consciousness' (Mitchell & Myles, 1998: 145). Wertsch (1998) in Block (2003) goes further and suggests that appropriation is 'the process ... of taking something that belongs to others and making it one's own.' (p.53). Swain and Lapkin (2002) agree that learners appropriate the words of others and then carry on over time to perform beyond their present level by collaborating with others who provide scaffolding and support.

The complementary nature of the two formats meant that the complexity of the interaction between the teachers and pupils could be captured very well, as functions the teachers' TL performed in moving the pupils on through the various roles could be distinguished. Using Goffman's and Wadensjö's formats for production and listening meant that a clearer view of the teachers' and learners' relationships to the language used to communicate with each other could be achieved. They allowed for a more nuanced understanding of what collaboration may involve in the classroom, as pupils were moved through the stages of reporter/ animator and recapitulator/ author towards being responders and principals of their utterances as they acted in response to the teachers' interactional moves, in which the teachers themselves appeared to adopt the different roles described above.

This chapter has discussed the steps taken to provide as clear as possible an analysis of the teachers' TL which stimulated pupil responses. The rationale behind the mix of approaches taken within an overall qualitative paradigm and decisions taken about the frameworks used to analyse the teachers' talk have been explained. The multiple functions in each teacher turn meant that analysis was not straightforward, but in providing as much detail as possible about the thinking behind the processes undertaken in the collection and analysis of the data, the aim has been to render as transparent and trustworthy an account as possible of the findings. The next three chapters give details of the findings of the study within the frameworks for analysis discussed in this chapter.

## **Chapter 4 Teacher Control**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This and the following two chapters will set out the main themes arising from the study and discuss what they might mean in terms of their potential impact on practitioners and for research. The review of the literature set the context for the study by considering in a detailed fashion relevant research on the specific characteristics of the language classroom and the interaction which takes place within it. Using the frameworks for analysis discussed in Chapter 3 this chapter will consider how the teacher managed the classroom and set the context for learning to take place as ‘fundamentally a social enterprise, jointly constructed and intrinsically linked to learners’ repeated and regular participation in their classroom activities’ (Hall & Verplaetse, 2000: 11). Chapter 5 considers the amount and types of TL used by the teachers and the way each type contributed to pupils’ language development. In Chapter 6 specific TL strategies used by the teachers to scaffold pupils’ TL utterances are discussed. Appropriate participation frameworks which ensure a clear description of the teachers’ and learners’ TL interactive moves and which provide an alternative to ‘accepted’ exchange frameworks are also discussed.

The focus of the study is the way teachers, deemed examples of good practice by peers, HMIe, and Local Authority Officers, as stated in Chapter 3, engage and support learners in interaction in the ML classroom through their use of the TL. The main research question is as follows:

- What TL strategies are employed by teachers to develop an active response from the learners, specifically, what do the teachers do to enable pupils to use the TL for a communicative purpose in the Scottish secondary ML classroom?

The learners in the study were adolescents, who were obliged to be in the classroom, therefore a major consideration was the way the teachers created a collaborative climate in the classroom, so that the learners were drawn into interaction, and with support could

use the language to which they had been exposed by the teacher, along with language they had learned, in order to communicate what they wanted to say. Because of the nature of interactive processes in the TL, which demand a measure of collaboration between the teacher and the learners, in order to be able to answer the question above a further question needed to be addressed:

- How do teachers exploit the social nature of the classroom encounter to create opportunities to involve the pupils in interaction in the TL?

In order to develop their communicative skills, pupils must be willing to respond to teachers' initiations, therefore it is incumbent on teachers to establish an atmosphere where pupils are disposed to collaborate, by not only actively taking part in producing the TL in exchanges with each other and the teacher, but also actively listening to the language used by teachers and other learners, thus readily engaging in the learning process. Non-collaboration would mean that pupils remained silent or indulged in off-task behaviour, leading to indiscipline. Collaboration, therefore, in this study refers to pupils' ready responses to the teachers' efforts to engage them in the TL talk that occurred in the classroom.

As noted in the literature review, research literature lays great emphasis on collaborative practices with more knowledgeable interlocutors as a means of engaging learners and aiding cognitive development (Vygotsky 1978, Bruner 1983, Allwright 1984, Mercer 1995, Dörnyei 2001). One of the aims of this study was to identify how the teachers created opportunities through their use of the TL which supported learners to collaborate in the interaction that took place in the TL. This chapter illustrates some of the most salient features of the teachers' TL use which appeared to draw the learners in so that they collaborated in the interaction which the teacher had initiated in the TL.

The previous chapter described the frameworks within which the analysis was undertaken. The complexity of the functions of the teachers' language in the interactions

that took place inside the classroom meant that a combination of analytical frameworks was used and the predominant qualitative methodology had to be enhanced by quantitative analysis to give as clear a picture as possible of how pupils were supported in using the TL to communicate and how the interaction in the classroom between the teachers and the learners developed. 'The complexity of the classroom is such that several things may be going on publicly through talk at the same time' (Edmondson, 1985: 162). However, it is not just publicly perceived interactive practices which merit attention, but also what can be reasonably inferred about the range of underlying purposes of the teachers' interactional moves, which need unpicked to give a clear understanding of the results that their initiations provoked in terms of pupils' responses.

In Chapter 3, the participation formats of Goffman (1981) and Wadensjö (1998) were discussed as an appropriate framework within which to frame the development of the learners' communicative skills in the TL. This chapter and Chapters 5 and 6 describe the way teachers guided the learners through the different stages of language production, from repetition of new vocabulary and structures in the role of animators, to being able to produce the correct language forms and vocabulary in directed practice tasks as authors, in preparation for taking responsibility for the meaning of what they said using the TL as principals of their utterances.

So that they can move through the stages above effectively, learners have to listen carefully at each stage in the different listening roles that Wadensjö identified: that of reporter, re-capitulator or responder to the teacher's initiation language in order to respond appropriately. This thesis looks at how the teachers created opportunities for the learners to move towards the final stage, that of being principal of their utterances, acting as a responder to the teacher's or others' initiations, so that they were able to take part in making meaning in the TL that was personal to their situation in 'real' communicative interaction, even though they were in the 'unreal' social environment that is the ML classroom.

Within this social environment one of the first tasks teachers have is to establish a collaborative atmosphere with the learners. If learners feel secure in the classroom, they will be more likely to take the risk of speaking (Hall & Verplaetse, 2000). '[T]eachers can foster classroom conditions that encourage or restrict successful student participation' (Boyd & Maloof, 2000:165). A collaborative atmosphere can be described as one in which the teacher has created a group dynamic where individuals respect and trust each other and share the same goals (Dörnyei 2001, Dörnyei & Murphey 2003); in the ML classroom one of these goals will usually be the development of communicative skills in the TL.

The way the teachers in the study used the TL to create an ethos of collaboration may at first appear rather contradictory, if it is not remembered that the context is the Scottish secondary school with learners who are obliged to be in the ML class. The teachers all operated a tight system of control in their classrooms but the atmosphere never seemed oppressive or inhibiting. The following section will discuss the way the teachers controlled the way that a collaborative classroom atmosphere was created, yet appeared to involve the learners in the 'joint management' (Allwright, 1984: 156) of the interaction in the TL that took place.

#### **4.2 Classroom Management**

The importance of classroom management is particularly relevant in this study as it is aimed at providing practitioners with information about strategies which may increase learner engagement through the teacher's use of the TL. It has been noted in the review of literature that indiscipline is an issue for many teachers (Barton 2006, Cowley 2001) and the great majority do not believe that a disciplined atmosphere can be maintained through the use of the TL (Franklin, 1990). Practitioners therefore may need to be convinced that the use of the TL by the teacher does not preclude a disciplined environment.

While researchers are interested in establishing truth, teachers may have a slightly different perspective, being more interested in what works (Ellis, 2005a). The need to

maintain discipline, for example, in a class of adolescent learners may not normally feature on a researcher's agenda. Ellis (2005a) highlights the gap which needs to be bridged between research which is well designed, reliable and valid and practical knowledge which is 'implicit and intuitive, acquired through experience' (p. 45). This section aims to unpick the practical knowledge that effective teachers appear to display intuitively when using the TL to illustrate strategies that create and sustain a collaborative atmosphere where discipline is not seen as an issue.

The teachers in the study all appeared to exert a considerable amount of control over the learners and the learning process, which at first sight might be taken as evidence of a teacher-centred, didactic approach; for example, they were strict about not allowing learners to talk out of turn, insisting on a 'hands up' system of requesting permission to speak or in answer to an initiation, unless questioned directly. They were adamant that pupils should be seen to be listening to all the interaction that took place and called on pupils by name to refocus their attention if their demeanour indicated a lack of attention. They operated a 'no-eating' policy, asking pupils to empty their mouths if they were seen eating and were quick to express displeasure if they thought learners were not paying attention or were off-task.

### **4.3 Seating**

The way their classrooms were arranged could be described as rather traditional, apart from Teacher 2, who taught a mixed-ability class and who had arranged the furniture into three large tables, at which the pupils were seated in groups according to ability. In all the other teachers' classrooms the pupils' desks were in rows facing the teacher. Seating the pupils in rows may be part of an overall class behaviour management strategy, which aids learner concentration by imposing a barrier to 'inappropriate talk' (Pachler & Field, 2001: 231), allowing for 'more interaction between audience and teacher but not between pupils' (Chaplain, 2003: 125). Although this appears to run counter to the establishment of a collaborative, pupil-centred atmosphere (Pachler & Field, 2001), and could be viewed as teacher-centred, it may be appropriate in these

teachers' classrooms to have the learners seated in rows, where they could clearly see the visual clues that the teacher provided to aid understanding.

The pupils always sat in the same seats, again indicating a high level of teacher control. In Teacher 2's classroom, where the seating was arranged round three tables, it was she who decided which pupils should sit at which table, according to the level at which she considered they were operating. It might be argued that creating ability groups might deny the learners in this class the opportunity to work with more proficient learners in their ZPD and thereby restrict development. However, even within the ability groups there appeared to be a range of aptitudes. The field notes indicate that within the ability groups the learners co-operated in discussion of tasks and helped each other develop understanding, not only when working on exercises designed to practise particular structures or vocabulary, but also when interacting with the teacher.

It should be noted that other examples of good practice in ML teaching may include classrooms where there are less traditional seating arrangements. However, whatever the arrangement, it is the teacher's responsibility to impose a seating system (or a variety of systems depending on the planned activity) which is conducive to learning (Dörnyei 2001, Dörnyei & Murphey 2003). Control over seating, therefore, makes it clear to the learners that the teacher is in charge of the classroom environment. The next section will explain the apparent contradiction between the creation of a collaborative, co-operative atmosphere and the need for the teacher to be seen to be the person in control.

#### **4.4 Maintaining Authority**

While the measures described above to ensure pupil compliance may seem rather uncongenial, the context of the Scottish secondary classroom must be taken into consideration. The reality of most Scottish secondary schools is that many are experiencing 'the problem of low-level disruption in schools and classes. It is growing, it is stressful, and it reduces the learning opportunities for all pupils. It affects almost all schools but is even more prevalent ... in secondary schools.' (GTCS, 2005). If teachers



are to be effective, therefore, they have to be seen by pupils to be in control of all that happens in the classroom, whether it is seating, eating policy or the right to speak. Pupils have clear expectations about teacher behaviour. Wragg et al. (2000), researching teacher competence, found that in one study 83 % of pupils listed 'can keep control' as very important. In the same study 88 % responded that it was very important that teachers 'treat pupils fairly' (p. 199). Poor management of pupil behaviour is viewed by pupils as poor teaching ability, with the most positive evaluations granted to teachers who implement a 'firm but fair' approach (Denscombe, 1982).

This study needs to be seen in a context that is different to that of adult learners, although it may be that they too prefer an ordered, well managed classroom. The context of the secondary school means that the measures the teachers in the study took should be seen against a whole school culture where the need for a disciplined working atmosphere needs to be enforced.

The pupils who were interviewed in the study were unequivocal about the need for good teacher discipline strategies:

#### **Interview extract 4.1**

*P5: ... people don't take you seriously then if you don't have good discipline. We take her seriously.*

*P4: You need that.*

*P5: Yeah.*

*P4: Yeah, you can't teach ... unless you've got good discipline.*

Pupils 4 and 5 articulated the need for an atmosphere where the teacher is seen to be in control. Although they could be said not to recognise their need to take responsibility for their own behaviour, research findings demonstrate that pupils believe that teachers have the ultimate responsibility for maintaining an orderly, productive environment (Pomeroy 1999, Wragg et al. 2000).

#### **4.5 Focusing Moves**

Sometimes the teachers merely uttered a name or directed a look towards a pupil who was perceived to be off-task. On other occasions they used a variety of focusing moves to ensure that the learners paid attention to the interaction. Examples of each of the teachers' focusing moves can be seen in Classroom extract 4.1 below.

##### **Classroom extract 4.1**

*T1: Ça va J.? Tu as mal à la tête ?  
F., quel est le problème ?*

*T2: Concentration, s'il vous plaît.*

*T3: Pass auf, komm, C.*

*T4: Eh, D. et L., écoutez s'il vous plaît.*

The refocusing moves were part of the disciplinary framework within which the classroom operated, as the teacher made sure the learners were paying attention. Examples in Classroom extract 4.1 above of the language the teachers used demonstrate a positive approach by refocusing the learners' attention, rather than criticising their lack of concentration. The teacher's implied criticism is softened by the addition of polite language or a question about how they feel, thus avoiding confrontation and saving the learner's face. The teachers' use of TL expressions appeared to be easily understood by the learners.

In the classrooms of the teachers in the study, it was striking how rarely learners had to be disciplined, any reprimands coming as a result of apparent off-task behaviour, when refocusing moves were directed to individual pupils or small groups. During interviews with pupils, when I asked them why they thought that their teachers spent so little time on discipline matters, they seemed to find it difficult to explain:

#### **Interview extract 4.2**

P7: *I don't know, I've never really thought about that before. It might be the dynamic of things – like you're always on the go and you're always kept busy.*

P8: *She's not like a, she's not a soft teacher, but I don't know how to put it, she's sort of ...*

P9: *She's like disciplined when she needs to be.*

The pupils seemed to accept that the teachers would be strict when necessary. The remark by Pupil 7 was borne out in the observations. All the teachers' lessons proceeded at a brisk pace and there was little opportunity for learners to go off-task. Pupil 7 appeared to be making a reference to the atmosphere in the classroom, *the dynamic of things* reflecting the classroom culture, while the use of *you're always kept busy* rather than *you're always busy* appears to indicate that the learner appreciated that it was the teacher who directed and controlled the action, providing a series of experiences to ensure that pupils were continually occupied.

Pupil 8's assessment of her teacher's character appeared to appreciate her interpersonal attributes; while stating that the teacher was not viewed as *soft*, therefore lenient and ineffectual (Reid, 2000), her obvious reluctance to describe the teacher in terms of severity appeared to point to a cordiality in the relationship between teacher and learners, while acknowledging that the teacher was in control. The teacher appeared to embody what is viewed by many pupils as an example of a 'good' teacher. It appears that pupils prefer teachers who are relatively strict (Wragg, 2001). Although discipline is not the focus of the study, it is important to acknowledge that in the secondary school context it is a significant factor in creating an ethos in which pupils learn or not, therefore it has to be taken into account when considering how a collaborative atmosphere is formed. What is noteworthy is that the purposeful atmosphere the pupils described was established and maintained by teachers using the TL almost exclusively to communicate with the learners, including using 'discipline' moves when necessary.

#### **4.6 Creation of a Collaborative Atmosphere**

A key skill appears to be the ability to create an atmosphere which has a framework of discipline which is understood by the learners, but which is not seen as so oppressive that learners are inhibited from contributing. The teacher in this setting acts as a 'benign dictator' (Exley & Dennick, 2004), facilitating learning by involving the learners in interaction, obliging them to contribute and assisting them to respond, but not making them feel uncomfortable or self-conscious if they make an error. The learner therefore does not feel anxious if asked to perform in another exchange.

#### **4.7 Establishing a Group Norm**

Enabling the existence of a group norm which promotes a cohesive and constructive atmosphere allows the learners to feel at ease and able to engage within this framework but it has to be enforced, if learners are to feel secure and their morale kept high (Dörnyei, 2001). By enforcing particular rules, such as the ones concerning eating, talking out of turn and paying attention, it could be said that the teachers were making it clear that the purpose of the ML class was not only learning, but also the importance of showing respect for each other's contributions. In interviews the teachers maintained that they insisted on an ethos of mutual respect within the classroom.

#### **Interview extract 4.3**

*T 2: ... if we are doing speaking I insist that they give it full attention, that they show respect to the others in the group, so for example yesterday ... a few of them [were] off task. And I stopped and said, 'Look, we listen to you, it's your politeness now, listen to someone else.' And that's training that they give each other respect.*

Teacher expectations can have a powerful affective influence on pupils' learning (Smith & Pellegrini 1998, Reynolds et al. 1996). By making explicit to the learners what is expected of them, the teacher underlined the importance of politeness and consideration

of others. In all the teachers' lessons everyone's contribution was seen as equally important and no one was permitted to show disrespect by not listening or making negative remarks about anyone else's input. The pupils also stressed this when they were interviewed.

#### **Interview extract 4.4**

*Pupil 9: No one would laugh [at someone's mistake] in our class.*

*Pupil 7: [Teacher] would chase them.*

The teachers' control seemed aimed at preventing negative actions by the learners which could have the effect of disrupting learning or involving the loss of face. The rules they enforced appeared to emphasise the importance of positive relationships and respect between the learners as well as with the teacher. The pupils who were interviewed appeared aware of this.

Sustaining good relationships within a collaborative atmosphere appeared to be woven through the teaching process by means of the TL used by the teachers to interact with the learners, evidence of which will be apparent in many of the extracts from the transcripts, even though they may be used to illustrate other points. Closer examination of the TL strategies that the teachers used to maintain the positive atmosphere will take place in Chapter 5. The next part of this section on teacher control will look at the way the teachers regulated their TL input in the classroom to make it accessible to the learners.

#### **4.8 Comprehensible Input**

My experience as a ML teacher educator working with substantial numbers of native French and German speakers each year, not only in Scotland but also in France and Austria, informed my impression of the teachers' TL expertise. The teachers were all highly proficient in the languages they taught; they spoke fluently to native speaker standard. The view has been expressed that 'The more proficient in [the TL], the more efficient in the classroom' (Medgyes, 1992: 347). However, a high degree of proficiency

does not necessarily pre-suppose an ability to simplify language to a level that non-native speakers at an early stage in their learning will understand. The ability to select language appropriate to the age and stage of the learners is crucial if learners are to understand what is being said (Krashen, 1985).

The teachers exercised a great deal of control over the lexis and grammar of the TL they used. They carefully limited the language to which the pupils were exposed, making sure that it was comprehensible. Although it is difficult to show from the data whether pupils really understood all the teachers' language or not, what was not observed may be as important as what could be studied. There appeared to be no instances of communication breakdown, nor any responses from the learners which suggested a lack of understanding, although there were occasions when they asked for confirmation that they had understood. The field notes indicate that the teachers appeared to be constantly scanning the room. The pupils in interviews also mentioned the teachers' alertness for possible signs of pupil incomprehension, as can be seen in Interview extract 4.5 below.

#### **Interview extract 4.5**

*P11: Eh well, like, if [teacher] notices somebody drifting, he'll kind of ask them if they don't understand.*

*P8: If [teacher] sees someone looking a bit lost, she'll go over it again and ask them.*

Both these pupils, representative of the opinion of all the pupils interviewed, appeared to show awareness of the teachers' attentiveness and concern that all learners should be engaged in the learning process and the actions they took to keep them involved. Although involvement of the learners does not necessarily correlate with learning, the teachers' responsiveness to their non-verbal communication appeared to show a determination to ensure pupils were given every opportunity to participate. It could be argued that without such opportunities, learning is less likely to take place.

The TL used by the teacher in Classroom extract 4.2 is an example of the way the teachers adapted their language so that it was comprehensible to the learners, without sounding ‘unnatural’.

#### **Classroom extract 4.2**

*T1: (writes on the board). Ok, ok, c'est bien. Alors le titre c'est les directions et vous écrivez un, deux, trois, quatre, blah, blah, blah, blah, onze jusqu'à 20. Oui? Il faut écrire le numéro et la lettre. C'est bien? Et je vous donne 4 minutes. C'est bien?*

*Ps: Oui, c'est bien*

*T1: 4 minutes.*

*P3: Do you just write like 1E?*

*T1: Un et puis la lettre Oui? C'est bien?*

*P3: C'est bien.*

*P23: Which one do you do it in?*

*T1: Cahier d'exercices*

Classroom extract 4.2 illustrates how the teacher made his instructions comprehensible through a number of steps. He first provided visual assistance by writing the title of the exercise on the board, to make clear to the pupils that they would be writing the exercise and also how it was to be set out. He then demonstrated, also using the board, that pupils should write the numbers 1-20. Then he told them they should write the appropriate letter beside each number and gave them a time limit for completion of the exercise. By breaking up the instructions, he gave pupils the time to grasp each of the component parts before moving on to the next one in a carefully planned sequence.

He also interspersed his instructions with ‘tag’ questions, inviting learners to show whether they had understood or not. These ‘tag’ questions also can be viewed as having the function of giving the learners more time to process each bit of information he had transmitted. ‘Tag’ questions also have a ‘softening’ function (Talbot, 1998); what is, in

effect, an imperative is tempered by the apparent request for concurrence. The language throughout was simple and did not contain any extraneous, distracting information. There will be further clarification of what is meant by ‘simple’ language when an additional example of teacher ‘simplicity’ of TL in Classroom extract 4.3 is considered.

In Classroom extract 4.2, pupil 3 checked that she had understood correctly, while pupil 23 requested procedural information which the teacher had not provided, but which the rest of the class appeared to have taken for granted. Neither pupil evinced any evidence of misunderstanding, but appeared to be using English in order to confirm accurate comprehension of the teacher’s instructions. Pupils’ use of English in interaction was usually infrequent and tended to be for confirmatory purposes, with the exception of Teacher 4’s class, who were a low proficiency class. Nonetheless they also used what might be considered a surprising amount of TL, given their apparent lack of ability. There will be further discussion of pupils’ mother tongue use in Chapter 5, where occurrences of teacher and pupil use of English are discussed.

All the teachers followed similar procedures when setting up tasks to make their TL comprehensible. They almost always used visuals to demonstrate what they required the learners to do and followed a carefully constructed step-wise sequence of instructions. There were also some characteristics of TL which all the teachers used almost all the time when talking to the learners. They usually used simple language, that is, they tended not to use complex sentences; the vocabulary they used typically did not comprise more than three syllables and often they used short phrases. They also included a great many cognates in their talk. Additional to Classroom extract 4.2, an example of the sort of ‘simple’ language they used can be seen in Classroom extract 4.3 when one of the teachers talked about her experience staying in a five star hotel.

### **Classroom extract 4.3**

*T2: Tu as vu Gleneagles à la télévision ?*

*P15: Oui.*



T2 : *Avec le golf, avec les politiciens, Tony Blair étcétera. C'est un grand hotel, avec des terrains de golf et c'est cher. Ma soeur m'a invitée. Une nuit et un dîner. Elle est riche. Elle a payé. Mais c'est cher.*

Teacher 2 started her second turn with two short prepositional phrases *Avec le golf, avec les politiciens*. The word for politician which is most normally used in French is *politique* or *l'homme politique*; however, it can be inferred that the teacher employed the lesser used *politiciens* as it was more likely to be understood by the pupils because of its closeness to English. Her use of a prominent politician's name also reinforced the meaning of *politiciens*. A compound sentence followed, both parts of which used the simple verbal construction *c'est*. Three short simple sentences followed. *Ma soeur* is one of the earliest collocations that pupils learn, so the teacher could be confident that they understood the meaning. She followed *ma soeur* with three cognates, *invitée*, *riche* and *payé* which should have left no doubt that the teacher had been invited by her rich sister who had paid. The details of what she paid for were also clearly signaled, *Une nuit et un dîner*.

The teachers reinforced certain language structures and vocabulary by 'recycling' them in different interactional contexts of the lesson and in different lessons, underlining their function and providing the learners with regular exposure to them at a level suitable for their age and stage. In Classroom extract 4.3 above, the teacher uses both *avec* and *c'est* three times, using repetition of simple language with which the pupils are familiar to make sure her message is understood.

By using a carefully controlled 'cut-down' version of 'authentic' familiar TL repetitively, the teachers provided a context which scaffolded the learners' understanding. It is important to note, however, that although the teachers were speaking a 'simple' version of the TL, it could not be considered imperfect or less 'authentic' than that spoken by native speakers. The constant recurrence in the teachers' talk of certain language structures also offered the learners language which could be appropriated if

necessary for their own use. Classroom extract 4.4 gives some examples of the way Teacher 1 ‘recycled’ a particular structure, combining it with familiar or easily recognisable vocabulary.

#### **Classroom extract 4.4**

*T1: Bon, on va continuer ce que nous avons commencé hier.*

*T1: On va faire exercice 2.*

*T1: On va faire une petite démonstration.*

In the three examples above which occurred at different stages in the same lesson, the cognates *continuer*, *commencé*, *exercice* and *démonstration* gave a clear message to the learners about the context the teacher was setting and what they could expect. The identification of ‘key words’ can help identification of meaning even by weaker learners as long as there is a general understanding of the context (Graham, 1997). Even if they had not understood every word, they would probably realise that they would be resuming work that had already been started; that they were going to be doing an exercise and that someone, possibly the teacher, would be modelling an activity or a language structure to them.

The teacher’s use of *On va* to signify immediate future action reinforced that structure to the learners, who might come to use it themselves after subconsciously internalising it due to the continuous nature of the repetition by the teacher (Krashen, 1985). The teacher in the role of principal is providing vocabulary and structures which pupils can use when they take responsibility themselves as principals for their own utterances. An example of this can be seen in Classroom extracts 4.5 and 4.6, from two of the French classes where Teacher 1 used the expression ‘*bizarre*’. In the first class Teacher 1 used it to describe the verb ‘*aller*’:

#### **Classroom extract 4.5**

*T1: Alors, c’est un verbe bizarre, non? Oui? Aller, c’est un verbe bizarre.*

The teacher used the cognate '*bizarre*' to help the pupils understand his utterance, but his use of *bizarre* may also be said to perform a face-saving function so that the learners were made to feel that it was not their ability that was in question if they found the verb difficult; rather it was the fault of the verb for being odd. There will be further consideration of face-saving language in Chapters 5 and 6 where there is more detailed analysis of the teachers' TL strategies. In the second extract, taken from a lesson two weeks later, he used the same word to describe a symbol for traffic lights in a lesson where he was introducing new vocabulary on directions to the learners:

#### **Classroom extract 4.6**

*T1: Passez le stade à gauche. Oui, ok, à gauche et à droite. Mmmm. (pointing to symbol on board) Bizarre, hein? Qu'est-ce que c'est?*

*P9: Traffic lights*

*T1: Oui, mais en français (laughs)*

*P9: Les traffic lights (in French accent)*

*T1: Non! (laughs)*

In the extract above the teacher used *bizarre* to draw attention to a new symbol for a vocabulary item which the pupils had not encountered before. Once again, it could be said that he was saving the pupils' collective face by using *bizarre* to emphasise that he did not expect the learners to know the new item of vocabulary. The use of *bizarre* a second time in lessons two weeks apart indicates that it was a word that the teacher employed fairly regularly. It is also interesting that pupil 9, in trying to identify the French word for traffic lights, used the English expression with a French accent.

The two extracts above illustrate the way the functions of the teachers' choice of language were interwoven. Not only had the teacher above selected language which was significant for ensuring pupil comprehension in these short extracts, it was also used as a face-saving mechanism, to reassure pupils that he was aware of any difficulties they might encounter. His use of 'tag' questions *non? Oui?* and *hein?* also invited co-

operation from the learners and might have been instrumental in contributing to a collaborative atmosphere. Some of the different functions of the teachers' language will be discussed in a later part of this chapter, but the 'messiness' of the data is evident from these short extracts above, when one utterance may perform a number of purposes. This 'messiness' may only be in the eye of the tidy-minded analyst, but not considered as such by the interactants, for whom the interchange may seem perfectly clear.

Although this section focuses on the way the teachers controlled the language to ensure that it was comprehensible for the learners, it is perhaps appropriate here to look at the result of the teacher's use of *bizarre* when, in another lesson which took place approximately two months after the second one, one of his pupils appropriated the word '*bizarre*' to describe work that his group had undertaken with the French language conversation assistant:

#### **Classroom extract 4.7**

*T1: C'était bien?*

*P15: C'était bien.*

*P14: C'est bizarre!*

*T1: (laughing) C'était bizarre? E. (French assistant) était bizarre ou l'activité était bizarre?*

*P14: L'activité bizarre*

*T1: Voilà.*

Classroom extract 4.7 above demonstrates the way the teacher's vocabulary had been appropriated by Pupil 14, who used it contextually correctly to communicate his opinion as principal of the utterance, without help from the teacher. Although pupil 14's second utterance *L'activité bizarre* was not perfectly formed, because he had omitted the verb, it demonstrated a certain confidence in participating in dialogue in the TL and there is the possibility that he and the rest of the learners, the 'overhearers', might be persuaded to contribute to classroom dialogue in the future, due to the teacher's positive reaction.

The appropriation of the teacher's language by the pupil demonstrates that he had 'noticed' the teacher's vocabulary input and stored it, before retrieving it to communicate his opinion in response to the teacher's question. Viewed within the framework of Goffman's production format (1981), he used the language he had appropriated to put forward his point of view in an unpredictable exchange, taking responsibility as principal of his utterance in the here and now, rather than in a language practice session where he normally acted as author of a language structure, practising and manipulating it as a rehearsal for possible future needs.

If we adopt Wadensjö's listening format (1998), the learner above can be said to have listened to the teacher's first question as a responder, taking responsibility for his part in developing the 'conversation', providing an unpredicted, 'natural' response, of which the teacher then took advantage to extend the talk, as he in turn responded, guiding the learner with a carefully phrased question to help him continue in the TL. The dialogic nature of the interchange means that the teacher was also then in the position of responder, as his next talk move would be as a result of the learner's answer. In the example above, the teacher then moved the dialogue towards a close with a phatic comment *Voilà*.

Classroom extract 4.7 illustrates how a teacher deemed to be an accomplished practitioner provides comprehensible input in the form of language which learners may then use to communicate meaning 'naturally', in this case after the teacher's initiation move. The pupil's unpredictable response in the TL could also be said to provide evidence of the collaborative atmosphere the teacher had established in the classroom between himself and the learners. It may be that in Classroom extract 4.7 the learner was seeking approval through adopting the TL, in order to accommodate to the teacher's preferred mode of speech, that is, the TL (Giles & Coupland, 1991). Although it was unusual that pupils initiated exchanges, the readiness they displayed to take part in

interaction in the TL appears to point to a positive attitude to the teachers and a willingness to accept the group norms and goals of the class.

Teachers' initiations through questions or instructions were responsible for most of the interaction which took place in the classroom. In sections 4.13 and 4.14 of this chapter, short extracts of TL classroom dialogue will be analysed closely to provide evidence of the pace the teachers imposed. In this later section the teachers' initiations will also be discussed more fully and the interactive moves the teachers made will be subjected to fine-grained analysis. The teachers' initiations appeared to be part of an overarching communicative approach, where the TL is used as much as possible to create an environment where it appears natural for all participants to use it. The next section looks at the nature of the interaction that the teacher initiated and managed.

#### **4.9 Management of Classroom Interaction**

A great deal of interaction in the TL occurred in the classrooms of the teachers in the study and this could not just be put down to the frequency of the teachers' questions. As can be seen above, other factors, including the establishment of a disciplined but collaborative atmosphere and the comprehensibility of the teacher's language, were important for setting the context in which the frequency and variety of questions appeared to engage the learners. Within each lesson, the teachers' control was also evident in activities and the way the lesson moved forward through a number of different stages. They tended to follow set routines at the beginning and end of every lesson.

#### **4.10 Routines**

The teachers all had established routines in their lessons. Routines in classrooms are important for maintaining pupil engagement (Leinhardt et al., 1987) and in a second language context they also give learners access to regularly used expressions which they can adopt themselves appropriately in interaction in the TL (Ohta, 1999). They all

greeted the pupils, one doing so individually as the pupils entered, the other three formally, to signal the start of the lesson:

#### **Classroom extract 4.8**

*Tl: Bonjour la classe!*

*Ps: Bonjour M. \_\_\_\_\_*

*Tl: Ça va?*

*Ps: Ça va.*

*Ça va bien.*

The pupils in Classroom extract 4.8 above and others like it tended to answer in chorus, usually with the same phrases to standard questions such as the ones above. It could be said that they are taking no responsibility for their answers and are performing in the role of animators or authors as they listen for the teacher's cue in order to supply an automatic or behavioural response. These choral routines could be said to underline their group identity and the 'speech code', that is, the TL, they employed to communicate in the community that is the classroom (Griffin, 2008).

On the other hand, it could be argued that these automatic routines were preparing them to use their responses as principals outside the classroom. If they were asked the same question by a native speaker, either in Scotland or in the target culture, and they produced the same response, they would then presumably be considered principals of the utterance, taking responsibility for communicating how they feel, or at least producing an appropriate response to a polite question in a social situation. By allowing the learners to rehearse language in the classroom for use in different circumstances outside it the teachers are promoting what Hymes (1972) called 'communicative competence', which not only recognises the correct form of the utterance, but includes the understanding of when it is appropriate to use it. The security and regularity of routines imposed by the teachers allowed learners to build up a stock of automatic responses in the TL which they could use meaningfully outside the classroom, just as children

learning their first language become adept at using language appropriate to the social context through routinely hearing and practising it (Ohta, 2001).

In a slightly different beginning sequence, Teacher 4 had established a warm-up routine in the class where pupils asked each other a series of questions for a short period of time, before moving on to another set:

**Classroom extract 4. 9**

*T4: Quel temps fait-il aujourd'hui, C.?*

*P3: The weather?*

*T4: Voilà.*

*P3: Il y a du soleil.*

*T4: Il y a du soleil. Très bien. Tu poses la question, s'il te plaît? Quel temps fait-il?*

*P3: Quel temps fait-il, L.?*

*T4: Quel temps fait-il, L.?*

*P5: Il fait beau.*

*T4: Il fait beau. Et tu poses la question s'il te plaît?*

*P5: Quel temps fait-il, S.?*

*P6: What's the weather like?*

*T4: The weather.*

*P6: Il ne fait pas mauvais.*

*T4: Super. Tu changes la question s'il te plaît. Qu'est-ce que tu as fait hier soir G.?*

*P7: J'ai fait du babysitting.*

*T4: J'ai fait du babysitting. Très bien, G. Et tu poses la question, s'il te plaît, G.? Qu'est-ce que tu as fait hier soir?*

*P8: Qu'est-ce que tu as fait hier soir?*

*P9: J'ai téléphoné à mon amie.*



The pupils in Classroom extract 4.9 above appeared to have a stock of replies to the questions which were posed. In this class of lower performing pupils, Teacher 4's scaffolding was obvious; she provided the questions, reassured the learners that their understanding was correct and decided when to move the interaction on. She also provided positive feedback to the responses through use of praise and reinforcement by repeating the pupils' utterances.

The pupils in this extract were using the language appropriately to answer the questions; they all said something different, demonstrating their understanding of the classroom dialogue. The answers to the questions about the weather followed a logical coherence in that the pupils' answers did not contradict each other and therefore showed the pupils' creativity in devising ways of describing the current weather conditions. It is not clear, however, if their answers to the question *Qu'est-ce que tu as fait hier soir?* were genuinely communicating meaning or were just one of a series of responses which the pupils had learned as appropriate answers. Nonetheless, the fact that the learners produced appropriate responses indicates understanding and may have been instrumental in developing their confidence in using the TL to communicate.

Although most pupils responded with rather formulaic replies it could be argued that, as well as formally signalling that the lesson was about to start, these routines established a minimum level of interaction, which could lead to a fluent response in less formal situations in which pupils might find themselves when in the target country, having to respond to questions from native speakers (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005). Having a supply of formulaic phrases may also increase fluency (Weinert, 1995), leading to more confidence on the part of the learners. The vocabulary and structures re-visited in the practice sequences above may not normally be part of the topic area being studied. Within the speech community that is the ML classroom, therefore, the teachers' use of routine exchanges integrated into the work of the class could be said to be playing a part in preparing the learners to use formulaic responses appropriate in the wider TL speech community.

The teachers also made explicit reference to routine practices:

**Classroom extract 4.10**

*T3: ... und morgen schreiben wir das Vokabeltest, ja? Morgen ist Mittwoch, wir schreiben das Vokabeltest.*

Teacher 3 above reminded the learners that there would be a vocabulary test the next day, since normal practice dictated that there would be a vocabulary test on a Wednesday. Routines permit the creation of a steady balance in the relationship between teacher and pupils and generate a feeling of security and stability (Prabhu, 1992). They may be helpful in keeping the learners' affective filter low, allowing them to respond readily. It may be that pupils are less likely to feel anxious about responding during classroom routines because they re-activate previously learned language with which they should feel confident. They can also save cognitive as well as emotional energy (Derrington & Goddard, 2007) because in the ML classroom they provide a secure base on which to build new language for more demanding work later in the lesson or the course. Routines often follow a predictable, 'scripted' pattern, which ensures learners are sure of their roles and allows them to concentrate their cognitive energies on more substantial matters (Berliner, 1986).

The teachers used polite language as a matter of routine; expressions such as *s'il te plaît/s'il vous plaît, tu peux ...* or *merci* usually before or after classroom commands such as *asseyez-vous, écoutez, regardez, faites attention, répétez* and other high frequency classroom expressions, the polite language softening the imperative and giving the learners an impression of being treated with the politeness and respect the teachers demanded from the learners. Treating learners with respect can have a positive effect on motivation (Aeginitou, 1994), as well as providing them with polite language forms which they could use themselves when making requests, either in the classroom or outside it, in interaction with native speakers.

The predictability of the routines the teachers employed usually at the beginning or end of the lessons and the routine language used for instructions and practice of language structures contrasted with ‘conversation-type’ language sequences which took place at other times in the lesson, which appeared less predictable, both for the teacher and the learners. The next section gives a fuller account of these conversational-type sequences and other categories of interaction identified.

#### **4.11 Pedagogical Foci of the Lesson**

There was always a clear structure evident in each lesson and another routine action at the beginning of the class was to communicate the learning intentions to the pupils orally and/or visually on the board. The teachers were flexible in the way that the lesson progressed; if a point of language arose that they thought was important to address, they followed it up so that the whole class was informed, whether it appeared to be part of the plan or not. The lessons observed always included four different interactional categories, three of which appeared to be linked to the pedagogical foci within the lesson, identified and described in Chapter 3. These were interactional sequences which featured:

- ‘operational-type’ language;
- ‘analysis-type’ language;
- ‘practice-type’ language;
- ‘conversation-type’ language.

Three of the categories above - operational-type language, analysis-type language and practice-type language - were linked to pedagogical foci of the lesson because the focus in each one was on a particular pedagogical classroom pursuit, which usually appeared to be part of the teachers’ lesson plan. Conversation-type language appeared less explicitly pedagogical due to its unpredictable, ‘naturally’ occurring nature within the three pedagogical foci identified. Further explanation of the conversation-type language will be provided within this section, on page 148 of this chapter, and also in Chapter 5, section 5.12, of the description of the categories identified in this study and their

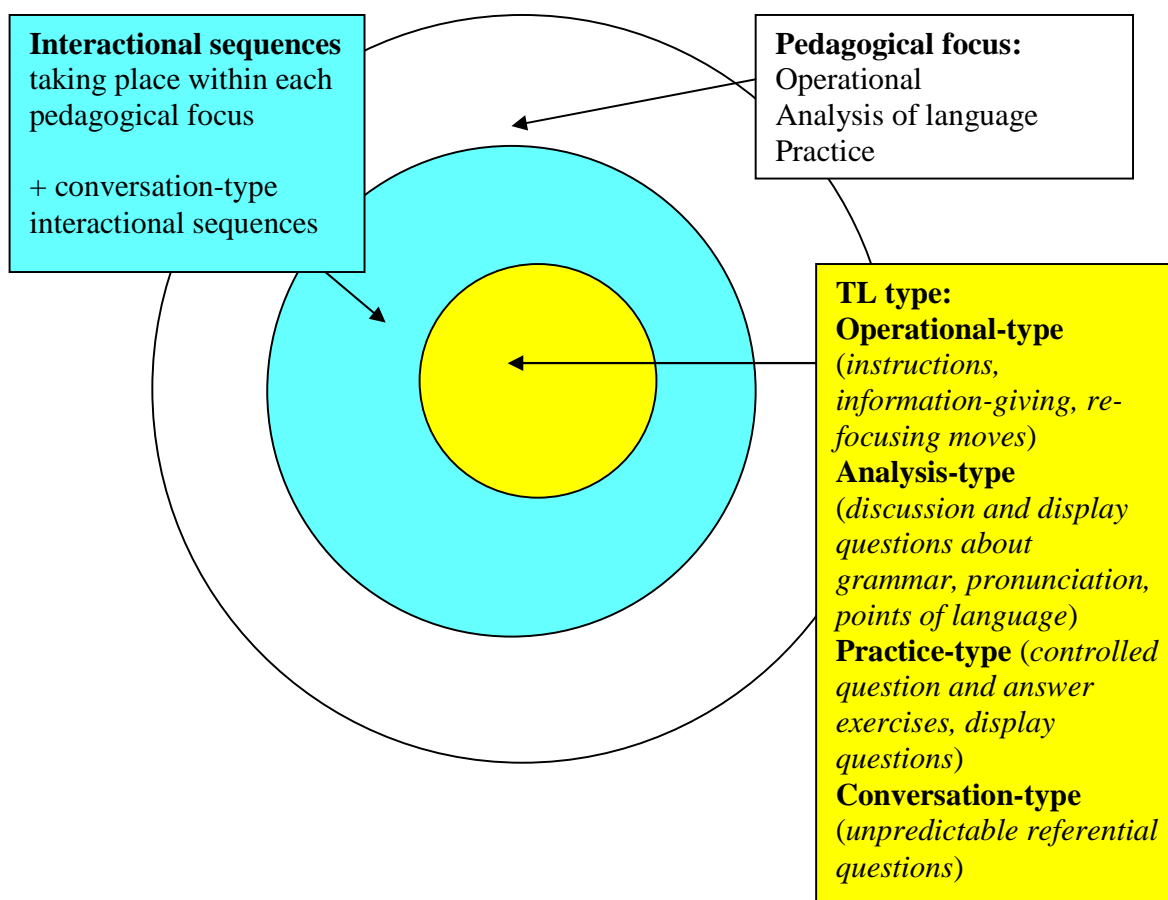
functions. Before that the next section will describe the way interactional sequences occurred within different pedagogical foci of the lessons which implied particular types of TL.

As each lesson progressed, the TL used in the interactional sequences which took place between the teachers and the learners could be said to relate to the principal pedagogical focus of that particular stage of the lesson; when the focus was on analysis of language, for example, interactional sequences centred on the form of the language<sup>2</sup>. In each interactional sequence, the TL employed by the teacher had a particular function depending on the pedagogical focus. Detail of the pedagogical foci and TL types used to interact within them has been provided in Chapter 3 and will be developed in the following sections. However, in order to present a clear picture of the relationship between focus, sequence and TL type, Figure 4.1 illustrates how the TL type is situated in the interactional sequence, which in turn is nested within a particular pedagogical focus.

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<sup>2</sup> Interactional sequences refer to the dialogue which took place between the teachers and the learners during the different foci in the lesson and do not include periods when pupils worked in groups or with a partner, nor the completion of written exercises.

**Figure 4.1. Pedagogical foci, interactional sequences and TL type**



The pedagogical focus of a section of the lesson is the outer circle. It describes where attention was focused in a part of a lesson, that is, on operational matters, or on analysis of language, or on language practice. With the exception of conversation-type language, the interactional sequences that feature in the second circle related closely to the pedagogical foci identified in the outer circle. Conversation-type language appeared to have no pedagogical focus, that is, it was not part of the teacher's plan. However, it did intrude into pedagogical foci as an interactional sequence, seemingly unrelated to the focus, but arising from it. The functions of the TL types will be considered in Chapter 5. The aim in this chapter is to raise awareness of the types of TL interaction that took place with different associated purposes.

As stated in Chapter 3, previous research has identified similar pedagogical categories or foci of the lesson, (Ellis 1984, Van Lier 1988, Neil 1997, Seedhouse 2004). Also identified are periods when the focus is on meaning and fluency, or the message. Where previous classifications differ from this study is that the meaning and fluency contexts that are described are planned by the teacher and their purpose is made explicit to the learners. The conversation-type language which occurred in the classrooms of the teachers who were the subjects of this study seemed unpredictable and did not appear to be part of the lesson plan; rather, they appeared to arise at random, often as a result of a learner's response during practice language. The interactional sequences which took place during the different pedagogical foci and the conversation-type sequences identified in this study are described below.

*Operational-type language:* Interactional sequences featuring operational-type TL occurred when the teachers were setting up a task or describing what was involved in an exercise, giving instructions, when the pedagogical focus was operational. One example of the operational-type language they used can be seen in Classroom extract 4.1 which was also used to illustrate how teachers made their language comprehensible. Operational-type TL tended to comprise imperatives followed by an expression of politeness such as *s'il vous plaît*, *bitte*, *merci* or *danke* or the immediate future tense, usually characterised by *on va*. The choice of *on va* more often than *vous allez* could be said to underline the way the teachers acted to develop a collaborative relationship with the learners, by indicating that they would be doing something together, *on va*, rather than communicating that they were doing something as a result of the teacher's directive, *vous allez*, which might be viewed as emphasising the power differential between teacher and learners. This was also evident in the Teacher 3's use of *wir*.

Operational-type language was also broken up with frequent 'tag' questions, which could be considered another collaborative move on the part of the teachers to soften their commands while seeking reassurance that the pupils had understood their TL. An

example of the way a teacher gave instructions can be seen in Classroom extract 4.11 below in which she communicated the learning intentions for the lesson.

#### **Classroom extract 4.11**

T2: Z., L., J., E., D. et L., vous allez faire un groupe aujourd'hui. Oui, si'il vous plaît.  
On va faire trois groupes, ok?  
...Ok, tout le monde est organisé? Alors, on va continuer les vacances, il faut les brochures 'les vacances'. Et on va travailler en trois groupes, on a pour commencer 'les transports', un jeu ...  
...Un groupe avec moi, on va parler 'dans le passé' ; j'ai passé mes vacances etcétera. Et troisième activité, vous allez sur les cassettes, et il faut les brochures à la page vingt-six (displaying page) ... Ça va, A. ? Oui ? Oui?

Teacher 2 had backed up her instructions with a diagram on the board, and used gesture so that the pupils could confirm their understanding. She made use of both *on va* and *vous allez* suggesting that although she was implicitly underlining the co-operation which existed in the class when setting the scene for the proposed activities by using *on va*, she was also demonstrating her organisational control when explicitly giving instructions to a particular group about what they had to do, using *vous allez*. As in Classroom extract 4.1 which featured a different teacher, she used some expressions repetitively, for example *on va*, *il faut*, and she used short sentences with no extraneous distracting information. The type of language used in Classroom extract 4.11 is typical of the operational-type language all the teachers used in interactional sequences when the pedagogical focus was on organisation.

*Analysis-type language:* When the pedagogical focus was on analysis of language the interactional sequences in this category included presentation of grammar items, as well as activities designed to focus the learners' attention on aspects of the form of the language. Interactional sequences tended to conform to the IRF framework, the teachers employing display questions to assess the pupils' understanding of grammatical

concepts. All of the teachers apart from Teacher 3 introduced grammar concepts, such as the perfect tense or reflexive verbs, using a mixture of English and the TL, but balanced the use of English by following up their presentations with exercises and activities in the TL. They believed that it was useful for the learners to be able use their mother tongue as a meta-language to help them make sense of what is perceived by the pupils as a very different language system. One teacher stated that the use of English accelerated pupils' comprehension.

**Interview extract 4.6**

*T1: There are times when ... it's going to be easier [using English]. They're going to understand more quickly.*

One of the teachers alluded to the pupils' lack of grammar knowledge in their first language:

**Interview extract 4.7**

*T2: I think to pretend that you can teach grammar successfully [in the TL] to pupils who have no grammar background from other subjects, or general knowledge, I think you could be very frustrated.*

Through drawing attention to pupils' general lack of grammar awareness, the teacher also justified her perception of the necessity for the use of English as a meta-language through which understanding might be achieved. Although there is a literacy strategy in Scotland and new curricular initiatives are planned which are designed to increase learners' knowledge about language systems, many pupils have not had any formal grammar teaching, either in the primary school or the early years of secondary school. Many primary and secondary teachers who are not linguists have incomplete knowledge of grammar terminology, partly as a result of the antipathy towards grammar teaching from the 1960s until the 1980s in the UK, when many of them were being educated themselves (McGonigal et al., 2001).



The desirability of using English to explain how the language works seemed to be borne out in interviews with the pupils.

#### **Interview extract 4.8**

*Pupil 3: [Teacher] would definitely use English for something really complicated.*

*Pupil 5: It's good, it helps you understand more.*

*Pupil 3: [Teacher] explains them and we look at, like, examples and then we practise using them.*

When the focus was on analysis of language the teachers encouraged the learners to articulate their understanding either in the mother tongue or, in Teacher 3's case, also the TL. Below is an example from Teacher 3's German class, when the focus was on analysis of language which was used to reinforce the learners' understanding of cases. The extract took place after homework sentences on the dative case had been corrected and the teacher was re-visiting the different cases.

#### **Classroom extract 4.12**

*T3: Ist es klar? Und was ist das auf Englisch? A.? Nominativ? Was ist das auf Englisch?*

*P8: The subject.*

*T3: Ja. Ist es euch allen klar? Ok? So, zum Beispiel, wenn ich sage, der Junge spielt Fussball, was ist Nominativ? Was ist Nominativ? R.?*

*P9: Der Junge.*

*T3: Der Junge. Ok. Das ist Nominativ. So, Nominativ ist der die oder das. Und dann haben wir in diesen Hausaufgaben, Dativ gehabt. Was ist das Wort für 'the' in Dativ? Komm, was ist das Wort für 'the' in Dativ? Sehr gut, super, C.?*

*P10: Ich bin M.*

*T3: Oh, Entschuldigung, M. (laughs) Tut mir Leid.*

*P10: Eh, dem der dem.*

*T3: Sehr gut, dem der dem. Ja, richtig, dem der dem (writing on board). Genau. Danke M. Und wann gebrauchen wir Dativ? Wann sagen wir dem der dem? Wer kann das? Kannst du es auf Deutsch erklären? E.? Kannst du?*

*P11: Nach ein Preposition.*

*T3: Sehr gut. Nach einem Preposition. Nach einem Preposition. Du hast ein Preposition: neben, in, unter und dann dem der dem, ja? Ja, richtig. Ok, nun ist es insofern klar? Versteht ihr das alles? Ok. Nun haben wir auch letzte Woche mit Akkusativ begonnen. Und das ist komplizierter. Ja, ist komplizierter. Wer weiss noch, können wir beginnen? Wer weiss noch, was ist 'the' in Akkusativ? Was ist 'the' in Akkusativ? Ja, gut, J.?*

*P12: Den die das*

Extract 4.12 follows the IRF framework; Teacher 2 used it to find out how much the learners had understood about the concept of definite article cases and when they should be used. Although most of the TL dialogue came from the teacher, a great deal of it was repetition, which gave the learners time to decode her utterances. She also followed up their responses with examples and further explanations, rephrasing and checking continually whether the pupils had understood. She used praise and positive feedback and also face-saving language; she told the pupils that the accusative case is more complicated, *komplizierter*, implicitly giving them permission to make mistakes, acknowledging the difficulty of what they were studying, praising their efforts as she helped them to consolidate understanding of the concept.

In analysis-type language interactional sequences, teacher talk was dominant due to the explanatory nature of the language. In order to make sure that the learners were paying attention, Teacher 3 asked questions to the whole class before choosing a pupil to answer; this was general practice by all the teachers. The learners therefore had to stay alert as they did not know which of them would be chosen to respond. Although many volunteered by putting their hands up, the teachers did not always choose the pupils who clearly thought they knew the answer. Teacher 3 encouraged the pupils to respond in the

TL but she, like the others, appeared flexible about accepting their use of English, depending on the circumstances.

During the analysis-type language interactional sequences, the focus might also be on pronunciation or vocabulary items. Regarding vocabulary, the teachers did not take a rigid stance on the use of the TL; if the learners appeared genuinely unable to work out a word in the TL, the teacher tended to insert a quick translation, perhaps in the interests of keeping the pace brisk, but this was relatively unusual, reflecting the teachers' skill in selecting the moments when judicious use of English might be more effective

Although grammar teaching, when the focus was explicitly on the form of the language, followed the teacher's plan for the lesson, analysis-type language incidents also occurred as a result of learners' utterances, when attention was drawn to correct usage, as can be seen below:

#### **Classroom extract 4.13**

*T2: Ok, Stop! (raps pen on desk) Stop! Ecoutez! Regardez 2 minutes les brochures à la page numéro cinq, page cinq. A la page vous avez des phrases plus compliquées oui? G. a posé la question, Comment dit-on 'on Friday' ? On dit en français le vendredi, le weekend. Ok? Par exemple le samedi matin je vais à la patinoire avec mes amis. On pourrait dire le vendredi après-midi je vais à la patinoire avec mes amis. Vous voyez les phrases compliquées. Vous avez à la page cinq la liste. Après l'école, le dimanche, le samedi.*

The pupils in the class from which Classroom extract 4.13 comes had been working on a piece of writing which was the basis for a future speaking assessment about leisure activities. Teacher 2 had been circulating, acting as a consultant, checking pupils' work and making suggestions, when one of the pupils asked how to say 'on' with a day of the week. Teacher 2 stopped the class and drew their attention to the point of language, where they could see examples and how it could be incorporated into their texts. In

doing so, she not only gave useful information which all the class could use if they wish, she may also have been communicating to the learners that any question they posed may have had relevance for everyone, therefore they should not feel embarrassed to ask. She could be said to have saved Pupil G.'s face by mentioning that the language about which he requested information was more complicated, therefore he could not be expected to know it. Teacher 2's actions here were designed to draw attention to the correct form, helping the learners to 'notice' it, so that by incorporating it into their production they would perhaps internalise it.

Grammar teaching can be problematic for learners of a foreign language and can 'often destroy motivation and puzzle children rather than enlighten them' (Cameron, 2001: 110), particularly when the teachers use as much TL as those in the study. Teachers have to be sensitive to the balance required between providing learners with understanding of the correct form, so that they can use it correctly to make meaning, and encouraging communicative fluency, which does not always imply accuracy (Hinkel, 2005). However, the importance of grammar may be underlined when teachers point up how it functions in real communication, as in Classroom extract 4.13 above. Practice-type language interactional sequences can then help learners rehearse the form of the language they will need to communicate with speakers of the TL. In the classrooms of the teachers in the study, following on from analysis of language, the pedagogical focus usually moved to practice.

*Practice-type language:* This occurred when the pedagogical focus was on practising the language they had been taught during analysis of language and usually comprised controlled question and answer interactional sequences in the TL, designed to apply their new knowledge. The importance of practice has been discussed in the review of the research literature. As well as practising structures, since the questions were usually personalised, the pupils had to supply a TL response which reflected the personal nature of their answer from their own experience, which could be viewed as preparing them for acting as principal of their utterance, using the language with native speakers in more

'natural' surroundings. Below is an extract from a lesson, where Teacher 2 was practising the use of the perfect tense within the topic of holidays, which displays characteristics of practice-type language interaction:

#### **Classroom extract 4.14**

*T2: Ok, la question: où as-tu passé les vacances ? J'ai passé mes vacances en France et en Espagne. Et vous ? Où as-tu passé les vacances ?*

*P1: J'ai passé mes vacances en Portugal.*

*T2: Au Portugal. Et toi ?*

*P2: J'ai passé mes vacances en Etats Unis*

*T2: Oui.*

*P3: J'ai passé mes vacances en Portugal*

*P4: J'ai passé mes vacances en Ecosse.*

*P5: J'ai passé mes vacances en Espagne.*

*P6: J'ai passé mes vacances en Lanzarote*

*T2: A Lanzarote? Ok, très différent. Tu es resté combien de temps ? Un jour? Un weekend? Une semaine? Un mois?*

The exchanges above could be said to conform to the IRF format; although Teacher 2 did not ask everyone in the group the question, *Où as-tu passé les vacances ?* it was implicit, as was the third move, the evaluative follow-up. The teacher supplied a model answer which the learners appear to have adopted, although Pupils 1, 2, 3 and 6 made mistakes with the preposition required before the country. Teacher 2 recast Pupil 1's and Pupil 6's faulty prepositions but not the others, suggesting that she was more concerned with their accurate use of the perfect tense. Perhaps since 'en' is the preposition predominantly used with countries and the meaning was not compromised, she had made a value judgment not to draw attention to it at this moment.

In Classroom extract 4.14, as they provided the correct form of the language the pupils were acting as authors; however, in the last part of their utterances they communicated

meaning that was personal only to them. In this situation, the learners were operating within their ZPD using the scaffolding that the teacher provided in terms of the grammatically correct structure, starting to become more autonomous through their choice of ending in the first instance.

The repetitious nature of the practice-type interactional sequence above was evident in most classroom events of this type, as was the personalised nature of the responses, which reduced the possibility that the repetition was seen by the pupils as irrelevant or boring. The teachers all appeared to relate the work done in class to the pupils' lives and interests outside school, with the result that the TL they were using might be applicable to situations they might find themselves in with native speakers, discussing personal matters. The learners seemed aware of the teachers' aims.

#### **Interview extract 4.9**

*P4: It's like, she's like teaching us what to say, like if you were in Germany, what you use, she teaches us stuff that would be useful, not just the grammar.*

As they expressed their understanding of the teacher's intentions the pupil 4 clearly appreciated the relevance of what the class was learning, through her use of the word *useful*. Pupils' awareness of the usefulness of what they are taught has been found in other studies to have a positive effect on their motivation (Dörnyei 1994, Chambers 1999).

The teachers not only rehearsed language which could be useful to the learners in interaction with native speakers during interactional sequences when the focus was on practising language structures; they also introduced less formal interactive episodes into the lessons, usually as a result of a learner's response during a practice language sequence. As noted earlier, these informal sequences are termed conversation-type language and are potentially the most interesting aspect of the classrooms of the teachers who were observed, as the content and form of these sequences do not appear to have

featured in preceding research. They did not usually represent a large proportion of the time spent in the lesson, although they appeared to be a greater or lesser part of different teachers' interactive repertoires, ranging from Teacher 4's 2% to Teacher 2's 37% in the three lessons selected for close analysis. There now follows a description of conversation-type language.

*Conversation-type language:* Conversation-type TL was different from the other three language types which related clearly to their associated pedagogical focus of the lesson. Conversation-type language describes language which appeared to occur spontaneously, usually related to personal information. The language was normally known to the pupils but 'popped up' unpredictably and therefore, unlike *practice-type* TL sequences, where the questions and answers were predictable and controlled, *analysis-type* sequences which focused on a particular grammar point and *operational-type* sequences where pupils were carefully led through an instructional process, conversation-type interactional sequences usually required an unprepared response. Conversation-type sequences generally happened as a result of a pupil's response, often during a practice-type TL sequence, about which the teacher requested further information which was not 'in the script'. The teachers often initiated exchanges which centred round their own and pupils' lives outside the classroom, using referential questioning.

As noted in the review of the literature, Takahashi et al. (2000) identified what they termed 'instructional conversations' (p.143), which appear 'natural and spontaneous' (p.144) but have an underlying pedagogical purpose in developing learners' communicative competence. In common with the 'instructional conversations' identified by Takahashi et al., conversation-type language appeared as an unplanned digression from the formal teaching and learning that went on in the teachers' classrooms. Both may reflect the social aspects of language learning, focusing on the learners' or teacher's 'real life' experience. However, definitions of what conversation normally entails state that, for an exchange to be judged a conversation, there has to be a suspension of the power differential between the participants and management of turns has to be

democratic and open to negotiation (Cook 1989, Nofsinger 1991, Brown & Yule 1983b). In the conversation-type exchanges which were observed in the classrooms the interaction was controlled by the teacher. Todhunter (2007) argues that 'instructional conversations' provide learners with the opportunity to share control of the interaction by nominating and developing topics, although she admits that in her study of a high school teacher's Spanish class the teacher retained control over much of the interaction. Perhaps it is more appropriate, therefore, to use 'conversation-type' as a description of this category of interaction.

In conversation-type interactional sequences the learner had to pay careful attention to unpredictable questions in order to produce a response, with or without help from the teacher. Often, in conversation-type interaction the teachers evinced surprise or curiosity by a rising tone of voice and at times there was no follow-up by the teacher other than a question prompted by seemingly genuine interest. These exchanges appeared to follow a more 'natural' pattern, which could be characterised as comparable to those which may take place during a family occasion when an older member of the family, for example, an elderly aunt or uncle, who has not seen the younger for some time, asks a series of questions about their lives and pastimes.

The focus in the conversation-type interactional sequence was on meaning rather than accuracy; the questions the teachers posed gave the impression of arising out of curiosity concerning the pupil's response. It could be claimed that conversation-type language has the pedagogical function of developing pupils' competence and confidence in using the TL to participate in 'natural' communication, although any assertions about learning from such exchanges must necessarily be cautious. Conversation-type language differs from that used in 'meaning and fluency' contexts (Seedhouse 2004), which are instructional activities planned by the teacher to simulate 'free conversation'. Each conversation-type sequence in the classroom interaction between the teachers and their pupils appeared unplanned and tended to be short, often lasting five or six conversational turns at most, before reverting to the original sequence within which it



had originated, for example, where the focus was on analysis of the language or practising structures. Conversation-type sequences, or ‘pop-ups’ appeared to be significant in creating a collaborative atmosphere which engaged the learners in performing in ‘natural’ interactive sequences, as teachers and learners shared information about personal matters.

For conversation-type language to be successful there has to be trust between the participants; if personal questions and opinions are being discussed, all parties in the classroom - teacher, responder and ‘overhearers’ - have to be aware of their responsibilities and display mutual trust and respect (Dörnyei, 2001). The teacher’s duty is therefore to ensure an atmosphere of trust and collaboration by establishing group norms which the learners accept and follow (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003). All the teachers offered personal information about themselves. One of the teachers had made it clear to the learners that if they felt uncomfortable about anything they were asked they could give an alternative answer and it was agreed that what was said in their classroom would not be discussed outside. The pupils explained this in the interviews.

#### **Interview extract 4.10**

*P8: Sometimes he can get quite personal, but (laughs)*

*P11: Nothing is ever, like, really personal.*

*P5: No, you’re used to it; he says that you can make up something if you don’t want to answer the truth.*

*P11: He says that whatever is said in the class doesn’t go outside.*

A typical example of the way a conversation-type ‘pop up’ arose out of a practice-type language sequence can be seen in Classroom extract 4.15 below, when the class was using the perfect tense to talk about activities they had done on holiday:

#### **Classroom extract 4.15**

*IT2: Et qu’est-ce que tu as fait, toi?*

*2P3: J’ai joué au golf et au foot.*

- 3T2: *Et au foot. Et C., qu'est-ce que tu as fait?*
- 4P4: *J'ai visité les musées.*
- 5T2: *Les musées à Edimbourg?*
- 6P4: *Non, aux Etats Unis.*
- 7T2: *Aux Etats Unis ? Ah. Et c'était intéressant ?*
- 8P4: *Oui.*
- 9T2: *Quels musées?*
- 10P4: *Un musée dans Washington.*
- 11T2: *A Washington, ah ha. Et qu'est-ce que tu as fait comme activité R.?*
- 12P6: *J'ai joué au bowling.*

The practice-type language sequence in Classroom extract 4.15 started with the question *Qu'est-ce que tu as fait?* to which a number of pupils had already responded with a variety of answers. The dialogue had followed the IRF framework up to Pupil 4's answer *J'ai visité les musées* in the fourth turn, which Teacher 2 used as a stimulus for a conversation-type sequence which lasted for 6 turns, before she then returned to the practice-type language stimulus question. Although Pupil 4's first answer in turn 4 may or may not have been formulaic, the rest of his answers were contingent on Teacher 2's questions, which required him to communicate meaning which was not 'in the script'.

Pupil 4 in turns 6, 8 and 10 was speaking as principal of his utterances. Although they were short, his responses communicated his own meaning in his own words. Within the practice-type language sequences the pupils were operating within a scaffolded framework, provided by the teacher, as they built up confidence and competence in using the language to make their own meaning; in the conversation-type sequences, they tended to prove themselves more able to take responsibility for their contribution to the discourse, although they may still have needed some scaffolded support. There will be greater discussion of the function of the conversation-type initiations employed by the teachers in Chapter 5.

The short duration of conversation-type language sequences may have been because of time constraints; if a teacher is to give each one of twenty-five or so pupils an opportunity to speak in a fifty-minute lesson, the pace has to move rapidly. The teachers controlled the length of conversation-type language sequences and the questioning, but they could not control the pupils' responses, since they did not know what they would be and had to respond themselves to the pupils' unpredicted language. Conversation-type language tends not to follow the IRF model of participation, although it may be argued that in turns 7 and 11 Teacher 2, by repeating the pupils' response, particularly in turn 11 when she recast his prepositional error, was providing follow-up. However, she could also have been repeating his utterance in turn 11 as a way of bringing the sequence to a close, before re-initiating a new sequence with another pupil. Conversation-type language in the classroom arising from practice language exercises has been identified by other researchers as not conforming to established participation frameworks:

... Sequences that start with known information questions can develop into more equal dialogue if, in the follow-up move, the teacher avoids evaluation and instead requests justification, connections or counter-arguments ... the initial IRF generic structure fades into the background and is replaced, temporarily by a more conversation-like genre. (Nassaji and Wells, 2000: 401)

The 'naturalness' of the conversation-type 'pop ups' made analysis of them more difficult as they appeared to be casual interruptions to the serious learning that is assumed to take place in the classroom. However, if Hymes's view (1974) that language is acquired and learned through social interaction is accepted, these conversation-type language interactional sequences might be influential in providing some measure of acquisition, a view supported by Firth and Wagner (1997). Gass and Varonis (1985) agree that "[a]ctive involvement is a necessary aspect of acquisition, since it is through involvement that the input becomes 'charged' and 'penetrates' deeply" (p.150). Teachers' use of conversation-type language when interacting with the learners in the TL meant that pupils had to make use of previously learned vocabulary and structures, reinforcing their prior learning in a way that, despite their brief duration, might help them to be remembered due to the 'real' nature of the communication.

Conversation-type language was also noted in the teachers' language, when they made conversational type asides or phatic utterances which did not expect a response from the learners, but appeared to be 'language used in free, aimless, social intercourse' (Malinowski, 1923: 476). The teachers often provided a commentary on what they were doing. Donato (2000) suggests that teachers who have a tendency to talk to themselves and share anecdotes may promote 'conversational talk' in the classroom. Although their intention may have been to prevent the learners' attention from flagging, the teachers' TL input provided a rich source of apparently natural language from which the learners could benefit. An example can be seen below in Classroom extract 4.16, when Teacher 1 was giving instructions to the class about a reading exercise they had to start:

**Classroom extract 4.16**

*T1: Et vous avez une fiche aussi. Vous avez la fiche ? D'hier ? la fiche? Moi, je n'ai pas la fiche. Tu as la fiche?*

*P9: Is it this one?*

*T1: Oui. (taking worksheet that pupil 9 proffers) Moi, j'ai perdu ma fiche (laughing) Je suis corne (laughs). C., tu as ça? (holding up the worksheet) C'est la fiche six/sept.*

As Teacher 1 talked to the class he appeared to be looking for his copy of the worksheet that the pupils were to work from before he confessed to them in a conversation-type aside that he had lost it and he felt stupid. He did not appear to expect any verbal response from the learners nor did they. However, his honesty in admitting his lapse and his self-castigation could be said to be modelling the type of behaviour that he wished to promote in the classroom. As part of creating an atmosphere of collaboration, he was perhaps aiming to establish empathy through his choice of language and his frank admission of 'humanness' (Bryant, 2003). His obvious self confidence in acknowledging his mistake and making a derogatory remark about himself, suggested he

was not worried about any undermining of his authority and might facilitate similar admissions of mistakes from his pupils (Sheanh, 1996).

It is important to bear in mind that the interactional sequences described in this section were not discrete and fixed; there was a great deal of fluidity in the way the classroom discourse moved from one language type to another and back again in interactional sequences within the foci of the lesson as each teacher directed the interaction. This may also have had the function of keeping the learners' attention, as they were forced to follow the teacher's lead. There will be further discussion of the way teachers directed the change of language types in the next chapter. This section has provided a description of four main categories of interaction which the teachers instigated, the nature of the language used in each one and examples of the interactional sequences the teachers' TL supported. The next section will look at how the teachers managed the interaction through the pace of the lessons.

#### **4.12 Pace**

So far this chapter has described the way that the teachers in the study used the TL to control the organisation of the classroom, creating and maintaining a collaborative atmosphere which facilitated their management of pupil behaviour. The teachers also controlled interaction in the TL through their comprehensible language, routines and a variety of interactional contexts within the lesson, which ensured that the learners felt secure and supported. This section looks at the way they controlled the pace of the interaction that took place.

In his discussion of motivation, Wlodkowski (1986) suggests that language teachers should 'teach at a pace that is not too fast and not too slow'. The issue of pace can be problematic in a secondary school ML class; if the speed of delivery is too fast, some, if not the majority of the learners will 'get lost' and disengage; if it is too slow the same number of pupils may also disengage through boredom engendered by lack of challenge. In a study of secondary school mathematics teaching, Boaler (2002) found that in an

apparently homogeneous 'set' class, some of the pupils complained of the too rapid pace while others complained it was too slow. Although her study concerned a different subject area, her findings illustrate the challenge of conducting teaching and learning at a pace which is appropriate to all learners.

In the classrooms of the teachers in the study, the pace appeared brisk with very few gaps in the interaction where pupils could go off-task. The pupils themselves mentioned this in interviews, as can be seen in Interview extract 4.11 below:

**Interview extract 4.11**

*P8: It's more lively as well*

*P9: You're always doing something as well.*

*P7: You never sit and do nothing. He's always got so much work planned, like even more than you could do.*

*P9: Yeah, [teacher] sometimes makes up the sheets himself, so it's what he thinks is important.*

*P11: It's more interesting and different, instead of day after day working through the same kind of thing.*

The group of pupils in Interview extract 4.11 above used *lively* to describe their class, attributing this to the fact that they were kept busy on a variety of tasks. The adjective *lively* generally has positive connotations and it is unlikely that they would have used it unless they enjoyed, or at least were not bored by, the work that they were given. The final comment by Pupil 11 appeared to confirm this, when she described the work as *interesting and different*. The pupils demonstrated understanding of the pivotal role of the teacher's organisation in providing them with a variety of work: *He's always got so much work planned*. Pupil 9 pointed out the individualisation of the work that was planned for them, at the same time demonstrating faith in the teacher's knowledge of what was best for their learning. The trust she was implicitly expressing in the teacher could be as a result of the collaborative atmosphere that had been created in the class,

where the learners understood and approved the teacher's intentions. Another group, talking about another teacher, also described her class as *lively* and stated that they were always '*on the go*'.

The pupils' perceptions were supported by the observations; field notes such as '*doesn't let up for a minute*' and '*v. smooth transition between activities*' indicate that the teachers moved the lessons' activities on at a brisk pace, constantly asking questions and directing comments to individuals and the whole class in the TL. It is possible that their interactional moves arose from a perceived behaviour management agenda, that is, by commanding the learners' focus on what they were saying, they were not allowing pupils 'space' to go off task. They may also have been using their talk to reinforce the relationship they had with the learners. Nonetheless, their input also performed a pedagogical function, giving pupils access to TL used for purposes other than the publicly stated learning intentions for that lesson. The techniques that the teachers used to engage the learners and stimulate responses in the TL will be discussed in detail in the next two chapters. In the next section the focus is on the nature, management and relative quantity of teacher and pupil interaction.

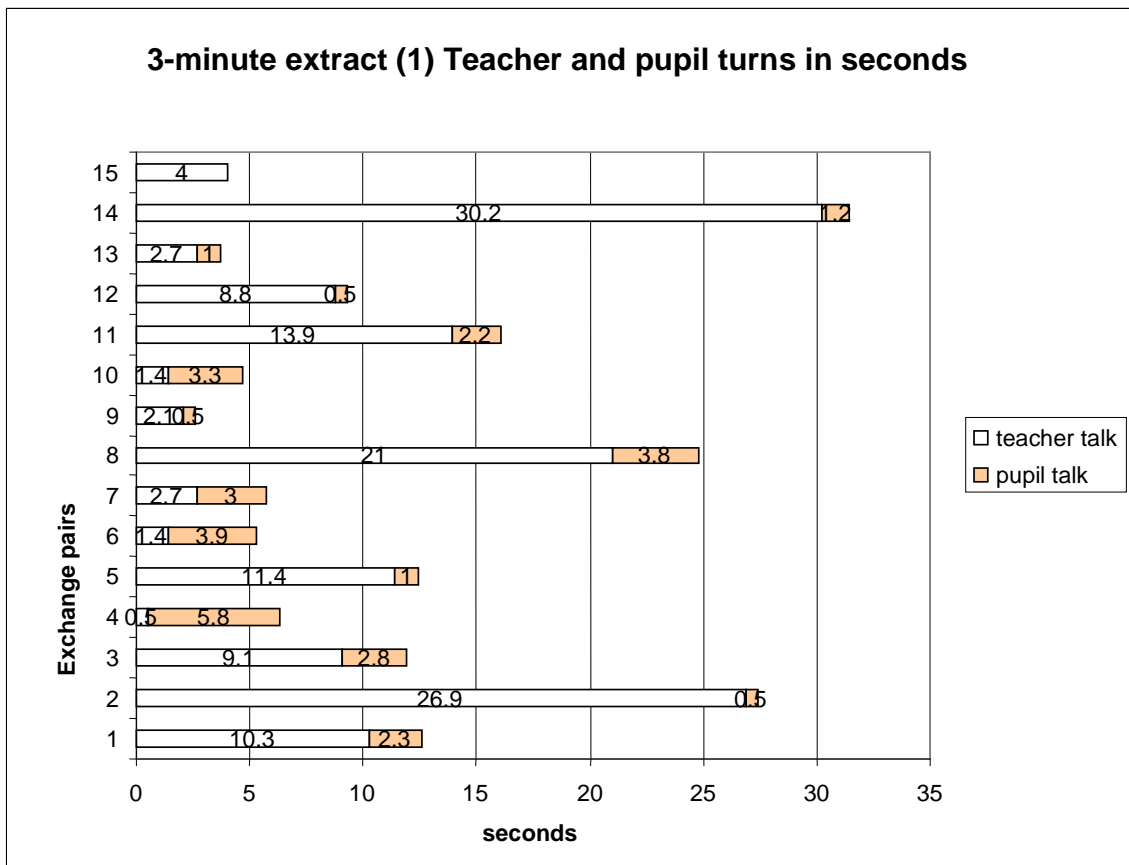
#### **4.13 Relative Quantities of Teacher and Pupil Talk: Three-Minute Extract (1)**

It could be said that the teachers' pace of teaching has already been defined to a certain degree by the pupils in Interview extract 4.11 as a '*lively*' atmosphere where pupils are always '*kept busy*'. However, this does not necessarily translate into learning, or to the amount of interaction that may take place.

As already stated in Chapter 3, in order to verify if the pace was as lively and if the teachers were really as interactively demanding as I believed, I chose two three-minute sections from two of the teachers' transcripts, one of Teacher 3 and one of Teacher 1 (Appendices 3 and 4) and applied quantitative methods to discover how much teacher and pupil talk actually occurred, how long each turn lasted and how much TL the learners produced. The first transcript takes place near the beginning of a lesson and

comprises a review of the pupils' homework on the German dative case. This was chosen because at the beginning of the lessons all the teachers either recapitulated what had been studied the previous lesson or corrected homework, which usually had the same function, thus it appeared an integral part of every teacher's lesson plan. I was keen to choose extracts that were typical of the teachers' lessons, rather than ones which perhaps gave an atypical representation of the relative quantities of teacher or pupil language. Figure 4.2 shows the way the three-minute fragment of talk was distributed.

**Figure 4.2. Three-minute extract (1) Teacher and pupil turns in seconds**



As can be seen in Figure 4.2, within the three minutes there were 29 turns of varying lengths, the longest teacher turn lasting 30.2 seconds and the longest pupil turn lasting



5.8 seconds. Both teacher and pupils spoke relatively quickly; if the standard word per minute measurement is used, the rate of talk averaged 170 words per minute. If numbers of syllables per minute are used to measure the talk, the rate of talk averaged 194 syllables per minute. This can be compared to the slow end of normal speech (Venkatagiri, 1999), although dependent on the context and the language, what constitutes 'slow' 'average' and 'fast' rates of speech may differ (Derwing 1990, Tauroza & Allison 1990). Other measures of speech rate suggest that for the purposes of listening comprehension the teacher's talk was at 'average' speed (Tauroza & Allison, 1990). The fact that the teacher spoke faster than the recommended word per minute rate for audio recording of books in English, which is 150-160 words per minute (Williams, 1998) only using the TL, can be seen to indicate the high level of the learners' comprehension. There were no silences between each party's utterances as the pupils answered the teacher's questions promptly.

The interaction can be seen to follow the IRF model, as Teacher 3 asked pupils to read out sentences they had written for homework before evaluating their responses. The data in Figure 4.2 is therefore set out in pairs of exchanges so that the pupils' responses can be seen in relation to the teacher's initiations. Displaying the data in this way shows the length of the teacher's initiation and that of the pupils' responses to each initiation. For example, the first teacher initiation lasts 10.3 seconds, prompting a pupil response of 2.3 seconds; the second teacher initiation lasts 26.9 seconds leading to a pupil response of 0.5 seconds. Figure 4.2 shows that Teacher 3's initiations in the first half of the exchange pair were generally longer than pupils' responses in the second half; only four out of the 14 pairs show pupil responses which were longer than the teacher's initiation. One of the reasons for her longer turns was that she invariably repeated the pupils' answers at least once, validating them and ensuring that the whole class had heard, before moving to the next part of the homework correction procedure, in this case translation of sentences incorporating prepositions governing the dative case. When a pupil made an error in responding, attention was drawn to it and a clue provided to help him correct the answer. This can be seen in exchange pair 8.

Two teacher turns were significantly longer than the others, in exchange pairs 2 and 14. In these turns Teacher 3 was checking the learners' comprehension and underlining grammar points. The pupils' turns were always as a result of teacher initiations. Within the longer teacher turns, there were a number of questions, often rephrased or repeated, which broke up the teacher's utterances, so that they appeared less like a monologue. To illustrate the way Teacher 3 kept the pace brisk during a relatively lengthy utterance, the longest turn is reproduced below broken into each independent unit of 'meaning segment'. As stated in Chapter 3, a 'meaning segment' in this study describes a phrase or sentence which carries a coherent message; it also follows the teacher's phrasing, reflecting her 'boundary tones' (Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg, 1990), represented either by questions or pauses.

#### **Classroom extract 4.17**

*T3: V. kann auch das sagen,*

*Ok?*

*Sehr gut.*

*Wer hat ein Problem?*

*Wer hat ein Problem mit diesem Dativ?*

*Alles ok?*

*Ist alles klar?*

*Ok,*

*Passt auf.*

*Hier haben wir (writing on board) Nominativ.*

*Wir wiederholen ein bisschen Nominativ, Dativ und dann Akusativ,*

*Ok?*

*Was ist Nominativ dann?*

*Was ist das Wort für 'the' im Nominativ?*

*Wer kann mir sagen?*

*D?*

Although Teacher 3's turn lasted 30.2 seconds, it was broken up into sixteen independent units of meaning or 'segments'. Teacher 3 asked ten questions and gave one directive. Near the beginning of the turn, she used a tag question to stress that one pupil had been asked to repeat rather than the whole class. She then asked four questions about the homework and the learners' understanding of the dative case. These four questions were in fact different versions of the same question, concerning pupils' understanding of the dative case, rephrased to ensure all had understood what she was asking. She then directed the pupils to pay attention before explaining the reason that she was writing on the board. She then asked three display questions about the cases, again three versions of the same question rephrased, before asking a pupil to answer. As will be seen in a later part of this section, where the functions of Teacher 3's language is discussed with reference to Figures 4.3 and 4.4, the pupils did not always respond verbally to the teacher, but their actions indicated understanding.

The pupils' seeming understanding of Teacher 3's TL despite the speed of delivery, both of the teacher and the learners, has earlier been noted as indicating pupils' comprehension of the teacher's language. It is possible that Teacher 3's frequent rephrasing was instrumental in ensuring learner comprehension. (Rephrasing may also give the learners access to a stock of questions which could be used in negotiation of meaning with native speakers when they want to check that they have been understood.) Although her turn was relatively long, the way she had broken it up into short segments of meaning, which included a large number of questions requesting feedback and information, meant that the learners had to stay alert. The TL she used was familiar to the pupils. Each segment within the turn was short, ranging from one word to nine words, the average per segment being 3.6 words. This may have had the result of easing the learners' concentration load, since each segment might be more easily understood due to its brief nature, so there was less chance of learners 'tuning out' because the language was deemed too difficult or too longwinded.

Comments from the field notes such as *'some pupils take longer to put hands up'* indicate that the pupils signalled that they knew the answer to the teacher's questions by putting their hands up at different rates; some showed they were prepared to answer after the first hearing of a question; others took longer before indicating that they wished to respond. Although repetition and rephrasing of the questions meant that Teacher 3's turns were longer, they may have had the function of providing pupils with 'thinking time' to process the information contained in her question and then formulate an answer.

It has been suggested that 'wait time' after teachers' questions facilitates higher level cognition, as learners are given time to think before they answer (Tobin, 1987), however, many teachers are concerned that building in 'wait time' to their initiations will slow the pace and lead to learners going off task (Tsui, 1996). The frequency of rephrasing and repetition of questions that was evident not only in the three minute extract above but also throughout the teachers' talk may have provided the learners with time to process the request before preparing an appropriate response. However, the result of rephrasing and repetition inevitably is that the teacher spends more time talking.

The purpose of timing the extracts was to consider the way the teachers controlled the pace, therefore it was also considered appropriate to look in more detail at the language Teacher 3 used to keep the learners' attention and take the business of learning forward. The learners' apparent concentration was recorded in the field notes and I was keen to determine features of the teachers' TL which kept their focus and enabled them to respond. I wanted to explore the teachers' TL to find out if it comprised functions which might also have the effect of keeping the learners alert, due to the collocation of different meaning segments, some of which, although using familiar language, might appear to them unpredictable, therefore requiring greater attention.

In order to get a better picture of the language Teacher 3 used during the three minute extract I examined each meaning segment of her utterances and noted each instance of

particular language features and functions, for example, when she repeated the learners' answers, offered information and invited a response from the learners through questions, prompts or focusing moves. Learners' responses were not always verbal; for example, they nodded, smiled, shook their head or made eye contact with her. Firstly, I noted language features which did not appear to invite an explicit response. I then considered the questions she asked, to discover if any types of question seemed to be predominant. The results can be seen in Figures 4.3 and 4.4.

**Figure 4.3. Three-minute extract (1) Teacher language functions**

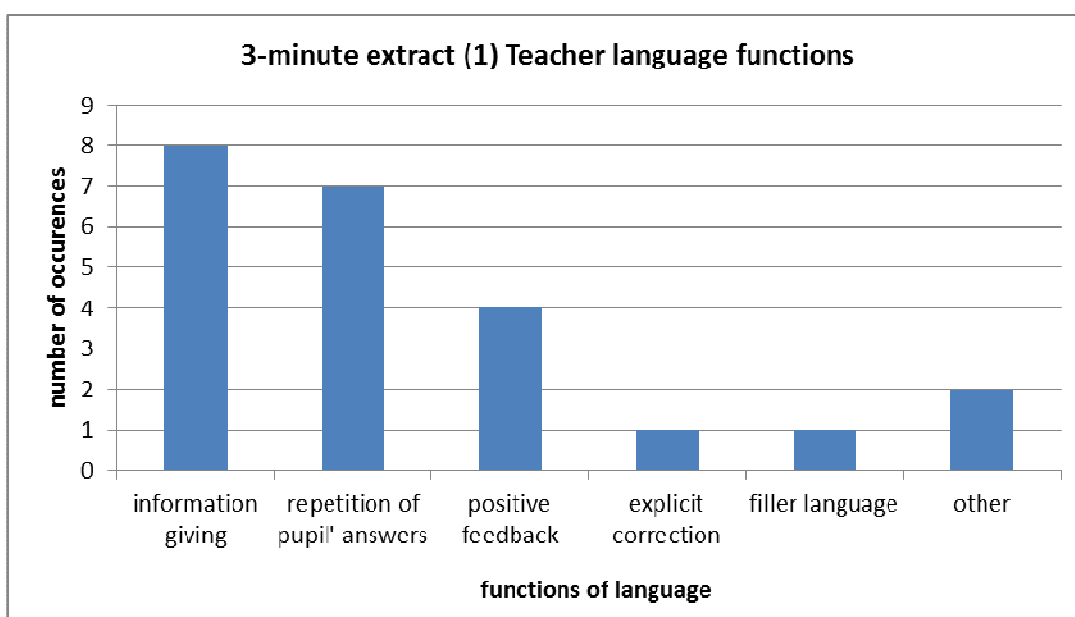
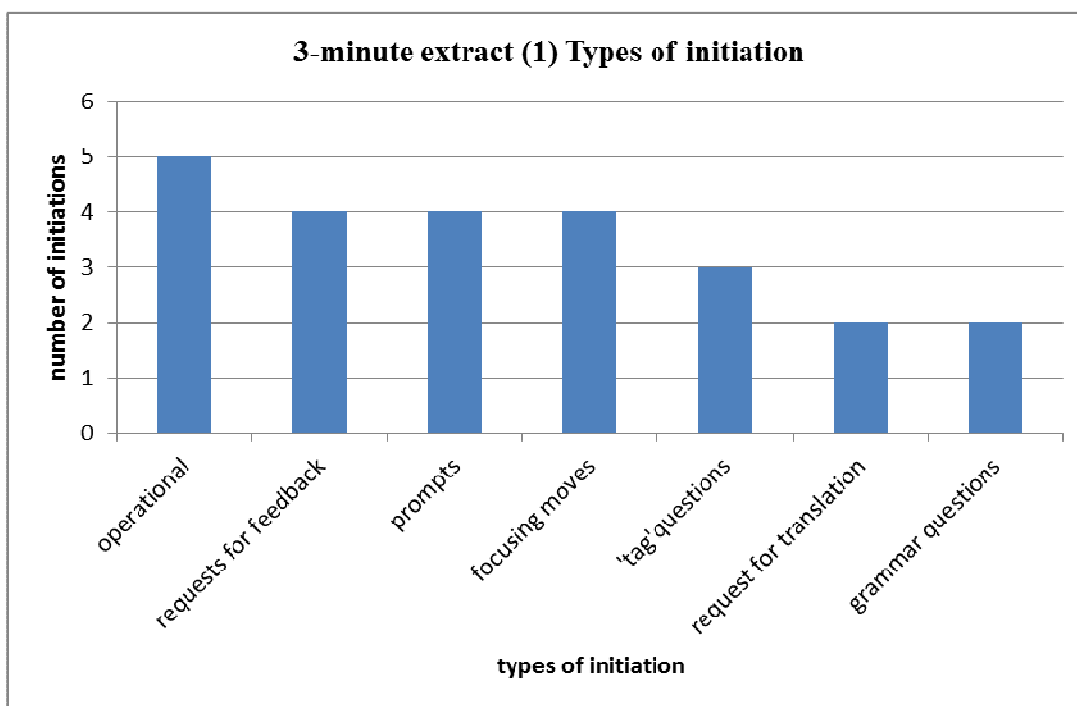


Figure 4.3 illustrates the functions of the Teacher 3's language when she was not specifically inviting the learners to respond. The majority of the functions confirm the existence of the IRF model of interaction (Cutting, 2008). The function that was used most was information-giving. Information-giving refers to instances when Teacher 3 presented information arising from the language that was the focus of this part of the lesson, *die meisten Wörter, die mit 'e' enden, sind normalerweise 'die' Wörter*. She also repeated the pupils' answers so that the whole class could hear, at the same time providing a positive evaluation of the response. Explicit positive feedback for learners' responses occurred either directly before or directly after a repetition. Teacher 3 drew

attention to a pupil's error on one occasion and used 'filler' language: *Ok. Sehr gut. Ok* on one occasion which may have also functioned as positive feedback. At one point early in the extract, she thanked the technician who had corrected feedback on the radio microphone before bidding him *Aufwiedersehen*. These two segments were recorded under 'Other' and did not conform to the IRF model.

In all, the language Teacher 3 used when not explicitly inviting the learners to respond during the three-minute extract comprised 23 segments of meaning. This was two fewer than the language used which did appear to call for a response. The constant interjection of questions and requests to respond appeared to keep the learners focused, as they could be called upon to respond at any moment. The types of initiation can be seen in Figure 4.4.

**Figure 4.4. Three-minute extract (1) Types of initiation**



In the whole three-minute extract, Teacher 3 asked 25 questions which comprised requests for translation, tag questions, requests for feedback, operational questions and

questions about grammar. However, although there seemed to be a high number of questions, because of her use of rephrasing and repetition, an illustration of which can be seen above in Classroom extract 4.17, there were actually sixteen ‘substantive’ questions some of which were repeated or rephrased up to four times. This may have been to provide pupils with ‘thinking time’ to ensure comprehension and formulate an answer before finally choosing a pupil to answer. It may also have been a tactic which gave her time to gauge the pupils’ level of understanding, by observing the number of ‘hands up’ as pupils volunteered to respond, before deciding to end the turn.

There were also four prompts to respond and four focusing moves as Teacher 3 used the board or drew the learners’ attention to a specific point. If the number of repetitions and rephrasing of questions is taken into account, the pupils responded verbally to 15 of 20 invitations to answer. The remaining five questions were either ‘tags’ or requests for feedback, such as *Alles klar? Hat jemand ein Problem?* Although both types of questions ostensibly invite a response, in most cases this will be non-verbal, perhaps nods or headshakes. The learners could therefore be said to have answered all the teacher’s questions which invited a verbal response in the TL, indicating that they were on-task and paying attention. It was striking how Teacher 3 managed all the interaction in the TL without recourse to English. The expectation in the class was that pupils would also talk in German as much as possible. This was borne out by pupils in interview:

**Interview extract 4.12**

*P4: As soon as you’re in the classroom it’s German*

*P5: We speak it so much every day*

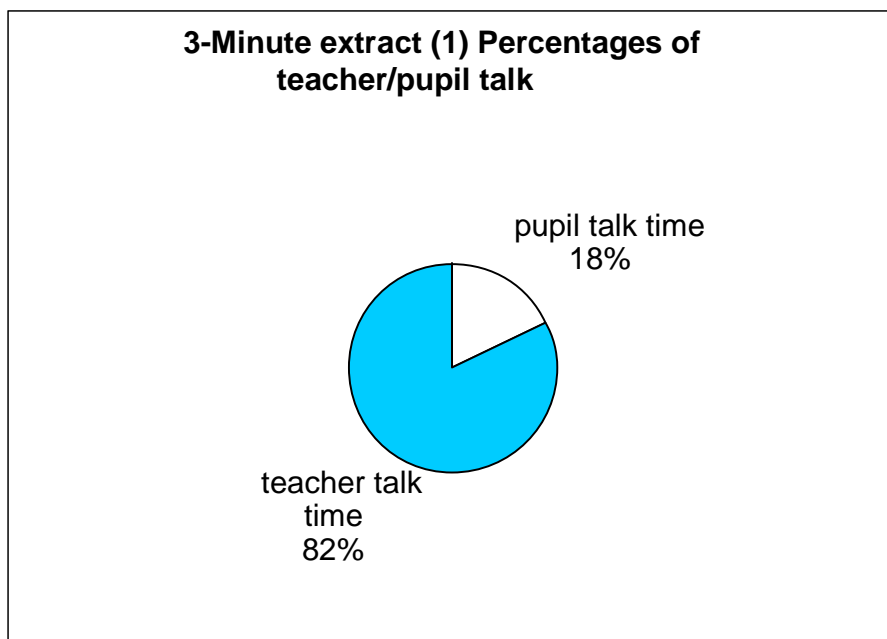
The pupils’ comments in Interview extract 4.12 were typical of all the pupils. Whether individually they spoke as much TL as they thought they did could perhaps be disputed, but their estimation of the amounts spoken both by the teachers and themselves was very high. There will be a breakdown of the amounts of TL and English used in all the classrooms in Chapter 5.

In the three-minute extract the greatest number of questions was about operational matters as Teacher 3 asked pupils about the sequence of the homework: *Was war nun die Nächste? War das nun die letzte Frage?* Teacher 3 was holding the worksheet with the homework exercise, therefore it seems likely that her questions were aimed at keeping the learners engaged and giving them opportunities to speak. Prompts were more directive and usually targeted individual pupils, although focusing moves were directed to both individuals and the whole class. Teacher 3 asked pupils to translate two of her utterances into English, for example, after telling them in German that she hated hearing her voice, she asked for a translation to make sure that the class had understood. There were also two grammar questions about points arising from the homework exercise.

Through the use of initiations and tags such as *Ist das ok?, Ok, los!, pass auf C.*, the pace was kept brisk. Questions or prompts to respond were evident in Teacher 3's language, on average every six seconds. The pupils responded promptly and appropriately to her initiations although the results did not show a large amount of pupil language; in fact there seemed to be less than that assumed to be the normal teacher pupil ratio of talk of approximately two-thirds to one-third (Cazden, 1988), although Cazden's figure refers to classrooms in general where teachers and learners share a common language. In language learning environments where the TL is the preferred mode of communication pupil talk may be much lower (Chaudron, 1988). The relative percentages of teacher and pupil talk in the first three-minute extract can be seen in Figure 4.5.



**Figure 4.5. Three-minute extract (1) Percentages of teacher/pupil talk**



In the first three minute extract the ratio was 82 % teacher talk to 18 % pupil talk. This appeared rather disappointing, given the number of teacher invitations to respond. Perhaps this may be explained by the subject of the homework, (the manipulation of the German dative case) and Teacher 3's constant checks and explanations to make sure everyone had understood. The learners' contributions consisted almost entirely of reading aloud sentences they had written the night before. However, although the chart in Figure 4.5 indicates that the extract was not learner-centred, there was a great deal of interaction within the short time-frame which flowed smoothly and quickly, even though the learners did not always respond verbally.

I had already decided to examine another interactional context. In addition, I wanted to compare the practice of Teacher 3 with another of the teachers. The second three-minute extract took place within a practice language context, as practice language featured largely in almost all the lessons I had observed, ranging from 22-39 % of the lessons selected for close analysis.

The second three minute extract was conducted by Teacher 1 who also moved the lessons forward briskly but, unlike Teacher 3, provided ‘wait time’ after questions without seemingly slowing the pace.

#### **4.14 Relative Quantities of Teacher and Pupil Interaction: Three-Minute Extract (2)**

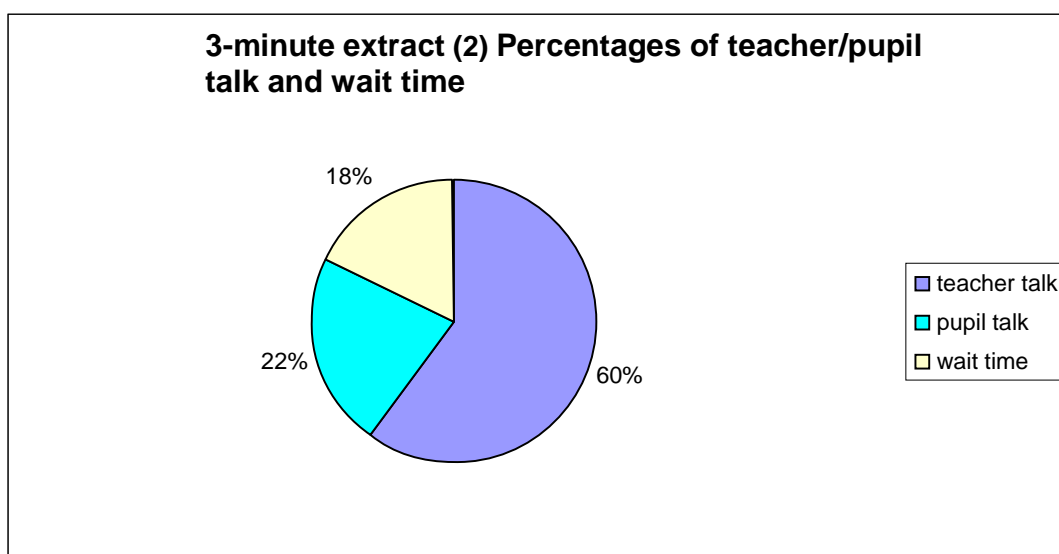
All the teachers had slightly different ways of managing interaction in the TL, although there were many areas of convergence, particularly with respect to the general nature of the interaction described so far in this chapter. However, although the preponderance of teacher talk in the first three-minute segment could be explained partly by Teacher 3’s rephrasing and repetition of questions, I was eager to examine another three-minute section from a lesson where a teacher provided ‘wait time’ after asking a question to consider if there were implications for pace. The aim of the study was to show different teacher techniques which engaged learners and facilitated their responses, therefore it seemed important to highlight the variety of strategies by which this might or might not be accomplished. All the teachers had developed their own strategies which seemed to suit them and their learners. Perhaps the variety of TL strategies identified in the study will be welcomed by practitioners, enabling them to choose what best matches their own circumstances and preferences.

For the second three-minute extract I selected a practice language interactional sequence where Teacher 1 was working with a group of nine pupils, while the rest of the class were either completing reading exercises or were working outside the classroom with the French assistant. This was another point of difference from the first extract which occurred as whole class interaction. The group working with Teacher 1 was studying a worksheet with questions and answers about areas where people live. Although the questions and answers on the sheet were de-contextualised, Teacher 1 personalised them, asking the pupils about their home district. He also directed pupils to ask each other questions in the TL about where they lived. Throughout the practice language

interactional sequence, the learners had the worksheet in front of them, to which they could refer. The full transcript of the extract can be seen in Appendix 4.

As with the first three-minute extract, the teacher's and pupils' talk were measured in seconds; the silences left for thinking time were not included in the turns, but measured separately. The results were plotted in Figure 4.6, which shows the relative percentage of time spent by the teacher talking, the pupils talking and the silence of 'wait time'.

**Figure 4.6. Three-minute extract (2) Percentages of teacher/pupil talk and wait time.**



Teacher 1, in the second three-minute extract, appeared to talk less than in the first. He tended to ask a question, wait between two to four seconds, ask it again and then select a pupil to answer. Even if the wait time which was included in his turns is added to the speaking time, there is only a difference of 4% in the relative time the two teachers and their pupils were responsible for talking. It is worth noting, however, that the use of purely quantitative measures of the amounts of language used in a study of this sort, which aims to investigate the type and functions of interaction in the TL which the teacher initiates, is not sufficient in terms of providing a clear picture of the content of the talk, which may have an important bearing on learners' attitudes. Using a combination of techniques to investigate the teachers' language was considered

important so that a well-defined description could be obtained, which explained not only the quantities of the teachers' TL use, but also the way it was used to promote learners' responses.

Pie charts do not show how the talk was organised or the length of each turn. The way the conversation was organised can be seen in Figure 4.7. The second three-minute extract, is broken into 37 constituent parts, rather than turns or exchange pairs, in order to show better the pattern of the interaction that this teacher employed. Each constituent part is made up of an utterance, which may or may not be followed by a period of wait time; therefore, in turn one Teacher 1 asked a question which lasted 1.6 seconds before providing wait time of 3.5 seconds. This is shown in the figure. Turn two took place after the silence of wait time when Teacher 1 repeated the question; turn three shows a pupil's response. Turn four shows the next teacher initiation which consisted of a question followed by wait time before he repeated the question in turn five to which a learner responded in turn six.

**Figure 4.7. Three-minute extract (2) Teacher talk, wait time, pupil talk in seconds**

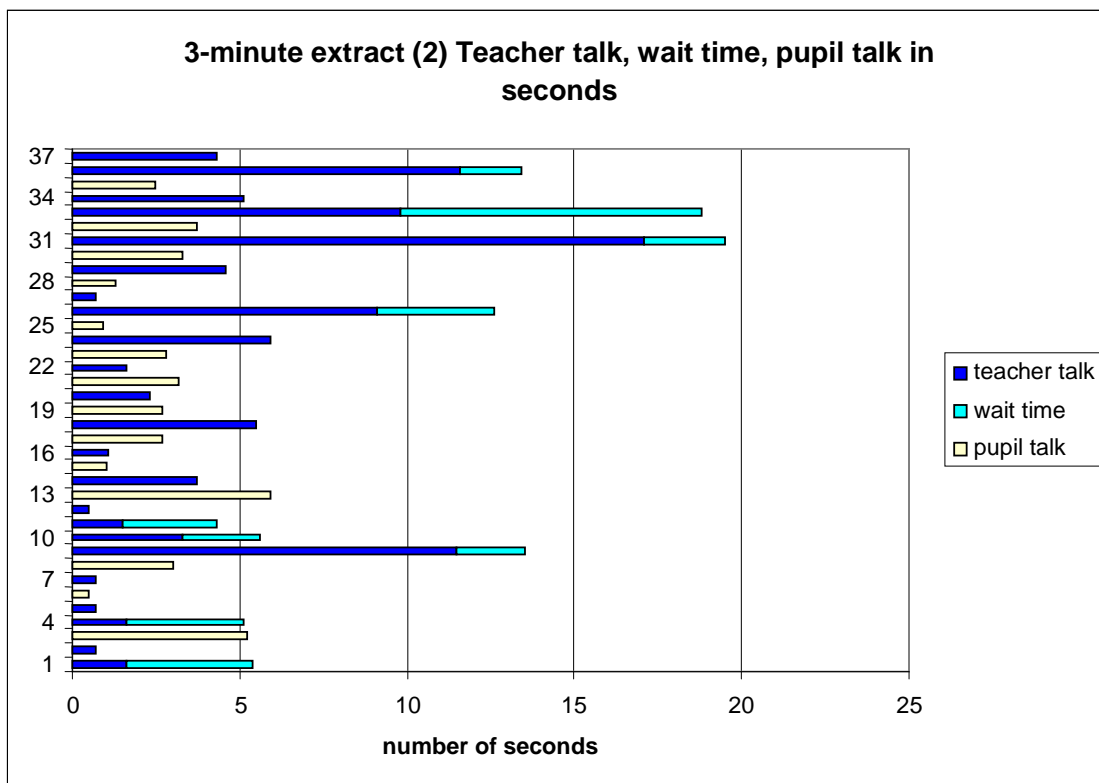


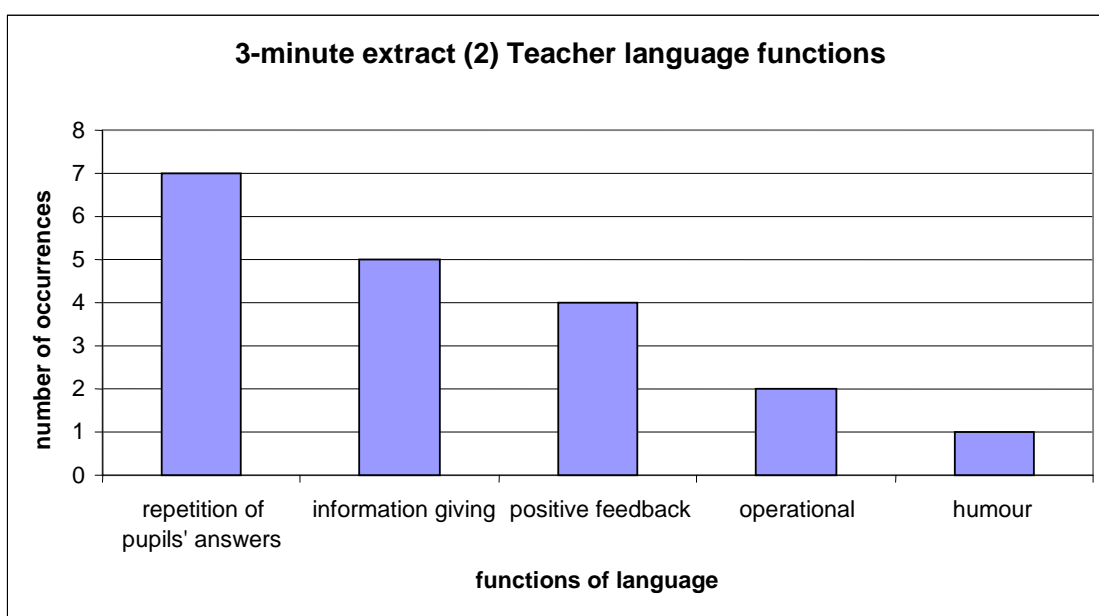
Figure 4.7 shows the periods of wait time that Teacher 1 built in to the questioning, as well as the relative time spent by teacher and pupils talking. Teacher 1 often employed a period of wait time before repeating a question. There were nine periods of wait time, usually related to each new question on the worksheet before the teacher initiated a personalised practice sequence with the learners. As in the previous extract, there were very few pauses between the final teacher invitation to respond and learner responses, indicating that the pupils were alert and ready to answer. When selected, the learners answered promptly, suggesting that they may have used the wait time provided by Teacher 1 to choose an appropriate answer, authoring the text to suit their own circumstances.

Teacher 1’s rate of talk was much slower than Teacher 3. If the standard word-per-minute measurement is used, the rate of talk averaged 73 words per minute. If numbers

of syllables per minute are used to measure the talk, the rate of talk averaged 88 syllables per minute, less than half the rate of Teacher 3. This can perhaps be explained by the existence of silent periods of wait time, which usually lasted between 1.8 and 3.8 seconds, although the longest lasted 9 seconds.

As with the first three-minute extract, the functions of language Teacher 1 used other than questions were plotted in Figure 4.8.

**Figure 4.8. Three-minute extract (2) Teacher language functions**



The second extract shows few differences from the first in teacher language not used specifically to invite learners to respond. Teacher 1 repeated pupils' correct answers the same number of times but provided three fewer pieces of information for the learners, for example, no personal information was relayed; the information offered by the teacher centred round the task: *On peut dire où est situé ou une autre question, c'est où se trouve*. Both teachers offered the same number of positive evaluations of pupils' responses. However, Teacher 1 did not use explicit correction, preferring the use of a question with rising intonation to draw learners' attention to the error, inviting them to

reconsider their response, as will be seen in Figure 4.9, where his questions and invitations to respond are displayed. This was typical of his approach to learner error. Teacher 1 in the second extract used operational language to guide the learners through the information sheet: *Ok, la deuxieme question*, and on one occasion responded humorously to a pupil's answer, which had been delivered in an exaggeratedly 'affected' accent. The exchange which led to the banter produced by the teacher can be seen in Classroom extract 4.18 below.

#### **Classroom extract 4.18**

*T3: uhuh, et toi F.?*

*P8: Em j'habite à Edimbourg.*

*T3: ... oui, mais où à Edimbourg? Dans quel quartier?*

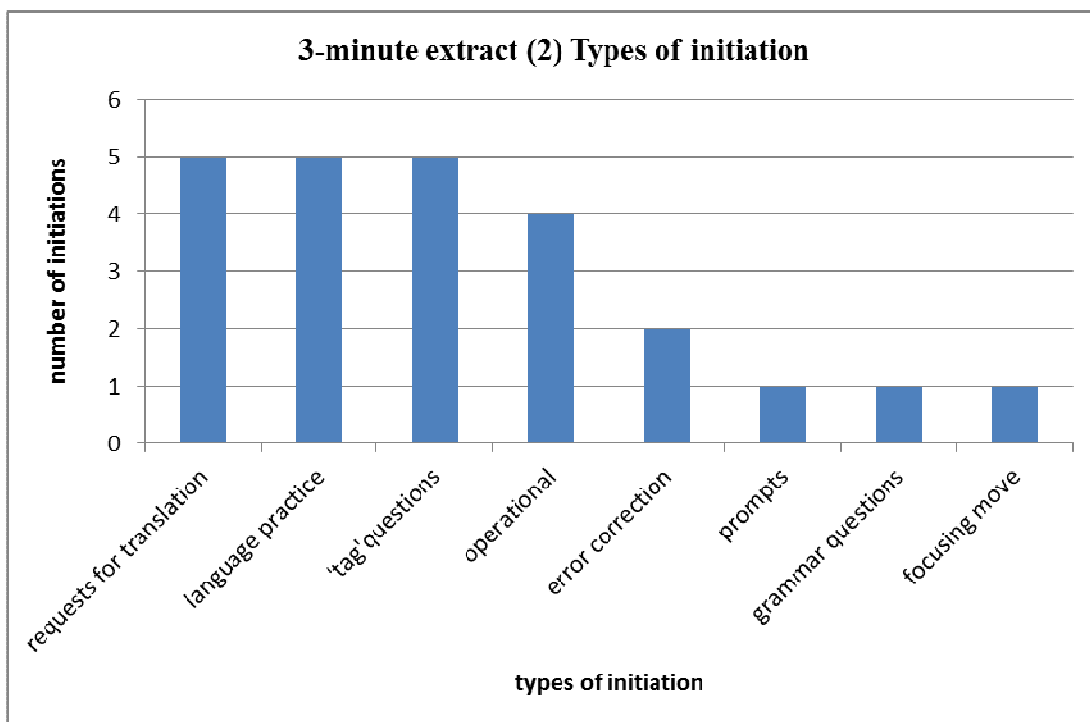
*P8: (in posh accent) Morningside.*

*T3: Oh! Oh! à Morningside. Oh! Tres chic, tres chic, oui, ok.*

Both the pupil and the teacher collaborated to produce the humorous exchange in Classroom extract 4.18, which started with a joke, made by the learner, whose 'affective filter' appeared to be low enough to permit her to indulge in a little jest, affecting an 'upper class' accent to indicate the perceived 'superior' nature of her home district. The teacher's responsive alertness to her contribution, and the way it was used to extend and enhance the interaction, offered pupils an example of how the language can be used for fun. The use of humour will be discussed in Chapter 6, but it is worth noting here, in the discussion of pace, how humorous interjections offer another example of the varied functions of the teachers' language use which may have provided an additional incentive to pay attention to the teacher's TL.

The different types of invitation to respond which Teacher 2 initiated were also plotted and can be seen on Figure 4.9.

**Figure 4.9. Three-minute extract (2) Types of initiation**



Almost the same categories of initiations appeared in the second three-minute extract as in the first extract, although the distribution was different, perhaps reflecting the different context. In extract 2, there were no questions explicitly asking for pupil feedback, but there were invitations to the learners to practise the new language. As each new question was studied on the worksheet, Teacher 1 asked the learners to use it, in a relevant context, for example, when discussing the second question on the sheet, he followed up the humorous incident:

**Classroom extract 4.19**

*T3: ... Comment dit-on en français, Where's that situated? Z.?*

*P4: Où est situé.*

*T3: Où est situé. Par exemple, quelle question tu demandes à F.?*

*P4: Où est situé Morningside?*



Teacher 1 exploited the knowledge he had gained from the learners to personalise the practice language exercise, with the intention perhaps of rendering it more relevant to them. His use of English as a stimulus for translation ensured that the pupils continued to use the TL when they translated his request as part of the practice language sequence. In the second three-minute extract Teacher 1 made more use of ‘tag’ questions than Teacher 3 in the first: *Et voilà, vous avez les possibilités de réponses, oui?*; their use might be said to have been his way of getting feedback regarding the pupils’ comprehension, rather than asking the pupils explicitly as the Teacher 3 did. In the second three minute extract Teacher 1 did not explicitly correct learners’ mistakes, preferring to repeat the erroneous response with rising intonation, inviting the learner to consider and revise the answer. This was typical of his practice.

During the second three-minute extract Teacher 1 asked the learners 29 questions. There was also a focusing move and an elicitation. This is only two fewer than Teacher 3’s 33 invitations to respond. As was the case in the first three minute extract, Teacher 1 in the second one repeated or rephrased several of the questions, although this usually happened after a period of wait time, before a pupil was invited to respond, bringing the number of actual questions to 19, three more than the first. Four of the questions were ‘tag’ questions and there was also one operational question, none of which appeared to expect a verbal response. As in the first three minute extract, when they were invited to provide a verbal response the learners responded promptly to all the questions posed, indicating a high level of concentration.

Teacher 1’s initiations followed only a slightly different pattern from Teacher 3’s. Requests for translation were most frequent, perhaps because the subject matter was relatively new to the learners and Teacher 1 was checking that they understood the questions on the worksheet. Having ascertained their understanding, Teacher 1 then asked them to practise the language, adapting it as authors, relating their answers to their own experiences.

While not doing this level of fine-grained analysis with all the data, inspection of the data set suggests that the interaction which occurred in the two three-minute extracts is typical of the TL talk which took place in all the teachers' classrooms and highlights the intensity of the interaction which the teachers initiated. The purpose of looking carefully at the two extracts was to determine if the pace was as brisk as it appeared from the observations. Moyles et al. (2003) suggest that 'relentless' questioning by the teacher increases interaction and therefore pace (p.168). Although the two teachers spoke at different rates, one making use of wait time the other not, and the focus of the questions was different, the results were remarkably similar in terms of the number of teacher initiations and pupil responses. The frequency of questions suggests that, despite different approaches, both teachers moved the lesson on at a rapid pace. It appeared from the alacrity with which the pupils responded that they were not experiencing difficulty in comprehending nor in formulating an appropriate response. Perhaps this can be explained by the high number of repetitions and rephrasing that the teachers used to ensure that all learners were able to understand, giving them opportunities to hear the language used in a variety of ways.

#### **4.15 'Monologic Dialogue'**

The evidence from the two three-minute extracts shows the *intensity* of questioning to which the learners were subjected. In many of the teachers' turns they posed more than one question. Although the teachers did not appear to expect pupils to answer verbally all the questions that were put to them, particularly the 'tag' questions, in the first extract Teacher 3 averaged 2.6 questions per turn, the greatest number of questions in one turn being eight while in the second extract Teacher 1 averaged two questions per turn, the greatest number of questions in one turn being five. It could be said that the frequency of invitations to respond directed to the learners has the effect of keeping a dynamic pace. A large number of questions also breaks up what could be termed a monologue into a more reciprocal exchange. Although the teacher is the one doing most of the talking, the learners are included in a 'monologic' dialogue complicitly through the teachers' questions.

The term 'monologic dialogue' may seem contradictory. Wertsch (1985) argues that monologic and dialogic communication are very different. Dialogic interaction is characterised by the comparatively rapid adjustments each speaker has to make in response to the other as they create a text; monologic interaction, however, is not actively constructed by both or all of the participants, although their existence is understood. Voloshinov's view (1929/1986) was that monologic speech had to take into account the 'implicit dialogue' with the listener(s) and that even 'inner speech' (Vygotsky, 1986) involved an addressee.

The teachers' 'monologic dialogue', an example of which can be seen in Extract 4.17, appeared to be designed to involve the learners through the concentration of questions to which they had to attend, before moving to more co-operative talk to which the learners contributed. The teacher's engagement of the learners in these talk sequences through questioning meant that the pupils were actively listening in order to be able to respond, even if they could not contribute a great deal when invited. In a situation where the difference in language knowledge between teacher and pupils is so great, it is important that learners are not made to feel that the task of communicating in the TL is beyond them. The teacher, by including them in the 'monologic' dialogue through the proliferation of questions, the variety of their questioning and collaborative 'tags', could be said to make the learners feel that they were part of the on-going TL talk and therefore it did not seem unnatural for them to contribute when the teacher targeted an individual to answer.

By interweaving questions directed at the learners throughout their talk, the teachers were obliging the pupils to pay attention, as they did not know when they might be called upon to answer. They were required to take part in the discourse, even when they did not contribute to it orally, by demonstrating that they were listening and understood what the teacher was saying. It was unlikely that the pupils would be able to 'drift off' during the teacher's longer turns because of the quantity and variety of questions

directed to them throughout the different stages of the lesson. In this way the teachers did not allow the pace to flag.

However, the teachers in the study were also sensitive to the learners' level of communicative skills and understanding. It may be that the preponderance of questions to which the teacher did not expect an answer during teacher talk broke up the monologue and allowed the learners some respite in the difficult task of listening and interpreting the foreign language before they themselves produced language which was necessary to make meaning. Corson (1993), discussing second language learners in mainstream classes, described their fatigue induced by concentration on making sense of the language. Although the ML class may not subject learners to the need for such intense concentration because the language is modified to an appropriate level, it is generally accepted that concentrating on meaning in a foreign language over an extended period of time is tiring (Ur, 1984). The way the teacher uses the TL is therefore crucial if the learners are to stay focused. Breaking up the longer turns with questions, repetition and rephrasing, inviting learners' complicity or comment means that the burden of concentration on the teacher's monologue is lessened.

This section has focused on the pace of the teaching in the classrooms of two teachers who were observed in the study. Limits of space dictate that extracts from only two of the teachers' lessons have been analysed in this section; however, evidence from my field notes and transcripts suggest that the brisk pace described above was typical of all the teachers in the study. The level and variety of the teachers' questions appeared to force the learners to stay alert while they were also given time, by different means, to make sense of the language they heard and construct an answer. Discussion of the functions of the teachers' questioning techniques will be developed more fully in Chapter 6. The next section will look at how the teachers used their language to sequence the pupils' contributions.

#### **4.16 Sequencing**

Sequencing pupils' learning in ML classrooms normally refers to the order in which a new topic or grammatical concept is introduced, reinforced and consolidated within a structured framework (Pachler & Field, 2001). Because of the discontinuity of the observations it is difficult to comment on how successfully or not this was achieved. However, each teacher sequenced individual lessons so that the learners were clear about the learning intentions and the plan by which the teacher intended to accomplish them.

The employment of routines in creating and maintaining a stable secure classroom environment has already been discussed; each lesson usually started with a greeting and an outline of the day's work plan followed by correction of homework. Within the lessons, at least two different language skills were practised. There was always time spent on speaking, either with a partner or with the teacher; there might be discrete listening activities targeting particular topic areas complementing the listening practice that the learners got from listening to the teacher's TL. The lessons might also include periods when the pupils performed reading comprehension or writing exercises in the foreign language. Practice of the different skills revolved round consolidation of a particular topic area or grammar point.

In the review of the literature, the four stages of Gardner's (2007) model of second language acquisition development were described: elemental; consolidation; conscious expression; automaticity and thought. It could be argued that in the secondary school ML learners will never get past Gardner's conscious expression stage, since they do not have the opportunity for sustained language use with native speakers. The teacher's responsibility is to make sure that they have consolidated their learning and are able to use the language they have learned to communicate meaning, even though they may consciously have to think about the form and vocabulary they use. With regard to the sequencing of the learners' language development, when the focus was on practising the TL the teachers rehearsed new language, which they then revisited through a variety of activities focusing on different skills to reinforce and consolidate the new language

structures. In interviews with pupils they mentioned the thoroughness with which the teachers approached the business of consolidating their learning.

#### **Interview extract 4.13**

*P2: And it's not just going over it. She does it for a wee while, so we get it.*

*P4: She doesn't just skim over it and like, change topics quickly. She goes over what we're on.*

*P5: Then we've gone back ...*

*P1 And if she doesn't think we've taken it on, she'll go over, back to what we were on. She'll keep going over it.*

The pupils above appeared to understand that they needed sufficient practice before they 'get' or have 'taken on' a structure or a concept. Three of the pupils talked of the teacher 'going over' the work, while pupil 2 qualified her use of the expression to suggest, as the others appear to, that this entailed concentrating for some time on the structure to ensure the learners had a solid base of understanding. The teacher could then move on to the next stage of the syllabus, confident that the learners had a foundation on which to build new understandings and that they would be equipped with the language to be able to express themselves as principals of their utterances. The pupils clearly felt that the teacher's actions were instrumental in helping their learning even if their perceptions might not have reflected the true nature of their development.

Two pupils mentioned the way their teacher sequenced their learning to move them on from fairly simple to more testing language.

#### **Interview extract 4.14**

*P1: ...there's lots of questions, but they can be like simple questions and the, in the next question will be a complex one which actually means you've got to think of a response that's quite, harder to say.*

*P3: If you just give like quite eh, the shortest ones like oui or something like that, she'll go (makes a 'continue' gesture) and she makes you like, makes you like, it's a big speech, which is quite good.*

Interview extract 4.14 illustrates the pupils' perceptions of the teacher's sequencing of questions from easier to more cognitively challenging. It seems clear that they were not averse to the challenge presented as the teacher moved from simpler to more complex demands on their language production capability. There will be further discussion of teacher expectations of the learners in terms of language comprehension and production in Chapter 5.

In reporting the findings of the study, this chapter has focused on the control exercised by the teachers, not only in terms of the demands made on the pupils and the management of their behaviour, but also in choosing appropriate language and a pace of learning which kept them focused. The evidence suggests that teacher control was a significant factor in keeping the learners' focus and providing a secure and structured framework within which the learners were made aware of their responsibility in constructing their learning with the help of the teacher. Research into teacher control has tended to view it as part of a discipline strategy; however, the current findings, supported by research studies featured in the literature review in section 2.4.6 (Puchta & Schratz 1993, Cowley 2001, Barton 2006) suggest that teacher control may be equally important as a support for learning. At the same time the teachers' TL was crucial in establishing and maintaining a collaborative atmosphere where pupils contributed readily to the TL interaction that took place. The four TL 'types' which have been identified meant that a clear picture of the teachers' TL used to engage the learners in interactional sequences could be obtained. Most significant was that so much of the interaction took place in the TL, particularly when the very limited level of pupil TL proficiency is taken into account. When considering the research questions, it appears that the control the teachers exercised, along with the collaborative ethos they created through their use of TL, were influential in promoting pupils' TL responses. The next

chapter will consider further the quantity of TL used by teachers and pupils, the language teaching functions that the teachers employed and how they enabled the learners to develop their speaking skills through interaction.



## **Chapter 5 Language Balance, Distribution and Patterns**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This study aimed to investigate TL strategies that teachers employed to develop an active response from learners; more specifically, the intention was to look closely at the way the teachers' TL was used to scaffold pupils' development of TL competence within the classroom, so that they might use it for communicative purposes. The way teachers used the TL to establish and maintain an atmosphere of collaboration where learners felt disposed to respond in the TL was also an important factor in this study. The specific interest in this chapter is the teachers' TL in interactional sequences within the different pedagogical foci of the lesson identified in Chapter 4: operational, analysis of language and practice, and the conversation-type sequences which 'popped up' in all three. The concern is to identify teachers' positioning moves to develop the interaction that they initiated in the classroom, gradually moving the learners towards taking responsibility for their own part in interaction.

Chapter 4 set the scene for more detailed analysis of the teachers' language by focusing on the way the teachers in the study controlled the classroom environment and the TL interaction they initiated with the pupils to create and maintain a collaborative atmosphere. The control was not perceived to be heavy-handed or unreasonable by the pupils, who, when interviewed, appeared to understand and approve of the way the lessons were conducted in terms of the teacher's management of the teaching and learning process. The control exercised by the teachers through their use of the TL provided a secure frame within which conditions for learning to use the TL to communicate meaning were created and managed within interaction in different stages of the lesson.

This chapter will give details of the quantities of TL that the teachers and pupils in the study used in the three lessons selected for close analysis, before moving to discuss the proportions of types of language used in each part of the lesson depending on the focus,

providing illustrations of the way the teachers combined language types from different foci so that the learners became accustomed to changes or 'shifts' from one to another, in much the same way that shifts take place in 'natural' interaction due to the fluid nature of conversational dialogue.

This chapter examines the way the teachers initiated exchanges and followed up learners' responses to develop dialogue which helped the learners use the language to communicate meaning, rather than simply show that they knew how to form a particular structure. Effective communicative interaction will usually incorporate accuracy of form (Canale & Swain 1980, Celce-Murcia 1991). Through the different pedagogical foci in the lessons the teachers in the study managed to combine the need for both focus on form and the learners' development of interpersonal communication skills. This chapter will therefore also consider how the teachers' interactional moves developed the relationship between focus on form and focus on meaning, as the pupils were moved from practising the language to using it to communicate meaning personal to them.

As explained in Chapter 3, a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods has been used throughout the study and was deemed most appropriate to determine the relative amounts of TL that the teachers and pupils used. At the same time it was important to use a framework for analysis which made sense of the institutional dialogue which is typical of the classroom, but which also recognised the unpredictability of 'real' interaction (Cutting, 2008), even though the purpose may be implicitly pedagogical, as opposed to 'practice', where the pedagogical purpose is explicit and can be explained more easily.

## **5.2 Teachers' and Pupils' TL Use**

Having identified the different foci of the lesson where interactional sequences occurred in Chapter 4, it was considered important to establish the amounts of TL that the teachers and pupils in the study actually used. A full account and justification of the

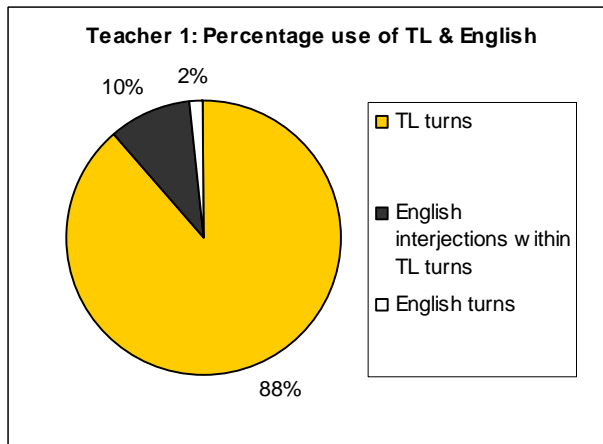
methodology used to calculate the amount of TL and English they employed was provided in Chapter 3 and will only be briefly summarised here.

All the teachers used the TL extensively in the classroom, but during the observations and while studying the transcripts, I became aware that there were occasions when they interjected English translations of vocabulary items and occasionally used English for a whole turn of the dialogue. In calculating the proportions of TL and English use, each teacher turn was therefore classed as TL or English. When a teacher interjected English in a TL turn, this was separately noted as 'English interjection within TL'.

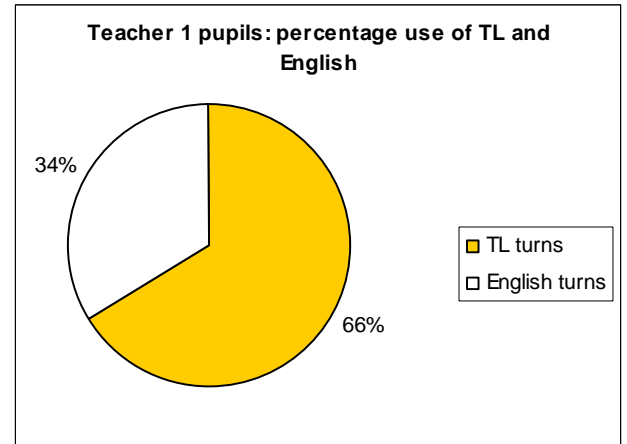
The decision was taken to use teacher turns, rather than follow their natural pausal phrasing within a turn. This was because as well as measuring their use of TL and English, I considered it important that dual language utterances, that is, when the teacher interjected English in a TL utterance in a turn, should also be noted, in order to provide a clear picture of the teachers' language. The pupils always answered in the TL or English.

The percentage of teacher TL, English and English interjections and pupil TL and English can be viewed in Figures 5.1 to 5.8 below. The percentages relating to each teacher and his/her pupils are placed adjacent to each other in order to enable a clear comparison of the teachers' and their pupils' use of TL and English to be made.

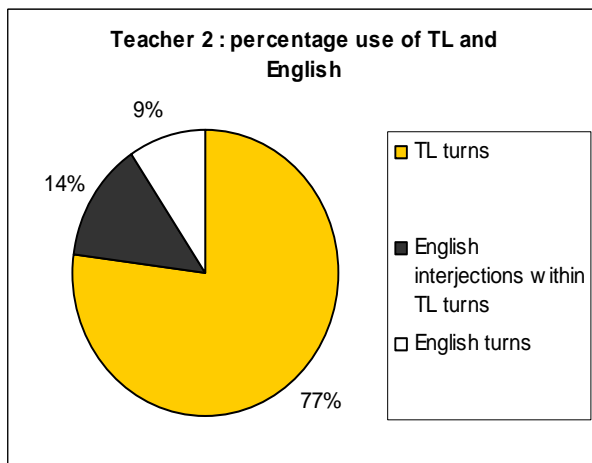
**Figure 5.1. Teacher 1: Percentage use of TL & English**



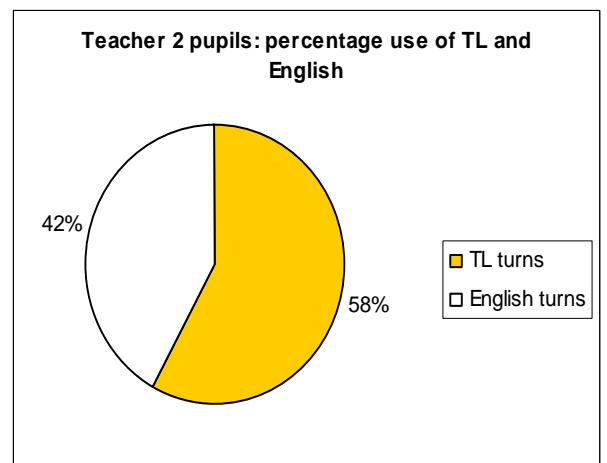
**5.2. Teacher 1 pupils: Percentage use of TL & English**



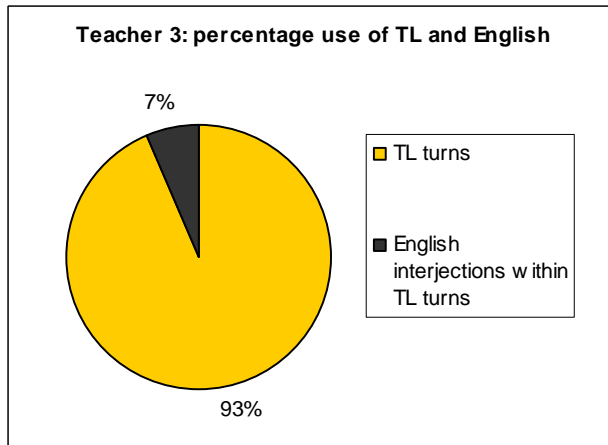
**Figure 5.3. Teacher 2: Percentage use of TL & English**



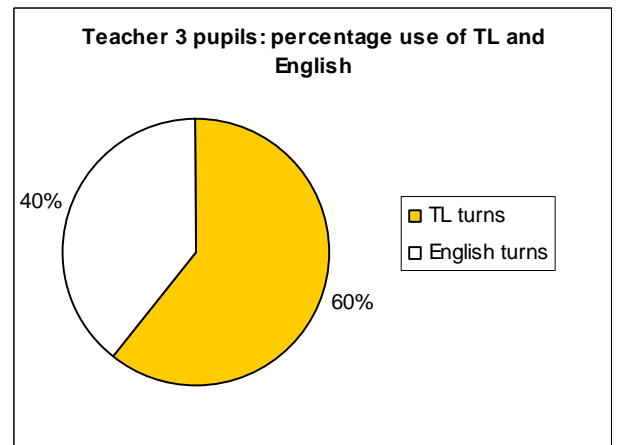
**Figure 5.4. Teacher 2 pupils: Percentage use of TL & English**



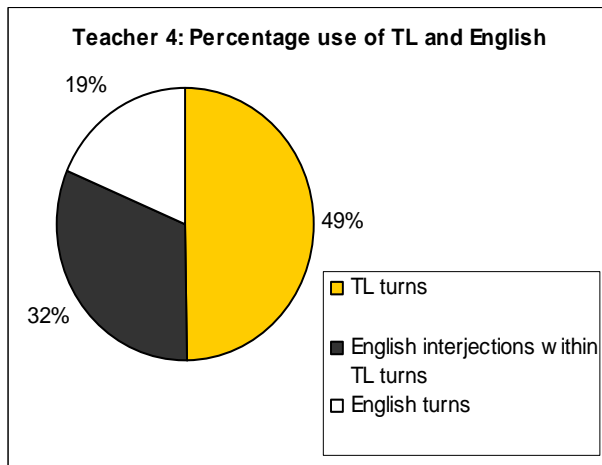
**Figure 5.5. Teacher 3: Percentage use of TL & English**



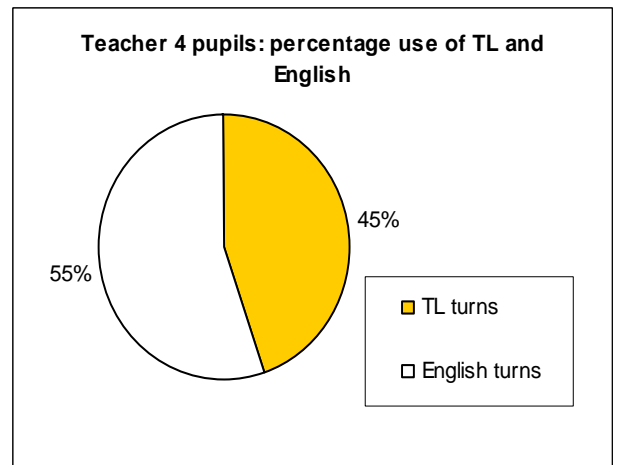
**Figure 5.6. Teacher 3 pupils: Percentage use of TL & English**



**Figure 5.7. Teacher 4: Percentage use of TL & English**



**Figure 5.8. Teacher 4 pupils: Percentage use of TL & English**



### 5.3 Teachers' and Pupils' TL Use: Teacher 4

Apart from Teacher 4, the figures suggest that the other three teachers' use of the TL could be considered extensive. This section will consider possible reasons for Teacher 4's considerably lesser use of the TL in the classroom, before examining the figures pertaining to the other three teachers. Although Teacher 4 spoke using only the TL in 49% of the turns, in only 19% of turns did she exclusively use English, preferring to interject English translations into the TL she used. Teacher 4 perhaps used the greatest

quantity of English because her class was considered to be at a low level, whose concentration was poor relative to the other three teachers' classes. She often asked pupils to translate English expressions and frequently inserted cues in English to help the learners retrieve answers. An example of the way she used English can be seen in Classroom extract 5.1.

### **Classroom extract 5.1**

*1T4: S.? Qu'est-ce que c'est 'at seven o'clock' en français?*

*2P3: Sept heures*

*3T4: A sept heures. And 'half past seven'? We add something and half. D?*

*4P12: Et demie.*

*5T4: Et demie, très bien. Et 'quarter past' ? Ne criez pas, levez la main.*

*6P5: Quatre heures.*

*7T4: Nearly there.*

*8P5: Et quart*

*9T4: Quart, très bien, et quart.*

Classroom extract 5.1 illustrates how Teacher 4 scaffolded the pupils' responses through her use of English; in turn 3 she reminded them of the way the required structure was formed *And half past seven? We add something and half*. This reminds pupils of important differences in the formulation of time expressions in the mother tongue and the TL (Harbord, 1992). This cue in English, which may have not been necessary with other higher performing classes, may also have had the effect of saving time, by not allowing the pace to slacken while learners thought of an answer (Atkinson, 1987). This may be viewed as indispensable with a class where a number of learners have poor concentration and are liable to go off task. She also provided a cue in English in turn 7, *Nearly there.*, when she evaluated the learner's answer, which caused him to focus more closely to remember the correct expression. Her encouragement also suggests that she was not rejecting his response as erroneous because she was concerned that the learner should not lose face.

It may be that because of the nature of Teacher 4's class, that is, a low-performing set with a limited attention span, they needed the reassurance of being able to take a break in the mother tongue from the intense concentration needed to decode the teacher's TL, even though it appeared appropriate to their level. There were instances during lessons when she 'allowed' the learners to go off-task briefly in English, before steering them back to the activity on which they were working. Although the focus in this chapter is on the TL that the teachers used to initiate responses from the learners, it is perhaps appropriate to consider an example of the type of 'off-task' interaction in English she accepted, in order to demonstrate how she nurtured a collaborative relationship with her learners, to the extent of speaking some English with them, while maintaining her role as a TL speaker as much as possible. Classroom extract 5.2 illustrates the kind of interruption Teacher 4 permitted as she prepared her class for a listening activity on daily routine, by focusing on key items of vocabulary that they needed to know to ensure understanding of the exercise.

### **Classroom extract 5.2**

*1T4: Du lait, écoutez, hein ? Du lait, c'est blanc, c'est blanc, c'est, tu bois, on boit du lait (making drinking action)*

*2P7: Milk*

*3T4: Milk, uhuh, du lait, c'est milk. Ok? Oui?*

*4P11: Miss, who did you want to win on Saturday? (France v. Scotland football match)*

*5P9: Did you want Scotland to win?*

*6T4: Ehhh ... I was kind of torn. My husband's French you know.*

*7P11: The better team won but.*

*8T4: But I'm quite happy that Scotland won as well. Ok, on continue. Ah, R., Je prends mon petit déjeuner.*

Teacher 4 accepted Pupil 11's initiation in turn 4 and responded to it in English, before refocusing the class's attention promptly to the practice language from which they had

departed briefly. The lesson was the first lesson on a Monday morning and it could be that she recognised that her pupils felt the need to discuss the rather surprising result of a football match between Scotland and France the Saturday before, which had been the main topic of conversation as the pupils entered the class. Harbord (1992) suggests that teachers who use the learners' first language in the classroom may do so in order to cement relationships with the learners, particularly regarding 'personal' information.

Code switching, that is, 'the phenomenon of switching from one language to another in the same discourse' (Nunan & Carter, 2001: 275) often takes place when the pedagogical focus is on analysis of language, as the teacher and pupils use the meta-language of the mother tongue to explain the features of the second language (Cole, 1998). However it is also recognised as a device for creating a positive affective environment (Mattsson & Burenhult-Mattsson, 1999). Perhaps the pupils felt that Teacher 4's use of English meant that she recognised what could be considered their 'real' selves, rather than their second language learner personae (Cook, 2001). However, while she appeared to understand their urge to talk about the match, her control of the classroom meant that she was able to quickly guide the focus back to the planned activity, using the TL.

Teacher 4's use of English raises questions about whether it is advisable to enter into interpersonal interaction in the learners' mother tongue. It could be argued that because the focus of the dialogue was not seen as part of the pedagogic purpose and was relatively short it could be seen as 'extraneous' to the learning plan, and therefore permissible. It is also possible that the learners' level of ability meant that they might have had difficulty understanding if she had offered a similar explanation in French. Teachers' use of the learners' first language appears to be influenced by the classroom context (Shimura, 2007) and it may be that Teacher 4 was endeavouring to avoid learner anxiety and create a secure atmosphere (Auerbach, 1993). Harbord (1992) counsels against teachers' use of the mother tongue, arguing that there are TL strategies which can be used as effectively. However, he also recognises that 'at lower levels' it may be



better to use the learners' first language (Harbord, 1992: 354). In a subsequent interview, when asked how she reacted to pupils' use of the mother tongue, Teacher 4 maintained that these learners benefited from 'breaks' in the lesson content.

### **Interview Extract 5.1**

*T4: I mean, I would prefer to use the TL when they talk to me in English, and I certainly do with my other classes, but sometimes they're so full of what they want to tell me it's quicker and easier to use English and then get back into the TL as fast as possible. With kids like that you can't ask them to concentrate on anything for too long in English or the TL (laughs). Their attention would just go. So, I think it doesn't do them any harm if they can have a quick break and then get back into it again.*

None of the teachers used the TL exclusively, nor expected their pupils to do so, although they encouraged them to use it as much as possible. The use of the mother tongue is not a focus of this study, although its use has been debated in the research literature (Atkinson 1987, Franklin 1990, Harbord 1992, Macaro 2000, Cook 2001, Butzkamm 2000, 2003, Turnbull 2001, Crawford 2004), arguments generally concerning its use as a meta-language or translation device. However, there seems to be little written about using it in conversation-type exchanges, perhaps because the majority of the research has been in the field of English as a foreign language with adult learners, who frequently come from different first language backgrounds. Those studies which have concerned TL use in the foreign language classroom have tended to consider the amount used by teachers in class (Duff & Polio 1990, Franklin 1990, Neil 1997, Crawford 2004) and appear to have concentrated less on how much the pupils actually used.

### **5.4 Teachers' and Pupils' TL Use: Pupils of Teacher 4**

Evidence of Teacher 4's good relationship with the learners can perhaps be seen in the number of TL contributions they made in class. Although less than the pupils of the other teachers in the study, Teacher 4's pupils' turns exclusively in the TL accounted for

45% of their talk in lessons. Previous studies do not appear to have taken a quantitative view of the TL pupils use in interaction with the teacher. It should also be noted that, although not shown in the Figure 5.8, over 35% of the English that Teacher 4's pupils used was either to articulate understanding of grammar or pronunciation, or as a result of Teacher 4's requests for translation from the TL to English. The next part of this section considers the percentages of TL use by the other three teachers and their pupils.

### **5.5 Teachers' and Pupils' TL Use: Teachers 1, 2 and 3**

All the teachers apart from Teacher 4 used the TL as the main means of communication for over 75% of these lessons, Teacher 2 using it for 77% of turns, Teacher 1 for 88% of turns and Teacher 3 for 93% of turns. All the teachers interjected English translations or instructions, Teacher 3 using this approach the least, within 7% of the turns, Teacher 1 10% and Teacher 2 14%. Teacher 3 had no turns where English was used exclusively. Teacher 1 used English exclusively for 2% of turns in the lesson and Teacher 2 for 9%. The figures indicate that their use of TL could be regarded as extensive. Extensive TL, as defined in Chapter 3 may be taken to mean the quantitatively prevalent or dominant mode of communication in the class. Extensive comprehensible TL input is considered critical if learners are to be successful in their language learning (Ellis 2005b, Chaudron 1988, Krashen 1981). By giving pupils access to the TL spoken at a rate and level appropriate to their age and stage, the teachers could be viewed as providing exposure to a rich source of language, which could be a potential resource for the learners to use in interaction.

The pupils of Teachers 1, 2 and 3, also used the TL as the dominant mode of communication although their usage was not as extensive as the teachers'. The next section considers the percentages of pupil TL use.

### **5.6 Teachers' and Pupils' TL Use: Pupils of Teachers 1, 2 and 3**

Although their classes were rated as more proficient than that of Teacher 4, only Teacher 3's class was regarded as a 'top performing' set. Teacher 1's class was an 'upper

middle' set and Teacher 2's class was mixed ability, comprising pupils of below-average to high achievers. Details of the make-up of the classes have been provided in Chapter 3.

If a comparison were to be made using the perceived ability of the class as a measure of how much TL the teachers spoke, there would appear to be some correlation between all four teachers' TL use and their perceptions of the pupils' ability. This is borne out by research where teachers attributed the amount of TL they used to the level of the learners (Crawford 2004, Meiring & Norman 2002). However, although Teacher 3 used the TL for 93% of the classroom interaction and only used English as interjections within her TL turns, her pupils' TL contributions were not the highest and were only two percentage points more than Teacher 2's mixed ability class. This could be because of the emphasis on grammar in the three lessons selected for close analysis and Teacher 3's requests for articulation of understanding in English or translation from German which accounted for the majority of her pupils' English speaking turns. The use of English for articulating understanding and also for translation echoed a large proportion of English use by Teacher 4's pupils.

Teacher 1's pupils made most use of the TL; his technique of asking for translations from rather than into English might have contributed to their higher score. Much of the interaction in his class tended to occur when the pedagogical focus was on practice language, where pupils were expected to respond in the TL to his initiations. Teacher 2's pupils' 58% of TL use also occurred mainly within the practice language focus and also in conversation-type 'pop up' sequences that she initiated. The breakdown of each teacher's TL into the different speech types which were evident depending on the focus in the lessons and the interaction they generated with the learners will be discussed in a later section of this chapter. Although the aim of this thesis is to identify teachers' TL strategies which are effective in drawing pupils into TL interaction, it seemed important to take into account the use of English in their classrooms, particularly when interjected into a TL sequence, because this represented another component of the very complex interaction which took place during the lessons.

### 5.7 Teachers' and Pupils' English Use

Two examples of the type of English interjection that occurred can be seen in Classroom extract 5.3 below where Teacher 1 was reviewing the verb *aller* with the class.

#### Classroom extract 5.3

1T1: *Vont à l'école primaire. Mes petites soeurs (writing on board) vont. Oui, ok, vont à l'école primaire. Pourquoi? Pourquoi mes petites soeurs vont? C.? R.? Pourquoi?*

2P1: *Eh*

3T1: *Pourquoi? Oui vont, oui, ok, mais pourquoi? Mes petites soeurs vont, J. ?*

4P20: *Because there's more than one*

5T1: *There's more than one, c'est pluriel. Oui, c'est pluriel. J.?*

6P11: *They're girls, so it's like elles*

7T1: *Très bien. Ce sont des filles, alors c'est elles – c'est la même chose, the same thing, oui? Mes petites soeurs et elles, ok, c'est bien. Numéro 6, numéro 6, eh S.*

In Classroom extract 5.3 Teacher 1 was asking questions which followed the IRF framework, to confirm that the pupils had understood how to use the different forms of the verb *aller*. In turn 4, Pupil 20 answered in English, *Because there's more than one.*, possibly because the pedagogical focus was analysis of language and the teacher appeared to accept the pupils' use of English as a meta-language for articulating understanding. Teacher 1 then repeated Pupil 20's response in English, perhaps to underline for the class what had been said as well as providing a positive evaluation of the answer, before translating his utterance into the TL, *c'est pluriel. Oui, c'est pluriel*, in turn 5, exposing the learners to the TL expression which they might use another time or in a different context. He then accepted Pupil 11's explanation in English in turn 6, *They're girls, so it's like elles*. In turn 7, expanding on Pupil 11's utterance, he also interjected a rapid translation, *Ce sont des filles, alors c'est elles – c'est la même chose, the same thing*, again perhaps to emphasise the point to the class, or because he was unsure that they would understand, before continuing in the TL.

Teacher 1's English interjections were typical of the way the teachers inserted translations or repeated pupils' utterances for the whole class. Teacher 1 rarely used English for a whole turn; Teacher 3 not at all. The majority of Teacher 2's exclusively English turns took place in one lesson, where the pupils were using a variety of reference materials to create a piece of writing in the TL, which was to be used as the basis for a speaking assessment. Classroom extract 5.4 gives an example of an exclusively English turn as Teacher 2 was explaining to one group how to use one of the reference books.

#### **Classroom extract 5.4**

*P11: You've not to do the exercises?*

*T2: You're not doing the exercises, you're only looking at it for ideas, ok? Take words out, take ideas. That page there's got a whole list of hobbies, for example. You can steal ideas from there and use it and put them in your work.*

*P11: Ok.*

A large proportion of pupils' talk in English concerned questions about operational matters, which the teachers appeared to accept, perhaps with a view to ensuring the pace was kept brisk, although they tended to reply using the TL. In the lesson in which Classroom extract 5.4 occurred, Teacher 2 had provided scaffolding through the provision of reference materials, but perhaps felt that the learners needed reassurance in English that it was acceptable to 'lift' material, in order to support the learners in the difficult process of writing what they wanted to say in the TL. 'A common frustration in mfl learning is the inability to express oneself freely...' (Pachler & Field, 2001:121). Her use of the phrase, *You can steal ideas from there and use it and put them in your work*, suggests a certain conspiratorial complicity with the pupils as she encourages them to appropriate TL structures for themselves. When asked in interview about her use of English, Teacher 2 defended using it to teach grammar, but appeared almost apologetic about other occasions when she spoke English in the classroom.

### **Interview extract 5.2**

*T2: If I'm explaining about say, a speaking or writing assessment, I would do those things in English to be sure that nobody could come back and say 'I didn't understand' but that's just to cover myself I think. I would say I fall down in my own ideal, I think, because you want to be sure they understand when in fact they would in the foreign language, but it's something I'm aware I do it sometimes and I'd like to change it.*

Teacher 4 did not wish there to be any equivocation in the minds of the pupils regarding assessment arrangements and had a clear rationale for her use of English in those situations where she was imparting information about assessment procedures. She appeared aware of the occasions when she did not meet the standard she had set herself regarding TL use and aspired to improve her perceived flaws. Her comments were echoed by the other teachers, who all thought that the pupils were capable of understanding the TL they were exposed to and felt they could use more.

This section has looked at the quantity of TL that the teachers and learners in the study actually used. The majority of the interaction in the classes of Teachers 1, 2 and 3 took place exclusively in the TL. The majority of interaction that took place in Teacher 4's class was not exclusively in the TL. Possible reasons for this have been discussed and it should be noted that in her classroom there was, nonetheless, a substantial amount of TL spoken both by her and her pupils. The amounts of TL used by the teachers and pupils overall suggest that it was seen as a 'normal' means of communication in the class and point to an atmosphere where both parties were making the effort to sustain its use.

The next section looks at the types of TL the teachers used and how they were distributed between the different foci during the lessons. Bearing the research questions in mind and the evidence above which suggests that both teachers and pupils

endeavoured to maintain TL as the lingua franca in the classroom, close attention is paid to the strategic moves the teachers made that assisted the learners to respond in the TL.

### **5.8 Classroom Language**

The language of the classroom in general is seen as a distinct genre, compared to that of the doctor's surgery or the restaurant, for example (Heritage & Greatbatch 1991, Walsh 2006). It may also be referred to as institutional discourse (Seedhouse 2004, Walsh 2006). However, as already noted in Chapter 3, it has been suggested that classroom discourse, rather than being seen as one distinct genre, may be better viewed as a 'genre colony ... held together by a common but very general communicative purpose and populated by genres which are themselves defined through their individual more specific communicative purposes' (Dalton-Puffer, 2007: 42). In the classrooms of the teachers in the study, the general communicative purpose could be said to be the engagement of the learners in TL interaction as a means of developing their communicative competence. To achieve this aim, the teachers made use of pedagogical foci and conversation-type language which had more specific communicative purposes, moving the learners from taking part in controlled classroom discourse to more 'natural' talk.

Pedagogical foci, as described in Chapters 3 and 4, is the term used to describe classroom contexts where the content had a specific purpose, such as the giving of instructions, analysing the form of the language and practising the language in structured exercises. Although there were many common features of the teachers' language in each of the three pedagogical foci and the shifts to conversation-type 'pop-up' sequences identified in the lessons, there appeared to be specific functions of their TL which were prevalent in the interactional sequences which occurred during each one. It seemed important therefore to examine the types of language the teachers used in interactional sequences, in order to understand the way they moved the development of the learners' communicative skills forward. The general characteristics of the types of language the teachers used within each focus of the lesson have been described in Chapter 4 and therefore will only be briefly summarised here.

### **5.9 Operational-type Language Characteristics**

The function of operational-type language could be said to be information-giving and directing pupils to do something. When the pedagogical focus was operational there was a preponderance of imperatives and polite language, such as *s'il vous plait, merci, bitte, danke*. The immediate future and 'tag' questions were also regular features as teachers informed the learners what they would be doing. Requests for translation allowed the teachers to check for understanding.

### **5.10 Analysis-type Language Characteristics**

The teachers used analysis-type language to provide and elicit information, not about tasks, as was the case with operational language, but about the form of the language. The teachers confirmed pupils' understanding of grammar systems generally through the use of display and 'tag' questions. Teacher talk was more dominant during analysis-type language because of the presentational and explanatory nature of the topic. This was when teachers were most likely to use English. When the pedagogical focus was on analysis of language the pupils' use of English was accepted more readily than at other times in the lesson as a meta-language. During analysis of language and practice language teachers asked the learners to translate language items either from or to the TL.

### **5.11 Practice-type Language Characteristics**

When the pedagogical focus was on practice, the teachers' TL was typified by a series of display questions designed to bring forth a particular response from the learners, often involving a great deal of repetition. The IRF framework was evident in the way that teachers generally repeated pupils' answers in a confirmatory move or praised their response, although it is also likely that they were making sure that the correct answers were heard by the rest of the class. Although usually personalised, the function of the practice-type language was principally to practise specific structures, rather than focus on meaning.



### **5.12 Conversation-type Language Characteristics**

The language used in conversation-type sequences tended to comprise open or referential questions, focusing on meaning rather than form. The teachers also provided prompts or cues to help the learners respond. The language often appeared to arise naturally from a pupil's response during a focus on practice language which seemed to trigger the teacher's interest, so that the exchange took on a more 'natural' aspect due to the teacher apparently stepping out of the role of educator and into that of an interested adult. This makes conversation-type language different from 'focus on fluency' (Seedhouse, 2004), which is part of the teacher's plan for the lesson. The IRF framework did not appear appropriate to describe conversation-type language because of the referential nature of the questions and the teachers' use of the third move to extend the dialogue.

### **5.13 Language Types within Interactional Sequences taking place during the Pedagogical Foci**

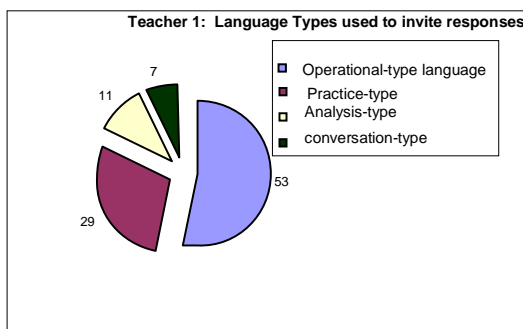
There was not a fixed order of pedagogical foci in the teachers' lessons; the proportion of time spent on each focus varied, depending on the lesson and the teacher. Interactional sequences during a particular focus of a lesson could be said to employ a particular type of language. However, as we have seen, many of the characteristics of each language type used during particular foci overlapped, for example, requests for translation were evident in interactional sequences in all three pedagogical foci, as teachers checked comprehension. To gain a clearer picture of the distribution of language types in the interactional sequences which took place during the pedagogical foci and conversation-type interaction, I counted each instance of the different language types used to invite the learners to respond in each of the three lessons selected for detailed analysis of each teacher's language. Details and justification of this process has been provided in Chapter 3, however, a brief summary is offered below.

Because of the complex nature of the teacher's language functions, it was often not an easy task to categorise each invitation to respond. Jarvis and Robinson (1997: 225) call

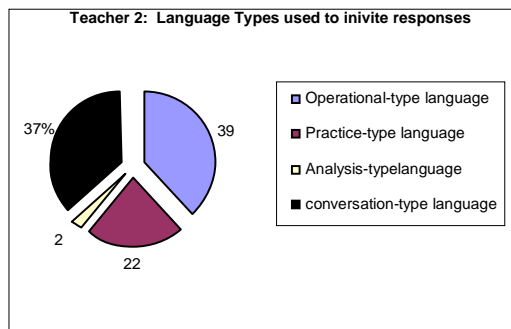
this the 'Russian doll' effect, due to the 'multifunctional, multivoiced, and multilayered' nature of classroom discourse. When the teacher in a practice language or analysis interactional sequence, for example, directed pupils to repeat a sentence or vocabulary item, this request, although taking place during the practice or analysis of language pedagogical focus of the lesson, was more typical of organisational-type language. Teacher 4, whose class was the low-performing set, often prefaced her invitations to respond in practice and analysis language interactional sequences with instructions that the class should not shout out the answer, but put their hands up to show they wished to be chosen. This mix of language types was evident in all the teachers' utterances within each pedagogical focus of the lessons.

Each teacher invitation to respond was noted as belonging to the type of interaction with which it was most closely associated, therefore if a teacher asked a display question and also told the pupils to put their hands up, the display question was noted under practice-type language and the instruction to raise their hands under operational-type language. In this way, even though the teacher's utterances may have taken place in an interactional sequence when the pedagogical focus of the lesson was on practice, a clear illustration of the proportions of the different language types used by the teachers could be observed. The numbers of each instance of a particular language type were transferred to pie charts which showed the percentages of their use by each teacher. These can be seen in Figures 5.9, 5.10, 5.11 and 5.12. The reason for grouping all four charts together was so that any patterns emerging would be obvious.

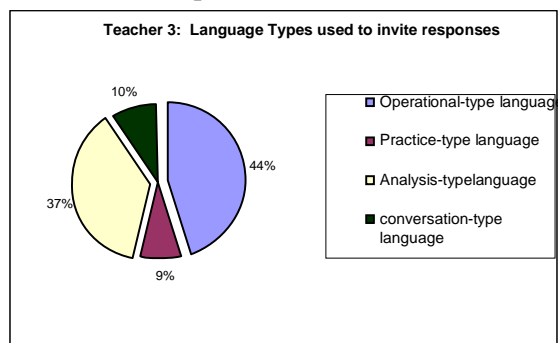
**Figure 5.9. Teacher 1: Language Types used to invite responses**



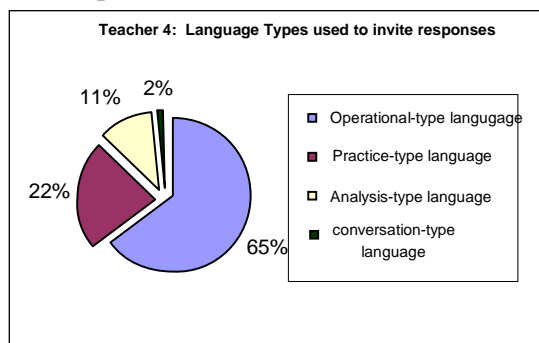
**Figure 5.10. Teacher 2: Language Types used to invite responses**



**Figure 5.11. Teacher 3: Language Types used to invite responses**



**Figure 5.12. Teacher 4: Language Types used to invite responses**



It should be remembered that the focus of the study is on the language the teachers used to stimulate and develop interaction with the learners. Although the teachers' use of TL could be said to be extensive, these charts reflect only the teacher's interactional TL which invited a response, either oral or non-verbal. What is not included in the charts is the teachers' TL which did not explicitly invite a response; that will be discussed in Chapter 6. Neither do the charts include any interactional language which took place in English, nor any part of the lesson where the learners worked individually or in groups, such as reading or writing exercises or paired speaking activities. Although these activities make important contributions to the learning process and may be a catalyst for interaction, only the teachers' actual invitations to respond in the TL are recorded in the figures.

The four figures show the different levels of each language type that each teacher used. Although there was some similarity between teachers - for example, Teachers 1 and 4 both spent 11% of their lesson time on analysis of language, and Teachers 2 and 4 spent the same amount of time, 22% on practice language sequences - there were also significant differences.

As already noted above, it was not always easy to classify the teachers' utterances under one single language type; examples of different types were evident within interaction in any pedagogical focus of the lesson and conversation type interactional sequences as teachers incorporated a language type associated with another focus before shifting back again. The following section will provide an analysis of the data presented in the figures, organised by language type used by the teachers. Examples of the TL moves the teachers made within each interactional sequence and the shifts from one to another will illustrate the way they moved the learners' TL communicative development forward.

#### **5.14 Interaction using Language Types and Language Type Shifts**

Shifts between interaction with different foci in the classroom have been identified as 'mode switching' (Walsh, 2006) and 'contextual shifts' (Seedhouse, 2004). 'Language type shifts' could be said to more appropriately describe the shifts the teachers in the study made, because they changed the characteristics of the language they used to communicate with the learners within a particular focus of the lesson, as they responded to the demands of the context (Walsh, 2006). Walsh has observed:

Lessons rarely progress from A to Z; like conversations, deviations, topic-shifts, back channelling, repetitions, false starts, overlaps all occur very regularly, making description difficult to achieve. (2006:83)

In the next section, proportions of each language type the teachers used to initiate TL interaction with the learners and possible reasons for the relative amounts of the different language types will be considered.

### **5.15 Operational-type Language**

In any classroom it is the teacher's responsibility to organise the pupils' learning. Learners are given instructions and information about what they will be learning and how they will go about doing so. The focus of the lesson within which the teacher communicates this information has been given a variety of labels: managerial mode (Walsh, 2006); procedural context (Seedhouse, 2004); introduction and instructions content area (Neil, 1997). In this study the type of language which is used in interactional sequences to communicate instructions and information about activities the learners will undertake is termed operational-type language.

Operational-type language was used most by all the teachers. It occurred not only in instructions before the learners started activities, but also within every other focus of the lesson. Operational-type language was employed for more than half of the interaction which took place in the lessons of both Teacher 1 and Teacher 4. The TL type that Teachers 2 and 3 used most was also operational. Some possible reasons for the dominance of operational-type language in lessons are given below.

At least three different activities took place during each of the teachers' lessons, which meant that a great deal of information and instructions were given as each one was explained. Examples of instructions have already been seen in Classroom extracts 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, and 4.11 in Chapter 4. Although each teacher had his or her own way of framing instructions and information about activities, Classroom extract 5.5 below, where Teacher 1 was setting up a discrete listening exercise, where the pupils had to listen to audio-taped directions to a variety of places on a town plan, could be said to be typical of the way the teachers used operational-type language.

#### **Classroom extract 5.5**

*IT1: C'est bien. Ok! C'est bien? Pas de probleme. Maintenant on va voir si vous comprenez bien. Vous avez un livre ici. C'est la page quatre-vingt-neuf, quatre-vingt-neuf.*

2P6: *Fifty-nine.*

3P10: *Seventy-nine.*

4T1: *Sh. Alors, qu'est-ce que c'est, quatre-vingt-neuf?*

5P16: *eighty-nine, no ninety-nine.*

6T1: *Non, quatre-vingt-neuf, (writing it on the board)*

7P5: *I told you.*

8T1: *Sh, sh. Regardez s'il vous plaît, sh, sh. Il y a beaucoup de bruit, Gregoire, Gregoire, Gregoire! Sh. Silence. Merci (very quietly), sh. On va faire exercice trois. Regardez exercice trois. Ecoute et écris le bon numéro. Où vont-ils? C'est bien? Cahier d'exercices, vous avez les cahiers d'exercices? Mmmm (writing on board) Ça va? (whisper) Ecrivez le titre s'il vous plaît, où vont-ils? (silence) Vous allez écouter 14 directions, oui? Où vont aller les personnes? C.?*

9P3: *Em, where are they going?*

Teacher 1 started the operational sequence by directing pupils to the page number in the text book where the exercise could be found. He allowed the learners time to decode the number before intervening with a visual clue to eliminate any confusion. In the longest turn, turn 8, he commented on the noise level *sh sh. Il y a beaucoup de bruit* as the pupils found the correct page and singled out one pupil who appeared to be off task with a refocusing move. He then directed the learners to the exercise and explained what they were expected to do and in which exercise book they had to record their answers, before checking the learners' comprehension of what he had said. The teacher's dominance of the talk appears to substantiate the findings of Walsh (2006) and Seedhouse (2004), who suggest that the majority of operational language does not involve the learners in interaction and is characterised by teacher monologue.

However, although turn 8 could be termed monologic because there was no oral response from the learners, Teacher 1 included three re-focusing moves, three directives and five questions, all of which required a response, which included stopping talking, looking at the correct place on the page, writing the title or conveying agreement

through body language. It could be argued that Teacher 1's apparently monologic interactional moves, although not requiring an oral response, can be viewed as directing a 'dialogue' with the learners, whose non-verbal contribution acts as a 'determining influence' on his subsequent interactional moves (Bakhtin, 1984:197).

The operational-type TL that Teacher 1 used in Classroom extract 5.5 was not only instructional in terms of describing the requirements of the proposed task; its purpose was also to maintain discipline, reinforced by the tone and volume of his voice. Once the class was quiet, Teacher 1 thanked the learners for their co-operation and continued with the instructions for the task having lowered the volume and pitch of his voice significantly, a strategy designed so that learners have to listen very carefully to hear what the teacher says (Tauber & Mester, 2006).

Some of the instructions that Teacher 1 communicated in Classroom Extract 5.5 were framed as questions, *Cahier d'exercices, vous avez les cahiers d'exercices?*, or statements *Vous avez un livre ici. C'est la page quatre-vingt-neuf, quatre-vingt-neuf.* Teacher 1's reasons for using the interrogative and declarative forms may have been to avoid a predominance of imperatives, which might have had the function of emphasising the teacher's power, working against the maintenance of a collaborative atmosphere. Nonetheless, the directive purpose of the utterances appeared clear to the learners, who responded appropriately.

Classroom extract 5.5 illustrates some of the ways the teachers used operational-type language, when the focus was on setting the scene or giving instructions for an activity in operational foci in the lessons. Because of the variety of activities which took place in each lesson, it appears reasonable to assume that the high level of operational-type TL reflected this, as each task had to be explicated and instructions made clear. However, there were shifts to operational-type language in interactional sequences which took place when the pedagogical focus was not solely on setting up activities, which could

also explain its high percentage of teacher use. The following section will offer a possible additional explanation for the high level of use of operational language.

All the teachers instructed the learners to pay attention, listen, look at stimulus sheets, textbooks or the board. Teachers 1 and 4 asked the learners to repeat structures and vocabulary items chorally more than Teachers 2 and 3 did. Often these interjections were made while the teacher was using another language type to interact with the learners, usually when the pedagogical focus was on practice or analysis of language. This meant that their invitations to respond had to be recorded under two categories of language type, because they performed two functions, that of inviting a response in the practice language or analysis of language part of the lesson, and also inviting a response by instructing the learner(s) to do something through their use of operational language. Seedhouse's position (2004) is that operational-type language, which he calls the 'procedural context' is '...obligatory; it occurs in every lesson as a precursor to another language context' (p.133). However, his interpretation does not appear to take account of operational-type language *within* other contexts of the lesson. The teachers employed a mix of language types in interactional sequences during any pedagogical focus of the lesson, shifting from one to the other and then back again. The next section will look more closely at the way the teachers shifted to operational-type language from other TL types.

Language type shifts were evident on numerous occasions when the teachers incorporated operational-type language into foci of the lesson. An example can be seen below in Classroom extract 5.6 which took place during a practice language sequence on the topic of home area.

#### **Classroom extract 5.6**

*IT1: ... Et comment dit-on 'what is there to do near your house?' F. ?*

*2P8: Qu'est-ce qu'il y a à maison ?*



3T1: *A la maison c'est in your house. Qu'est-ce qu'il y a à la maison, oui, mais comment dit-on, regarde, comment dit-on what is there near your house ?*

The exchange in Classroom extract 5.6 followed the IRF framework; after the learner's response to a display question Teacher 1 provided corrective feedback, conforming to the type of language which was typical of interaction when the pedagogical focus was on practice. In response to a request for translation in turn one, Pupil 8 made an error which was explained in turn three, when the correct expression was reinforced, before returning to the original question. However, interjected into the second request *comment dit-on 'what is there near your house?'* was an instruction, *regarde*, to look at the stimulus sheet where Pupil 8 might find help to answer. Teacher 1's second invitation to respond, therefore, was coded as both practice-type language and operational-type language. Because of the frequency of shifts to operational-type language interspersed within other TL interactional sequences, it is probable that this resulted in its higher score in the charts.

Although the emphasis in this section is on the way one language type in the teachers' TL utterances may appear in what is considered another, it is perhaps appropriate also to note the way the teacher dealt with the learner's error in Classroom extract 5.6 above. Teacher 1 recast the error and at the same time, in much the same way as parents or care givers do with their young children, focused on the meaning of the pupil's response rather than the form (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). The learner was then directed to where she could find assistance to choose the correct form of the language for the meaning that the teacher had asked her to convey. By drawing attention to the meaning, even though it was the learner's faulty choice of the form of the language which had prompted the correction, Teacher 1 moved to save the learner's face, as the learner's first attempt was validated, *Qu'est-ce qu'il y a à la maison, oui, mais comment dit-on, regarde, comment dit-on what is there near your house ?* Face-saving techniques were evident throughout the teachers' utterances in each language type as they supported the learners in their efforts to communicate, which may have been instrumental in creating an atmosphere

where pupils were not reluctant to respond in the TL. There will be further discussion of the teachers' use of face-saving techniques in later sections of this chapter and Chapter 6.

Another example of the way operational-type language intruded into other language types can be seen in Classroom extract 5.7, from Teacher 4's class who, although performing at a low level, were, in the main, enthusiastic; many of the pupils interrupted her initiations by attempting to shout out the answer to her questions, with the result that she appeared to use operational-type language as part of the invitations to respond, instructing pupils to concentrate, think or raise their hand to show they wanted to answer immediately before or after an initiation. The embedded nature of her operational-type language can be seen in Classroom extract 5.7, in a practice language sequence where she was revising expressions used to describe people's daily routine.

#### **Classroom extract 5.7**

1P4: *Je me douche.*

2T4: *Je me douche. En anglais? Levez la main s'il vous plaît.*

3P6: *Shower.*

4T4: *I have a shower. Encore des expressions pour les routines? M.?*

5P11: *Je me lève.*

6T4: *Je me lève. En anglais?*

7P11: *I get up.*

T4: *L., chewing gum à la poubelle s'il te plaît. Encore des expressions pour les routines? Ne criez pas, levez la main.*

In Classroom extract 5.7 Teacher 4 asked the learners to respond in practice-type language four times using *En anglais?* twice and *Encore des expressions pour la routine?* twice. Both expressions appeared to be easily understood by the learners, *En anglais?* because it was used often to check pupils' understanding in Teacher 4's lessons, *Encore des expressions pour la routine?* perhaps because of the three cognates

*encore, expressions* and *routine* which appeared to convey the message she was transmitting to the learners. The context had also already been made explicit to the learners.

Teacher 4 shifted from practice-type language to operational-type four times, *Levez la main* on two occasions, *ne criez pas* once and an instruction to a learner to put his chewing gum in the waste paper basket *L., chewing gum à la poubelle s'il te plaît*. The high level of operational-type TL in her class may have been to meet a perceived need to ensure that the learners did not get out of control in their eagerness to respond and to manage the response procedure in such a way that ensured that all the pupils were given a chance to answer. In reminding the class that no eating was the rule, she also reinforced her authority. Her shifts to operational-type language within another pedagogical focus, practice language, therefore appeared to guarantee order and security, leaving the pupils in no doubt of her authority by ensuring a disciplined environment.

The two examples above show the way that the language type shift meant that operational-type language could be observed in practice-type language sequences. However, it was also evident in analysis of language interactional sequences. Classroom extract 5.8 illustrates the way that operational language was used by Teacher 1 during a pedagogical focus on analysis of language in the lesson. Earlier pupils had come to the front of the class and written the different parts of the paradigm of the verb *aller* on the board. The teacher had made no comment while they did so. Now the class were asked to confirm or disconfirm the parts of the paradigm that were written on the board.

#### **Classroom extract 5.8**

*1T1: Ok, regardez le tableau, c'est bon? Je vais? Oui?*

*2Ps: Oui.*

*3T1: On va regarder. Aller, to go. Je?*

*4Ps: vais.*

*5T1: C'est bon? Oui? Ok. Tu vas, c'est bon?*

6Ps: *Oui.*

7T1: *Oui. Il vas, elle vas? C'est bon?*

8Ps: *(mix of oui and non)*

9T1: *Non? Levez la main si c'est bon. (some pupils raise their hands) Levez la main si c'est faux. (the majority of pupils raise their hands) Pourquoi, L.? ah, pourquoi, J. ?*

10P16: *It's not meant to have an 's'.*

11T1: *Très bien, il n'y a pas de 's' Ici il y a un 's', mais ici il n'y a pas de 's'. Ok alors, on va voir, oui. C'est bon. Nous? C'est bon?*

12Ps: *C'est bon.*  
*Oui.*

13T1: *Levez la main si c'est bon. (the majority of pupils raise their hands) Levez la main si c'est faux.*

14P5: *Eh non, faux, faux, faux, faux.*

15T1: *Pourquoi, J.?*

16P5: *It's not meant to have the em, the 'n'.*

17P12: *It says nouns.*

18T1: *Oui, c'est marqué nouns. Nouns (French pronunciation), alors il n'y a pas de ?*

19Ps: *'n'.*

20T1: *Non, il n'y a pas de n. Ok, nous allons, c'est bon. Vous allez, c'est bon?*

21Ps: *Oui.*

22T1: *Oui. Ça c'est vont, oui? Vont? Vont, oui?*

23Ps: *Non.*

24T1: *C'est bien?*

25Ps: *Non.*

26T1: *Non. Pourquoi pas, F.?*

27P10: *You've got to have s on the il and elle.*

28T1: *Très bien, ils et elles. Pourquoi? Sh.*

29P10: *'Cos they're plural.*

Teacher 1 started the interaction with an imperative, *regardez le tableau*, which conforms to Seedhouse's (2004) notion of operational language preceding another focus. He then took the learners through the paradigm, checking their knowledge of the different forms of the verb *aller*. In turn nine two imperatives were issued, *Levez la main si c'est bon. Levez la main si c'est faux* to which the learners responded. Teacher 1 repeated this process in turn 13. Because he asked the learners for a show of hands, not singling out any particular pupil to answer, but instead allowing them to answer as a group, it is possible that they felt less exposed when responding. Taking the individual risk of proffering a wrong answer was lessened, due to the request for a group response, demonstrating sensitivity to the adolescent learners' face.

On both occasions Teacher 1 combined operational-type language, the instruction to the learners to raise their hands, with an enquiry about the structure of the verb, which is classed as analysis-type language. Thus, *Levez la main si c'est bon. Levez la main si c'est faux* were recorded under both operational-type language and analysis-type language. The teacher interjected another imperative towards the end of the extract in turn 28, similar to those in classroom extracts 5.6 and 5.7 telling some pupils to be quiet, *Sh*, before one answered the analysis of language question which had just been posed. Classroom extracts 5.6, 5.7 and 5.8 may go some way to explaining the dominance of operational-type language over the other three. As can be seen in the three extracts above the majority of the teachers' operational-type language was 'light touch', that is, the teachers appeared concerned that the learners' sense of face should not be threatened. This concern may also have contributed to a collaborative atmosphere of mutual respect, where learners felt able to respond in the TL without anxiety.

All three extracts illustrate the complex nature of the teachers' language, where the type of language associated with interactional sequences during a particular focus of the lesson may shift to another type and back. The quantity of operational-type language that the teachers employed provided a rich source of varied language input for the learners across the interactional sequences. Seedhouse (2004) talks about the

‘complementarity’ of classroom interaction (p.208). He uses this term to describe different contexts within which the interaction can be said to occur: the micro context, by which he means the actual unique interaction taking place; the second language classroom context, that is, how the unique interaction relates to similar classroom contexts; and the institutional context within which the other two are situated (p.209).

Perhaps the different types of language in the interactional sequences within the different foci of the lesson could also be said to be complementary in a different sense, because of the way the teachers combined them, shifting from one to the other so that the resulting dialogue appeared more natural, rather like a parent talking to a child, focusing their attention on a particular item, before returning to a topic, with the result that the dialogue appeared less institutional. It might be that the mix of language types used by the teachers also prepared learners to respond to less predictable exchanges and added an element of interest to the subject matter. Having considered the teachers’ use of operational-type language, the next section looks at similarities and differences in proportions of each of the other language types used by the teachers in the study.

### **5.16 Analysis-type Language**

Although operational-type language was most used by all the teachers, there seemed little agreement between them as to the proportions of the other language types employed. Analysis-type language varied in the teachers’ lessons from Teacher 2’s 2% to Teacher 3’s 37%. This seems to suggest that Teacher 2 focused very little on grammar while the figure for Teacher 3 seems disproportionately high, especially when compared to the figures for Teachers 1 and 4, which are the same, 11%.

In Chapter 3 issues surrounding the collection of the observational data were discussed. The discontinuity of some of the observations meant that the distribution of the different types of language cannot be taken as representational of the teachers’ normal foci. Nor can lessons observed in close succession be considered typical. The final three observations of Teacher 3’s class, for example, were conducted while they were learning

about the accusative and dative cases and therefore appear focused on analysis-type language. Perhaps the reason for Teacher 2's apparent lack of grammar content was the observation timetable; the single period when Teacher 2 did most of her grammar teaching was one that it was impossible to observe due to my professional commitments. During the double periods her use of the analysis-type language tended to be restricted to reminders of what had been taught during the single period, or to draw learners' attention to a point of language which had arisen from a learner's question or the work the class was doing. Classroom extract 5.9 illustrates how Teacher 2 incorporated a focus on language into a practice language interactional sequence.

### **Classroom extract 5.9**

*1T2: Comment dit-on en français 'when' ?*

*2P5: Quand.*

*3T2: Comment dit-on 'how' ?*

*4P8: Comment.*

*5T2: Comment dit-on 'with whom' ?*

*6P10: Avec qui.*

*7T2: 'How long' ?*

*8P6: Pour combien de temps.*

*9T2: Combien de temps, quand, comment, avec qui – ce sont les mots très importants, les questions. Et en français on fait le ↗ (voice rising) comme ça. Où as-tu passé les vacances ? ↗ Tu peux répéter L. ? Où as-tu passé les vacances ?*

*10P9: (Laughing) Wait a minute. Tu as passé les vacances ? ↗*

*11T2: (Laughing) Excellent ! Et la voix monte comme si on chante un peu, la la la. ↗*

*La voix monte et c'est une question. Z., tu peux le faire?*

Teacher 2 interrupted the practice language sequence to focus on the use of tone in questioning and asked the learners to repeat a question, using a rising tone. Although tone may be said not to be strictly a point of grammar, it can be included in the analysis-

type language because of its relation to knowledge of the way particular intonational functions increase effective communication.

It seems unlikely that Teacher 2 intended to deviate from her intention of confirming the learners' knowledge of question initiations; in fact she did not raise the matter of tone with either of the other two groups. Her decision appeared to have been spontaneous, like a great deal of the interactive decisions made by the four teachers in the study. Van Lier (1991) maintains that there are two basic components in teaching: planning and improvisation. By appearing to digress from her planned activity, Teacher 2 made an interactive decision which was 'appropriate to the moment' (Walsh 2006:19) and the context. Insight into teacher techniques, including the opportunities for learning which such improvised interactive events occurring in the ML classroom provide, are a valuable resource for all teachers, particularly beginning teachers. Although the teachers' TL interactive moves appeared intuitive, this study aims to identify the strategies they used when 'improvising' to promote communicative interaction with a view to helping teachers become more aware of interactional opportunities in the TL they may offer to their learners to develop effective communication skills.

Before moving ahead to discuss Teacher 3's use of the analysis-type language, it is perhaps worth noting that in Classroom extract 5.9, which occurred when the pedagogical focus in the lesson was practice, the teacher not only incorporated analysis-type language, but also shifted to operational-type when she instructed the learners to repeat the question with rising tone, *Tu peux répéter?; tu peux le faire ?*, illustrating again the mix of language types used by the teachers during each pedagogical focus. She also framed the instructions as invitational questions, thus softening the implicit imperative. Pupil 9 asked her to wait until he had composed himself before answering: *Wait a minute*, bearing witness to the atmosphere which Teacher 2 had created, where a lack of learner anxiety meant that the pupil felt able to speak to her in a less formal manner before doing something he might have regarded as rather silly.



It was clear from the observations of Teacher 2's lessons that the learners had been exposed to explicit grammar teaching. The apparent lack of grammar focus in lessons was as a result of the observation timetable. As noted above, Teacher 3's ostensibly high percentage of analysis of language may have also been related to the observation timetable; when the observational visits took place, over a two-month period, her class was learning the different German cases and she spent a great deal of time revisiting the forms of the definite and indefinite article and the prepositions which governed the different cases. Teacher 3's high level of analysis-type language in her lessons was over three times that of Teachers 1 and 4, who both focused on the form of the language for 11% of the time in the observed lessons. However, although the quantity of her analysis-type language was very high compared to the others, it also showed a striking amount of interactional language being used.

Chapter 4 contains examples of the use of Teacher 3's analysis-type language in the interactional sequences which occurred during the pedagogical focus on analysis of language in the lesson. Another example of her interactive approach to analysis of language can be seen below in Classroom extract 5.10, where she was introducing the accusative case, beginning the sequence by concentrating on an English sentence that she had written on the board, *The boy ate the cake*.

#### **Classroom extract 5.10**

*1T3: So, hier haben wir ein Verb und zwei Substantive, ok? Das hier is wer. Wer aß? Wer hat es gemacht? Das ist Nominative, ja? Das ist the subject. Ok? Was ist das auf Englisch? Wer aß ist the subject. Wer? Wer aß?*

*2P14: The subject is like the thing that ate the cake.*

*3T3: Uhuh, in diesem Fall richtig. Wer hat es gemacht. Was ist subject in diesem Satz? (writing on the board) Was ist Nominativ in diesem Satz: The dog ate the bone? Was ist Nominativ in diesem Satz? Nominativ.*

*4P11: The dog.*

5T3: *The dog. (writing on the board)The teacher gives too much homework?  
Nominativ?*

6P13: *The teacher.*

7T3: *Ja?*

8Ps: *Ja.*

9T3: *Ja, ok. Und dann hast du Nominativ und das Verb zusammen. The teacher gives.  
Und dann stellst du die Frage: was? The teacher gives was? Und die Antwort?*

10P8: *Too much homework.*

11T3: *Too much homework. Das wäre dann auf deutsch Akusativ, ok? The boy ate the  
cake. Nominativ the boy. Das Verb ist ate und dann sagen wir: the boy ate was?  
Und die Antwort? The boy ate was? Und die Antwort?*

12P9: *The cake.*

13T3: *The cake. Das ist dann Akusativ, ok? Du stellst immer die Frage: was? nach dem  
Verb. Wenn du eine Antwort hast, ist es Akusativ. Was ist das auf Englisch? Du  
stellst die Frage: was? nach dem Verb. The boy ate was? Wenn es eine Antwort  
ist, dann ist es Akusativ. The dog ate was? Eine Antwort, the bone, das ist  
Akusativ. Wer kann das alles auf English erklären, was ich gerade gesagt habe?  
E?*

14P8: *When you ask like what the boy ate,*

15T3: *Uhuh?*

16P8: *The answer is the accusative.*

17T3: *Super, aber du machst es so: the boy ate was? Ok? Du mußst das immer so  
machen: the boy ate was?*

Teacher 3 began the sequence by revisiting previous learning, requesting an explanation in English of the nominative case to ensure that the learners had a firm basis of understanding, before moving to the next stage, introducing the accusative case. She moved the learners into their ZPD as she guided them through the process of identifying the accusative case, providing examples and using 'tag' questions to check that the

learners were following, before asking them to identify in English how to recognise the accusative case in a sentence.

In five out of the nine teacher turns, Teacher 3 interjected ‘tag’ questions. As already discussed in the review of the literature and Chapter 4, these invite collaboration and show concern for the learners (Holmes, 1983) through requesting belief, rather than imposing it (Cuenca, 1997), underlining the teacher’s sensitivity to the complexity of the concept and the potential difficulty that the learners were facing. The teacher also used examples of sentences and asked pupils to elucidate their understanding in English, removing a potential layer of misinterpretation, although she herself continued to use TL in the main. She frequently repeated her utterances, which allowed the learners time to follow her exposition and also to formulate a response when required to do so. The pupils responded without hesitation and the sequence followed the IRF framework of display questioning, as the teacher scaffolded their understanding through her initiations.

Classroom extract 5.10 is unusual in that analysis-type language was the only one used by the teacher; there were no shifts to other types, although it might be argued that the requests for translation could be said to belong to both analysis-type language and operational-type language. The class was deemed a top performing set; perhaps because of the level of concentration that they displayed as they worked to grasp the concept of the accusative case, which they had probably not met in the English language, Teacher 3 did not have to focus their attention in the same way that Teacher 4, for example, might have had to with her class, who, due to their perceived lesser capabilities in learning, may have lacked the motivation of the more proficient pupils in Teacher 3’s class (Fontana 1994).

Despite Teacher 3’s pupils’ apparently high levels of understanding, German cases are a complicated concept, particularly if the learners have little or no grammatical knowledge of their mother tongue with which they can compare. Teacher 3’s stepwise approach may also have accounted for the amount of analysis of language in the observed lessons.

In Classroom extract 5.10 she made no mention of the change in form of the article in the accusative case; she was only concerned that the learners should understand the concept of the different cases. The actual form they take would be discussed subsequently. Carefully planned structuring of grammar teaching is important for learners to make sense of it (Pachler & Field, 2001), and it is therefore incumbent on the teacher to ensure that learners have grasped each stage before moving to the next to ensure progression. Teacher 3's pupils identified the thoroughness with which she approached their learning in Chapter 4. They also expressed the view that knowledge about the grammar system was useful to them, as shown in Interview extract 5.3 below.

### **Interview extract 5.3**

*P10: The grammar's almost easier as well, because, well it's hard for us, but in German it's like, it's more consistent, like there's one rule for everything. In English all the rules are like different for different things.*

*P5: It almost like helps you understand your own language better for, like for any other languages.*

The difficulty of learning another grammar system was acknowledged, but the two pupils in Interview extract 5.3 commented positively on its usefulness, not only in furthering their knowledge of German, but also of their own and any other languages they might learn. Teacher 3's concentration on the structures underpinning the language, although not always easy for the learners to comprehend, appears to have had the result of a greater appreciation of language structures in general, which may have positive effects when learning a second or third foreign language (Bardel & Falk 2007).

Teachers 1 and 4 concentrated for less than a third of the time on analysis-type language than Teacher 3; this may have been due to the relatively straightforward nature of the grammar focus in their classes. In the three lessons chosen for close analysis, Teacher 1's class was consolidating the verb *aller*, asking and giving directions and learning about the topic: home area; Teacher 4's class was consolidating the daily routine and the

time, with the intention of putting the two together to produce a written piece of work. Both incorporated a pedagogical focus on analysis of language in their lessons to revise and reinforce previous learning of structures and vocabulary, before moving to practise language activities where they might shift to analysis-type if they deemed it necessary. Examples will be examined in the next section which considers the teachers' quantity of practice-type language.

The disparity between the amounts of time the teachers appear to have spent on analysis of language reflects what could be viewed as a flaw in the observation timetable; ideally the teachers should have been observed over a sustained period of time to discover the proportions of the language used in different foci in the lessons. However, this was not possible. Examination of the data seems to suggest that depending on where the class is in the course syllabus, there may be more or less emphasis on grammar. Since the focus of the study is exploratory, on techniques that teachers employ to engage adolescent learners in interaction in the TL, perhaps the imbalance of language types is less important than the TL interaction which takes place within them, stimulated by the teachers' interactional moves.

### **5.17 Practice-type Language**

Teacher 3 used relatively little practice-type language compared to the other three teachers; 9% of the time in the three lessons selected for close analysis in contrast to Teachers 2 and 4 who used practice-type language for exactly the same amount of time each, 22%, and Teacher 1 who employed it for 29% of the lessons. Perhaps Teacher 3's determination to ensure understanding of the complicated grammar concepts she was demonstrating meant a greater concentration on the presentational component of the structures before asking the pupils to practise examples. However, as has been shown above, the presentation of the grammar was still highly interactive.

The other three teachers made greater use of practice-type language, perhaps because the initial presentation of the grammar had already taken place and the teachers were now

moving the pupils towards being confident authors of the new language they were learning through exercises which required them to use it correctly in response to predictable questions. Teacher 1 spent 7% more time than Teachers 2 and 4 when the pedagogical focus was on practice language. Teacher 1 was the teacher who asked pupils to translate most, either from English to the TL and vice-versa, which may be one of the reasons for his higher level of practice-type language. Table 5.1 below shows the frequency of requests for translation for each teacher.

**Table 5.1. Frequency of translation requests**

Teacher	Translation from English to TL	Translation from TL to English	Total invitations to translate
Teacher 1	63	68	131
Teacher 2	23	15	38
Teacher 3	5	37	42
Teacher 4	68	46	114

Although Teacher 4 asked for more translations from English to the TL, overall Teacher 1 used translation most to confirm learners' understanding and practise forming expressions as authors of the language. 'Translation/transfer is a natural phenomenon and an inevitable part of second language acquisition' (Harbord, 1992: 351). It is also seen as a useful way of checking the learners' comprehension and eliciting vocabulary (Atkinson 1987, Harbord 1992). An example of the use made of invitations to translate can be seen in Classroom extract 5.11.

**Classroom extract 5.11**

*1T1: I'm going, oui. Ça c'est intéressant. (writing on board). Comment dit-on en français, I go to the pictures? B.?*

*2P1: Je vais au cinéma.*

*3T1: Bien. I'm going to the pictures? C. ?*

*4P13: Je vais au cinéma.*

- 5T1: *C'est la même chose. The same thing. Comment dit-on do you go to the swimming pool? Do you go to the swimming pool? S.?*
- 6P12: *Tu vas à la piscine.*
- 7T1: *Tu vas à la piscine? Comment dit-on are you going to the swimming pool? H.?*
- 8P14: *(Silence)*
- 9T1: *Tu vas à la piscine? Do you go to the swimming pool? Comment dit-on are you going? C.*
- 10P15: *On y va.*
- 11T1: *Non. A.?*
- 12P16: *Tu vas à la piscine.*
- 13T1: *Tu vas à la piscine. Oui. Alors c'est la même chose. (writing on board) Question – do you go, are you going, Oui? Ok. Eh, Comment dit-on he's going into town? He's going into town? Z.?*
- 14P6: *Il va en ville.*
- 15T1: *Très bien. He goes into town. H.?*
- 16P17: *Il va au centre ville.*
- 17T1: *Il va au centre ville. Il va, il va, il va.*

In Classroom extract 5.11 Teacher 1 was using requests for translation to confirm the learners' understanding of how the different parts of the paradigm of *aller* might be used to translate not only the simple present tense, but also the continuous present tense in English. He stressed the double sense that each part of the paradigm might convey, to the extent that he used English, *C'est la même chose. The same thing.*, to emphasise the different nuances of meaning, to ensure the learners' comprehension. Apart from a conversation-type aside in the first utterance, *Ça c'est intéressant.*, the type of language used may be said to be exclusively that of practice-type, conforming to the IRF framework. He also reinforced the message of the double sense by writing the two English tenses on the board for the pupils to see.

Some may argue that in Classroom extract 5.11, the pedagogical focus was on analysis of language, since the centre of attention was on the verb and its meanings. While understanding the rationale for this view, it seems clear that the learners were already familiar with the verb and Teacher 1 was moving them forward in a reinforcement practice sequence where they were called on not only to demonstrate understanding but to supply translations of examples as proof in a scaffolded practice language exchange. Nonetheless, like a great deal of the teachers' language, the complexity of the language they used to interact with the learners was such that different interpretations of its functions could be possible.

Another possible reason for Teacher 1's higher quantity of practice-type language may have been the greater number of repetitions he called for from the learners. Table 5.2 illustrates the number of times the teachers asked learners to repeat vocabulary, sentences or structures.

**Table 5.2. Requests for repetition**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Requests for repetition</b>
Teacher 1	53
Teacher 2	6
Teacher 3	10
Teacher 4	16

When the pedagogical focus was on practice, Teacher 1 incorporated repetition almost nine times more than Teacher 2, more than five times more than Teacher 3 and over three times more than Teacher 4. Repetition is considered necessary to ensure all learners' pronunciation is of the correct standard (Pachler & Field, 2001) and allows every pupil the opportunity to speak (Tannen, 2007). In addition, choral repetition means that the learners can practise new language, or familiar language in a different context, without being singled out for attention which, as adolescents, they may not welcome. It may also have been a strategy to keep the learners' attention. Examples of Teacher 1's requests for repetition can be seen in Classroom extract 5.12.



### **Classroom extract 5.12**

1T1: *Oui, la deuxième rue a gauche. Ok Pas de problème. Pas de problème. Oui? Voilà la rivière, oui ? Alors? Quelle est la direction, L.?*

2P14: *Traversez le pont.*

3T1: *Traversez le pont oui, c'est le pont. Traversez le pont. Et comment dit-on cross the river? Oui?*

4P14: *Traversez la rivière.*

5T1: *Oui, Traversez la rivière. Toute la classe, Traversez la rivière.*

6Ps: *Traversez la rivière.*

7T1: *Traversez le pont.*

8Ps: *Traversez le pont.*

9T1: *Mmmm. Quelle est la direction la? (indicating drawing) Qu'est-ce que c'est ici? E.? Traversez le pont. Qu'est-ce que c'est ici? B. ?*

10P6: *Traversez la place.*

11T1: *Très bien, la place Oui? Qu'est-ce que c'est la place en anglais?*

12Ps: *Square.*

13T1: *Oui. Traversez la place, toute la classe.*

14Ps: *Traversez la place.*

15T1: *Traversez la place, toute la classe.*

16Ps: *Traversez la place.*

The lesson from which Classroom extract 5.12 takes place had started with some work to reinforce simple directions. The focus now was on more complex directions. In fact Teacher 1, setting the scene for the exercise had indicated that the next step was *un peu plus compliqué, un peu plus difficile*. There were a series of symbols on the board, indicating directional scenarios. At the beginning of Classroom extract 5.12, Teacher 1 confirmed a learner's answer and provided general encouragement, before asking another pupil to give an appropriate direction. He also provided a cue to help her respond *Voilà la rivière, oui? Alors?* Pupil 14 answered correctly *Traversez le pont*, without taking up the cue, *la rivière* that the teacher had offered. In turn 3 Teacher 1

confirmed her correct answer but then returned to what appeared to be the original intention, that of eliciting the TL for ‘cross the *river*’. Once that had been achieved he asked the class to repeat both expressions *Traversez la rivière, Traversez le pont*, validating both responses, thus saving Pupil 14’s face. He then invited pupil 10 to use the expression as a basis for his answer, *Traversez la place* before asking the learners to repeat that. In Classroom extract 5.12 Teacher 1’s use of requests for translation both from and to the TL can also be seen as confirming the learners’ understanding of the meaning of language items.

Although the other teachers also made use of individual and choral repetition when the focus was on practising the language, it appears likely that the preponderance of requests for repetition and translation contributed to Teacher 1’s high level of practice-type language. It is also possible that a high level of requests for translation, which can be seen in Table 5.1, may have been responsible for much of Teacher 4’s 22% of practice-type language, examples of which have been seen in Classroom extracts 5.1 and 5.7.

Teachers 2 and 3 made some use of translation and repetition requests when the pedagogical focus was on practice, but in general in the interactive sequences which they initiated they tended to follow the IRF framework of more ‘traditional’ practice sequences comprising initiations in the TL, followed by the pupils’ responses to which they then offered feedback. Classroom extracts 5.13 and 5.14 provide typical examples of the practice-type language they used.

### **Classroom extract 5.13**

1T2: *Et tu as voyagé comment?*

2P19: *J’ai voyagé en voiture.*

3T2: *En voiture. A ? Tu as voyagé comment ?*

4P12: *J’ai voyagé en avion et voiture.*

5T2: *En avion et en voiture. J. ? Tu as voyagé comment ?*

6P8: *J’ai voyagé en avion.*

7T2: *Très bien. Et G, tu as voyagé comment ?*

8P6: *J'ai voyagé en avion.*

Teacher 2 conducted a practice language interactional sequence in Classroom extract 5.13 which conformed to the IRF pattern of teacher initiation, pupil response and teacher follow up. Teacher 2 confirmed pupils' answers by repeating them or praising their response. When Pupil 12 erroneously omitted a preposition, the error was recast. Perhaps through the continuous repetition of the initiatory question to each learner, her intention was to help them remember the form of the question. By using the declarative rather than the interrogative form to structure the question, it could be argued that she was making it easier for the learners to structure their response. Teacher 2's adherence to the IRF pattern in Classroom extract 5.13 has similarities to Teacher 3's use of practice-type language, although there are some differences which can be seen below in Classroom extract 5.14.

#### **Classroom extract 5.14**

1T3: *So, A. hat gesagt, ich habe einen Kleiderschrank in meinem Schlafzimmer. D. hat gesagt, ich habe ein Bett in meinem Schlafzimmer. Du bist jetzt dran.*

2P17: *Eh, ich habe eine, eine Lampe.*

3T3: *Ja, in meinem Schlafzimmer.*

4P17: *In meinem Schlafzimmer.*

5T3: *Ok, was auch? M.?*

6P18: *Em, ich habe einen Radio in mei-*

7T3: *Ein Radio, ein Radio.*

8P18: *ein Radio in meinem Schlafzimmer.*

9T3: *Ja. Was hast du in deinem Schlafzimmer zu Hause, M.?*

10P5: *Ich habe ein Doppelbett in meinem Schlafzimmer.*

11T3: *Oh, (pupils smirking, teacher smiling) sehr gut, sehr gut. Du hast es gut, du hast ein Doppelbett. Er hat es gut. Was ist das auf Englisch? Er hat es gut. Was ist das auf Englisch?*

12P7: *Em, he's lucky?*

13T3: *Ja, er hat es gut, er hat ein Doppelbett. Was hast du in deinem Schlafzimmer, L.?*

Classroom extract 5.14 is taken from a practice language interactional sequence where learners were rehearsing the use of the accusative case, by responding to a question about what they had in their bedrooms, *Was hast du in deinem Schlafzimmer zu Hause?* Teacher 3 started by summarising the two previous learners' responses before asking Pupil 17 to respond. The summary may have been designed as a prompt to Pupil 17 and possibly others who needed the help of a model answer in order to respond. Teacher 3's practice language sequence follows a similar pattern to the IRF format of Teacher 2 in Classroom extract 5.13.

In contrast to Teacher 2, who recast a learner's error, Teacher 3 explicitly corrected Pupil 18's wrong choice of gender of *Radio*, perhaps because the focus of the sequence, the use of the accusative case, could be said to be complicated in view of the fact that learners not only had to remember the accusative form but also the gender of the noun they were placing in the accusative, since each gender grouping has its own form. Teacher 3 did not repeat the learners' responses, but did provide affirmative feedback: *Ja; ok; sehr gut*. In turn 11 she shifted from practice-type language to conversation-type, commenting on Pupil 5's response *Oh ...Du hast es gut, du hast ein Doppelbett. Er hat es gut.*, before moving back to practice-type language when she asked the learners to translate what she had just said. Teacher 3's sensitivity to the other learners' reaction to pupil 5's response that he had a double bed lightened the seriousness of the practice language and injected some humour, illustrating the rapport which she appeared to share with the class.

In concluding these sections describing the teachers' use of the language types in interactional sequences during the different pedagogical foci in the lesson, it is important to underline that the examples provided above not only illustrate what may be understood by operational-type, analysis-type and practise-type language, but also

demonstrate how the teachers' TL use in all three of these categories was used to draw in the learners so that they felt able to respond readily in the TL. In the extracts above the teachers' sensitivity to the adolescents' fear of losing face is demonstrated through their careful choice of language to respond to learners' errors and to ensure that pupils were not made to feel embarrassed about responding in the TL. Their requests for translation to guarantee comprehension and repetition to ensure that all pupils rehearsed an accurate pronunciation model without singling out individuals suggest consideration for their learners' feelings. Their use of 'tag' questions, praise and politeness emphasise a collaborative ethos where mutual respect appeared fundamental in the interaction that they directed. The teachers' sensitivity towards the learners can be viewed as the thread running through the fabric of the classroom TL talk.

Perhaps the TL type which was most instrumental in establishing and consolidating an atmosphere of partnership and collaboration was conversation-type language. Shifts to conversation-type asides and interjections appeared to highlight the positive interactive relationship the teachers had with their pupils, which, although underpinned by the discipline structure which the teacher had imposed, appeared cordial. The teachers' conversation-type language also prompted the learners to choose language to respond that would communicate their meaning most appropriately, rather than as part of a predictable practice sequence. The teachers' use of conversation-type language is discussed in the next section.

### **5.18 Conversation-type Language**

As was the case with the other language types, the teachers' use of conversation-type language varied. Teacher 4's 2% was very small, compared to Teachers 1 and 3 (7% and 10%, respectively) and Teacher 2 whose 37% usage of conversation-type language was almost twice that of the other three combined. The following section seeks to present explanations for the variance between its use by the teachers and provide illustrative examples of conversation-type sequences which demonstrate further the manner in which the teachers' TL engaged the learners, so that they appeared willing to respond.

Teacher 4 used little conversation-type TL proportionate to the other teachers; it is possible that due to their low level of proficiency and her perceived need to keep the learners focused she tried not to deviate from the purpose of the lesson. As explained in an earlier section where the amount of TL she used is discussed, she allowed the learners to engage with her in English occasionally. Although it may appear somewhat paradoxical, her view was that, by allowing a break from the TL from time to time, the learners actually produced more TL due to the limited nature of their attention span which needed regular ‘time out’ periods before returning to the task in hand.

When faced with referential questions in conversation-type language, it is perhaps to be expected that learners may have difficulty in formulating what they want to say and resort to the mother tongue. Teacher 2, whose class was mixed ability, when faced with learners’ responses in English during conversation-type sequences, in contrast to Teacher 4, tended to stay in role as a TL speaker. An example of the kind of ‘bilingual’ dialogue that occasionally took place in her classroom can be seen in Classroom extract 5.15, when the teacher digressed from a practice language sequence on holidays which was designed to reinforce the perfect tense.

**Classroom extract 5.15**

*1T2: Tu es allé à la plage?*

*2P1: Nuh!*

*3T2: A Portobello?*

*4P2: Portobello!*

*5P3: We did.*

*6T2: Oui? à la plage?*

*7P3: Me and S.*

*8T2: Et tu as fait la natation? Ohhh.*

*9P3: Yeah, no, ‘cos there was jelly fish. Actually I did go in and then I thought, Nah there’s jelly fish and I went out.*

10T2: *En français, il y avait des méduses.*

11P3: *Méduses*

12T2: *Des méduses – sont dangereux. Ça pique.*

13P3: *Oui.*

14P2: *It stings.*

15T2: *Oui, ça pique. Ah. Et à Portobello il y avait beaucoup de personnes qui faisait le bronzage?*

16P3: *Aye.*

17T2: *Oui?*

18P3: *Yeah it was roasting.*

19T2: *Il a fait très chaud. Alors, qu'est-ce que tu as fait?*

In Classroom extract 5.15 above and some other similar ones which were recorded in Teacher 2's classroom, although the pupils' responses were in English, they seemed almost unaware that they were answering questions put to them in another language. This would appear to indicate that the teacher's use of the TL was seen by the pupils as natural in the classroom and even if they were unable or unwilling to formulate replies themselves in the TL, they demonstrated complete understanding of what the teacher was saying through their answers.

The way that Teacher 2 developed the dialogue from Pupil 3's response to her initiation in turn 8, *Yeah, no, 'cos there was jelly fish. Actually I did go in and then I thought, Nah there's jelly fish and I went out.*, firstly by providing the French term for jellyfish: *En français, il y avait des méduses*, then extending the talk by providing information about jellyfish: *Des méduses – sont dangereux. Ça pique*, appeared similar to the way an adult would talk to a much younger child, and seemed to contribute to a less formal exchange. There was no evidence of IRF type questioning; although Teacher 2 controlled the interaction, her contributions were contingent on the learners' unpredictable responses and because they answered in English, there was little evaluation of their answers, apart from turn 15, when the teacher confirmed pupil 2's translation of *Ça pique*.

Nor does Goffman's production format (1981) provide a satisfactory account of the pupils' language in Classroom extract 5.15. The learners were clearly demonstrating understanding, but did not produce any TL apart from turn 11 when Pupil 3 repeated the new vocabulary item and again in turn 13 when he affirmed Teacher 2's statement. If Goffman's format is used to describe his TL utterances, he would be classified as an animator, simply repeating what the teacher had said. However, his obvious understanding of Teacher 2's questions and statements indicate that he should not be classified at such a low level. Similarly, if analysis of Classroom extract 5.15 draws on Wadensjö's reception format (1998), it is clear that the understanding the learners display cannot permit their roles to be described as reporter or recapitulator. They are listening with a view to responding, although they do not or cannot do so in the TL. The existence of these 'bilingual' exchanges illustrates again the 'messiness' of classroom interaction and the difficulty it presents in terms of analysis.

Code switching cannot adequately describe the dialogue in Classroom extract 5.15, as it implies both parties to the exchange shifting to another language. Although code switching was evident when Teacher 4 accepted and responded to her learners' initiations in English, Teacher 2 remained resolutely in her TL persona. Perhaps one approach is to identify exchanges such as these, where pupils display obvious understanding, but do not respond in the TL as 'dual language communicative discourse' and the pupils' responses as 'showing evidence of understanding'.

Perhaps Teacher 2's intention in continuing to use the TL was to draw the learners in so that they started using it themselves; pupil 3 started to repeat the new vocabulary item, *méduse*, then responded in the TL, *Oui*, to the teacher's statement in turn 12 before returning to English which his classmate used throughout. Classroom extract 5.15 also demonstrates how the teacher transmits her interest in the pupils on a social rather than narrowly pedagogic level, drawing the learners in to a collaborative interaction, where the language is used for real purposes, even though in this case it could be argued that



the learners were only deploying their listening comprehension. Although in Classroom extract 5.15 the learners used English almost exclusively, at other times Teacher 2's persistence had the effect of drawing learners into using the TL as can be seen in Classroom extract 5.16, when she interrupted a practice language sequence on pupils' hobbies to shift language type to a conversation-type exchange with a pupil.

### **Classroom extract 5.16**

1T2: *Quel est ton passetemps préféré ?*

2P8: *J'aime le shopping.*

3T2: *Le shopping aussi. En France J. a aimé le shopping. Elle a acheté des vêtements G., hein? Et le maquillage. Elle était très contente. Elle a trouvé les marques Nivea. Elle a dépensé beaucoup d'argent. G., tu n'as pas aimé le shopping en France.*

4P4: *Oui.*

5T2: *Oui? Qu'est-ce que tu as acheté?*

6P4: *What did I buy?*

7T2: *Oui.*

8P4: *Un pullover Lacoste.*

9T2: *Un pullover Lacoste.*

10P4: *Un sac.*

11T2: *Un sac.*

12P4: *How do you say a ring?*

13T2: *Une bague.*

14P4: *Une bague.*

15T2: *Une bague, OK. Quel est ton passetemps préféré?*

Teacher 2 had asked the stimulus question *Quel est ton passetemps préféré?* to a number of pupils in the group. All had responded by naming a hobby or, in the case of Pupil 8 that they liked the hobby, *J'aime le shopping*. In the third turn, Teacher 2 repeated her answer. This may have been to provide positive feedback as part of the IRF framework;

however, she also made reference to the fact that two of the previous pupils' responses had been the same, *Le shopping aussi*, which could be said to be more in the style of conversation-type language, as a comment on the learners' preferences. Teacher 2 then told the group about one of the pupils who had taken part in the exchange visit to France and what she had bought, before directing a comment in turn 3 to Pupil 4, who had also been on the exchange visit, to the effect that he had not enjoyed shopping, *G., tu n'as pas aimé le shopping en France*. Pupil 4 responded in the TL as principal, contradicting Teacher 2's assumption and taking the initiative so that the subsequent TL exchange appeared 'natural' after the teacher posed a referential question to which the pupil responded with the required information.

Although she repeated Pupil 4's answers, which some may argue is the positive third turn evaluation, it could be that she was merely repeating his answers as an encouragement to continue, in much the same way as parents and care-givers may do. Such repetition also signals attention to the learner's responses with a view to establishing common ground (Clark & Bernicot, 2008). It was Pupil 4 who moved the 'conversation' on by taking the initiative, as he listed the things he bought until the teacher brought the conversation-type sequence to a close by posing the stimulus question to another pupil. Although he had to ask for reassurance and help in turns five and twelve, Pupil 4 appeared to have no intention of continuing the exchange in anything other than the TL.

Classroom extract 5.16, and others like it, shows Teacher 2 recognising the fact that the pupils have identities other than merely learners of ML. By referring to a past shared experience, she was alluding to the common ground she shared with the learners while appearing to make it clear that she was aware of their interests and keen to discover more information about them. Firth and Wagner (1997, 2007) draw attention to different social contexts in which language is learned. Although the pupils in this study apparently did most, if not all, of their language learning in the ML classroom, perhaps the evocation of a different social context by the teacher had the effect of allowing

learners not only to use the TL meaningfully to transmit personal information, but also to follow the conventions of such an exchange: initiating, agreeing and disagreeing, turn taking and collaborating to construct meaning. Although the conversation-type exchanges formed a small part of the lessons and were brief, their frequency throughout the lessons meant that the pupils were exposed to TL used for 'real' purposes.

Teacher 2 made the most use of conversation-type language, 37% of the classroom interaction, compared to Teacher 1's 7% and Teacher 3's 10%. Her lack of analysis-type language has already been explained; it is possible that because she did not specifically teach grammar in the three lessons selected for close analysis, her focus was on reinforcing the language through practice language sequences which lent themselves more to conversation-type development.

Another factor which may go some way to explaining Teacher 2's greater use of conversation-type language was the way the class was organised; the pupils were divided into three groups which worked through a series of activities, changing activity approximately every twenty minutes. This meant that while two groups were working on reading, listening or writing exercises, the other worked with her on practice language sequences. The rotation of groups and activities meant that the teacher repeated her speaking practice three times, following a circular rather than the linear progression through the lesson that the other three generally employed. The result was that she therefore had three times as many opportunities to engage the learners in conversation-type TL in shifts from practice sequences, as she repeated the practice language sequence with each group.

Teachers 1 and 4 tended to shift to conversation-type language more with the whole class, although they also introduced it when working with groups. Like Teacher 2 they interjected it, seemingly at random intervals, as they used learners' responses to extend an exchange through referential questioning to request further information about what had been said. An example from Teacher 1's lesson where the pupils were working on a

practice language exercise on their home area can be seen below in Classroom extract 5.17.

**Classroom extract 5.17**

1T1: *Tu habites dans quel quartier à Edimbourg? Alors U., tu habites dans quel quartier à Edimbourg?*

2P2: *Eh, j'habite dans le Fife. J'habite à Aberdour.*

3T1: *A Aberdour! Ah! Tu n'habites pas à Edimbourg alors, très bien. Tu viens à l'école par le train tous les jours ?*

4P2: *Non, mon père, em, dans la voiture.*

5T1: *Il travaille à Edimbourg, ton père ?*

6P2: *Oui.*

7T1: *Ah. C'est intéressant. Et toi K.? Tu habites dans quel quartier d'Edimbourg?*

In Classroom extract 5.17 Teacher 1 was conducting what appeared to be a fairly routine practice language sequence, when Pupil 2 produced an unexpected response in turn 2. Although he used the same form of the verb as other pupils had done previously, Pupil 2 clarified his answer further, as principal of his utterance, to emphasis that he did not live in the catchment area of the school, *Eh, j'habite dans le Fife. J'habite à Aberdour.* Teacher 1's surprised reaction in turn 3 and his follow up referential questions, which appeared to signify genuine interest, cannot be explained by the IRF framework, as there is no evaluative third move, only a request for further information. Teacher 1 did say *très bien* but it is unclear whether he was praising Pupil 2 for his response or using the expression as an observational comment. In turn 4, Pupil 2 continued to respond as principal, taking responsibility for communication. Despite not including a verb in his response, his meaning was clear and Teacher 1 did not correct his utterance, preferring to pose a further referential question, to which Pupil 2 responded in the affirmative.

By not drawing attention to Pupil 2's error in turn 4 Teacher 1 was giving the learner 'permission to use the language with less than perfect performance' (Oxford, 1999:67).

Learners learn best when they expect success (Dörnyei, 2001) and the clear understanding of the message and the positive feedback conveyed by Teacher 1 could be instrumental in developing Pupil 2's confidence in being able to communicate meaning. Teacher 1's closing comment, *C'est intéressant.*, before he moved the stimulus question to the next pupil, also provided positive affective attention, indicating the value placed on the pupil's contribution.

Teacher 1 displayed an interest in the pupils and a concern for their face that were evident in all the teachers' classrooms and which have been seen in extracts from their classroom TL interaction in this chapter and Chapter 4. Although they used a number of strategies to maintain an atmosphere of trust and collaboration, such as tag questions, insistence on politeness and mutual respect, sensitive error correction and the establishment of group norms, perhaps the shift to conversation-type language could be described as the most effective strategy the teachers used to engage the learners in collaborative interaction because of the interest they showed.

Examples of types of language shifts have been demonstrated throughout this chapter, as the teachers incorporated language which was typical of one pedagogic focus of the lesson into another. This seemed to be done intuitively as teachers focused learners' attention or acted in response to language the learners had produced. Conversation-type language did not seem to have been a planned interactive strategy in the teachers' lessons; it usually arose out of one of the pedagogical foci, most often as a result of pupils' utterances in practice language interactional sequences, and demonstrated a seemingly natural interest in the learners as people, rather than merely language learners.

The teachers' shifts to conversation-type language were generally brief and because of its prevalence in practice language sequences could be compared to 'the filling in the sandwich' of practice language, as the teachers deviated from the routine of display questions and answers to referential questions, as their interests determined, before returning to practice language. In most sandwiches, the filling is what prompts consumer

choice, not the bread, but the bread acts to support the filling and contributes to the overall gastronomic experience. If the bread is not of good quality, then the sandwich will be spoiled. In the same way the sound grammatical underpinning which has been rehearsed by the learners as authors in practice-type language complements and provides a firm foundation for conversation-type language, which, as the pupils move towards taking part in a more ‘natural’ interaction as principals of their utterances, is the more interesting part of the interactional ‘sandwich’.

### **5.19 The Multiple Functions of the Third Turn**

The extracts above which exemplify language type shifts to conversation-type language illustrate the difficulty of trying to fit all the classroom TL exchanges into an IRF formula, particularly when the shift towards conversation-type language took place. For the IRF format to fit there have to be instances of all three moves and on many occasions one was lacking, usually the third, which provides feedback, although some may argue that feedback was implicit in the teachers’ re-initiation moves.

Language shifts which the teachers employed occurred as they reacted in terms of evincing interest in the pupils’ answers, by asking follow up ‘conversation-type’ questions. The teachers also used the third turn to react to the pupils’ responses which indicated that they had not understood, which could have been silence or a baffled look, by rephrasing or breaking down the original question/prompt into more manageable unit of understanding for the learners (Lee, 2007) as they did with instructions, examples of which were discussed in Chapter 4.

Lee posits that the ‘third turn’ by the teacher is far more complex than merely giving feedback to the learner, due to the variety of functions that it fulfils:

‘the third turn is an extraordinary place that brings into view a vast array of interpretive works and contingent methods of actions by the teacher as she acts on the students’ second turns. The teacher carries out complex analytic work, estimating what students know and what they do not know, discovering particular identities of their students and their problems, finding and

repairing what becomes problematic in the second turns, steering the discourse in particular directions and exploring alternative interactional trajectories in the course of action.’ (Lee 2007: 126).

It is also contingent on the second turn response by the learner, so will not necessarily be predictable. The teacher has to be able to react in a manner which allows the learner to use the language that s/he knows to maintain a meaningful exchange. This may mean providing the learner with the means to respond, for example, a menu of options or questions which can be answered satisfactorily with a yes/no. A lot of what the teachers were doing in the class appeared to be engaging the learners in the TL by building up their motivation to answer, even when they lacked the language to reply fully or fluently. IRF may simplify ways of understanding some classroom discourse, but cannot adequately describe the complex realities of the language used in the shifts to conversation-type language that took place as the learners were drawn towards taking responsibility for their part in continuing the TL exchanges.

### **5.20 Summary**

TL interaction in the classroom is designed to prepare the learners to take part in interpersonal communication in the target culture at a later date. The classroom cannot replicate the target culture outside it, where the learners will be exposed to constant unexpected stimuli from a variety of sources in a variety of social situations. However, through their use of shifts to conversation-type language in the third turn, the teachers provided the learners with opportunities to use the language ‘for real’.

The findings discussed in Chapter 4 and this chapter could be said to have provided a backdrop to the more fine-grained analysis which will take place in Chapter 6. Chapter 4 examined the way the teachers used TL to create and maintain an atmosphere of collaboration, while staying in control of all that took place within the classroom. Their control was seen as a ‘benign dictatorship’, approved of by the learners. The intensity of the interaction was underlined by the brisk pace that the teachers imposed and the quantity of questions put to the learners.

Narrowing the focus from the organisational level to look more closely at the teachers' language, this chapter has considered the amount of TL that the teachers used when interacting with the pupils and the breakdown into particular language 'types' associated with the different pedagogical foci in the lesson. Careful sequencing of information and instructions (operational), a clear focus on the grammar underpinning the language (analysis of language) and controlled practice of the language (practice) were the three pedagogical foci identified whose complementarity in developing understanding of the TL ensured that learners could feel equipped to use it as a means of communication. The language types associated with each pedagogical focus were not fixed; operational-type language in particular often featured in interactional sequences with a different pedagogical focus and there was evidence of shifts from one language 'type' to another during different pedagogical foci in all the teachers' lessons, requiring the learners to remain alert to the teachers' language. Shifts to another language type - conversation-type language which appeared to have no pedagogical focus, stemming from the teachers' interest in pupils' responses - appeared particularly effective in engaging the learners.

Woven through the chapter are illustrations of the teachers' TL moves which highlight their skill in furthering a classroom ethos in which learners seem prepared to co-operate in communicating in the TL. The fear of adolescent learners of speaking out in class has already been noted (Poulton et al., 1997). In a ML classroom, where the language they are expected to use is one in which they are barely proficient, the teachers' use of the TL in lowering the learners' affective filter (Krashen, 1985), so that they feel secure, is crucial to their TL development.

Scoping down to a narrower focus yet on the teachers' TL, Chapter 6 will consider the teachers' TL in conversation-type language, not only that which did not require an oral response from the learners but also examining strategies that the teachers used to encourage pupils to interact using the TL, in conversation-type sequences where the



provision of cues helped them to respond. Chapter 6 will also examine in more detail the way topic shifts within conversation-type language gave pupils preparation for using the TL for real communication.

## **Chapter 6 Pupil Positioning: Conversation-type language**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter 4 considered the way the teachers established a collaborative atmosphere in the classroom with the aim of creating a secure and supportive environment where learners contributed readily. In Chapter 4 different pedagogical foci of the lesson, the concomitant TL language types used in interactional sequences within them and another type of language, conversation-type, were identified in the lessons selected for close analysis. Chapter 5 examined the relative amounts of TL used by the teachers and their pupils before looking more closely at each language type, its proportional use by each teacher in the lessons and the contribution each type made to the development of pupils' TL communicative competence. Analysis of the data showed that the teachers employed a mix of TL types throughout the lessons, as they shifted to move the talk from predictable patterns to apparently more spontaneous interaction, which demanded that the learners focus on understanding and communicating meaning.

As explained in Chapter 3, in order to analyse the data effectively a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods has had to be used. The findings considered in Chapters 4 and 5 reflect this mix of analytical approaches. In this chapter, where the focus on the teachers' TL is narrower, the predominant approach taken is qualitative, as functions of the TL the teachers introduced in the language type shifts are subjected to a fine-grained analysis, particularly that of conversation-type language.

Chapter 5 discussed the way the teachers might use the 'third turn' to shift from a predictable TL exchange to a more conversation-type interactional sequence where learners were expected to respond to unpredictable referential questioning. This chapter looks closely at the conversation-type language the teachers used and how it reinforced the collaborative atmosphere by changing the focus for the learners from practice of the language, responding to display questioning, to using it to respond to unpredictable referential questions to communicate information hitherto unknown to the teacher in the TL. Close examination of the TL the teachers and pupils used will also highlight specific

strategies the teachers used to support the pupils in their use of the TL to communicate their meaning through the use of anticipatory response cues which enabled them to take an active part in the conversation-type interactional sequences the teachers initiated. This chapter illustrates the way the teachers exploited the social, as well as the pedagogical, nature of the classroom community.

The purpose of interaction between teachers and learners in the classroom is understood to be pedagogical; however, it could be argued that the role of interaction on a 'social' level could be considered instrumental in assisting learners' development of confidence in communicating in the TL. The language that the teachers employed in conversation-type sequences could be said to have encouraged the learners to use TL for the purpose of 'real' communication in preparation for talking outside the classroom in society. 'Social' could also be viewed as 'sociable', where an interactive experience was created in which the tightly bound definition of roles of teacher and learner appeared less obvious, due to the involvement of both parties to the dialogue in constructing meaning.

## **6.2 Discoursal Follow-up**

The majority of interaction during the three pedagogical foci identified in the lessons of the four teachers in the study took place within the IRF framework (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975, Sinclair & Brazil, 1982), that is, teacher initiation, usually by posing a display question, followed by pupil response, to which the teacher provided feedback, either positively through praise or repetition or negatively through recasting the erroneous response or requesting clarification. The interaction in the teachers' classrooms reflects research findings which suggest that up to 70% of classroom interaction follows this model (Nassaji & Wells, 2000). If Goffman's (1981) and Wadensjö's (1998) participation frameworks are applied to the IRF model of interaction, it could be said that pupils listen to the teachers' initiations as recapitulators in order to act as authors of the language, demonstrating that they can manipulate required structures effectively.

However, as noted in Chapters 4 and 5, conversation-type sequences appeared to take place in a less explicitly pedagogical context, where the pupils did not appear to be viewed as ‘learners’ but individuals with ‘other potentially relevant social identit[ies]’ (Firth and Wagner, 2007: 760). In the third turn the teachers in the study appeared to use the discoursal model, which is described by Cullen as:

qualitatively different from [the] evaluative role: the purpose is to pick up students’ contributions ... in order to sustain and develop a dialogue between the teacher and the class: the emphasis is on content rather than form. (2002: 120)

The use by the teacher of discoursal follow-up (DF) means that the learner is faced with referential questioning which is likely to be unpredictable as the teacher concentrates on developing the message presented by the learner, with less regard to the correct formulation of the linguistic structure of the utterance. In DF moves, there is little or no correction of the learner’s utterances, although teachers may reformulate the pupil’s response to make it more linguistically acceptable (Cullen, 2002). During DF conversation-type sequences, the learners listen to the teacher’s TL initiations as responders (Wadensjö, 1998) so that they can answer in the role of principal (Goffman, 1981), taking responsibility for the meaning they convey in the TL. As a result, the teacher is able to give all learners in the class the opportunity to hear the TL used for more ‘natural’ communication, possibly signalling to them that the content of what is being discussed is more important at this point than the way the message was formulated. It also communicates that the teacher is interested in what the pupils have to say on a social level, recognising their ‘other’ roles in society.

Classroom extract 6.1, which occurred during a pedagogical focus on practice in a lesson on free time and hobbies, illustrates the non-IRF, discoursal nature of the interaction between teacher and pupil, when Teacher 2 introduced a conversation-type sequence.

### Classroom extract 6.1

1T2: OK, L., <i>quel est ton passe-temps préféré et pourquoi?</i>	I
2P7: <i>Le badminton.</i>	R
3T2: <i>Le badminton aussi?</i>	Comment
<i>Tu fais partie de l'équipe?</i>	I/DF
4P7: <i>Oui.</i>	R
5T2: <i>Le club? [the after-school badminton club]</i>	I/DF
6P7: <i>Oui.</i>	R
7T2: <i>Combien de personnes participent au club à [school]?</i>	I/DF
8P7: <i>Eh, vingt.</i>	R
9T2: <i>Et quels professeurs? Monsieur D. et ...</i>	I/DF
10P7: <i>Monsieur D.</i>	R
11T2: <i>Monsieur D., il est seul.</i>	Comment
<i>Il joue bien?</i>	I/DF
12P7: <i>Oui, assez.</i>	R
13T2: <i>Assez, oui, OK.</i>	F

In Classroom extract 6.1 Teacher 2 posed the initiating question she had been asking round the group *Quel est ton passe-temps préféré et pourquoi?* Pupil 7's response *Le badminton.*, echoed that of two of the other pupils. In turn 3 therefore, Teacher 2's first response *Le badminton aussi?* could be viewed as a positive evaluation; however, it appeared to be a conversation-type comment, such as a parent or friend might make when they discover something in common with the first speaker. Teacher 2 then conducted the rest of the exchange without providing any explicit feedback to Pupil 7 until the last turn, 13, when she repeated his response, *Assez, oui, OK.* Even this utterance is ambiguous, as it could be considered not as a comment on the quality of Pupil 7's response, but on the information he has provided.

The dialogue in Classroom extract 6.1 occurs within a dialogic, rather than triadic (Lemke, 1990) or IRF, framework. Teacher 2 posed a series of questions to which the

learner had to answer using TL which he had not prepared and which the teacher did not appear to evaluate. The learner's answers were short; after the first two conversation-type initiations he merely answered using the affirmative in turns 4 and 6, *Oui*, and his responses to the next three were minimal, however, his understanding appeared to be clear from his responses. In turn 9 when Teacher 2 asked for information about the teachers in charge of the badminton club she used elicitation, *Monsieur D. et ...* perhaps to elucidate what she had asked and in turn 11 she amplified Pupil 7's response *Monsieur D., il est seul*. This may have been to give him and the class access to the vocabulary necessary to communicate that the teacher was alone. The teachers' use of amplification of pupils' responses will be considered in a later section of this chapter. Additionally, Teacher 2 as a 'participatory listener' might have been 'ratifying' Pupil 7's contribution (Tannen, 2007: 59) through her repetition and amplification of his response.

Classroom extract 6.1 demonstrates how the teacher's use of DF meant that the interactional sequence she initiated tended to follow a 'natural' progression instead of the rather static unnatural manner in which it might have developed if the IRF framework was used and each pupil contribution evaluated before the next teacher initiation took place. Using the IRF model, the exchange between teacher and pupil is always backward-looking, as the teacher considers and evaluates the response that the pupil has presented before then moving on. DF offers the learners the opportunity to take part in conversation-type language exchanges, which the teacher continually moves forward by posing a series of referential questions, each one deriving from the pupil's response to the previous one. Crucial to the development of learners' communicative competence is the development of their confidence in being able to use the TL outside the classroom (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The teachers' non-evaluative position in the conversation-type sequences could be said to provide a form of implicit positive feedback to pupils on their ability to sustain a similar type of exchange in the 'real world' outside the classroom with the result that they become more confident and motivated (Dörnyei, 2001).

The shift to conversation-type language could be viewed as beneficial not just for the participants, but also for the rest of the class, the ‘ratified participants’ or ‘overhearers’ (Goffman, 1981:131). The teachers usually performed the shift when talking specifically to one pupil, at the same time addressing their remarks to the whole class. This technique was mentioned by Teacher 1 who described it as a strategy designed to keep the rest of the class interested.

### **Interview extract 6.1**

*T1: I mean, while you’re doing this you tend to have one person and how do you keep the others interested? So you, you’ve got to try to get them and in a way they’re vaguely interested, I think, the others, because they want to see how’s he going to get out of this, or if he’s managed it, you know, you would hope that the other kids will kind of think, oh, oh yes and they can, you know, use that to help their own linguistic skills.*

Teacher 1 was aware of the need to keep the whole class focused. His view was that listeners might gain from hearing one of their peers use the TL to communicate effectively when faced with unpredictable questions. Research into children’s acquisition of their first language found that two-and-a-half-year-old children were equally able to pick up verbs and nouns when they were overhearers as when directly addressed (Akhtar et al., 2001). Although the circumstances are different in a ML classroom with adolescent learners, it could be that the pupils, as overhearers, are learning from other pupils’ interaction with the teacher. Ellis et al. (1994) found that for those who merely listened to interaction, as opposed to those actually involved in it, the learning outcomes were the same. The pupils themselves mentioned in interviews that they learned from other pupils’ TL talk in the classroom.

### **Interview extract 6.2**

*P5: It’s probably not as much as you learn from the teacher but you do learn stuff from other people. If you hear them making mistakes you’ll know not to make it yourself.*

*P2: You know how to pronounce it if you don't quite know how to do it ...*

*P3: It's good [listening to others in the class speaking French], because sometimes they remember things that you've forgotten and then you remember them.*

The pupils' views appear to show that they are aware of the need to hear the language spoken in order to reinforce their learning, supporting Ohta's (2001) claim that teachers when interacting with learners have two audiences in mind, the 'addressees' and the 'auditors' (p.137). Ohta also underlines the importance for the auditors of staying alert, as they may be next to be questioned, a feature of the interactive process in the teachers' classrooms identified by learners in Chapter 4. The awareness of the necessity of paying conscious attention to the interaction, even though they might not be playing an active part in it themselves, could have been as a result of the teachers' language type shifts, which occurred without warning. The next section considers another possible reason for the attention the learners paid to the interaction, that of relevance.

### **6.3 Relevance**

There is the possibility that the learners were genuinely interested in what the teacher and their peers had to say in the conversation-type exchanges, particularly if they were of the opinion that the topic was of relevance to them. Perceived relevance is considered a decisive factor in pupil motivation (Oxford & Shearin 1994, Chambers 1999, Dörnyei 2001, Thanasoulas 2002). Classroom extract 6.2 illustrates the way that Teacher 2's TL drew in the learners as she shifted language-type from a practice language sequence on adjectives to conversation-type talk about the prospective visit from the French partner school.

#### **Classroom extract 6.2**

*1T2: Fantastique ok, excellent. D'autres adjectives pourquoi tu aimes? C'est excellent, autre chose? Commence avec 's', c'est ?*

*2P5: Super.*

*3T2: Super, c'est bon, c'est bien oui, autre chose?*



- 4P6: *Drôle.*
- 5T2: *C'est drôle oui, ou c'est amusant ou c'est drôle. Excellent. Oui? Parce que c'est? (writing on board) c'est chouette. En France ils ont dit chouette et en anglais c'est 'sound', ça c'est ce que vous dites, hein? Sound?*
- 6P4: *What does 'de accord' mean again?*
- 7T2: *D'accord.*
- 8P6: *Ok.*
- 9T2: *Ok, et en France ils disent ok.*
- 10P3: *Formidable.*
- 11T2: *Formidable, oh E. a été en France donc ils disent en France formidable.*
- 12P3: *Eh, oui.*
- 13T2: *Oui ok, ok, voilà.*
- 14P2: *What in France?*
- 15P3: *Oui.*
- 16P9: *Super.*
- 17T2: *Super ils disent, ok . J'ai entendu aussi c'est cool, c'est cool.*
- 18P2: *When do they come over?*
- 19P6: *The eighth.*
- 20T2: *Oui, le huit juin.*
- 21P15: *I can't wait to see them again.*
- 22T2: *Oui? A., les filles, les filles françaises sont jolies.*
- 23P2: *Oh la la!*
- 24T2: *Attention, la correspondante de D., elle s'appellent M., oui. Elle est jolie. Ok, vous voyez la? Maintenant on va continuer vos paragraphes avec des adjectives, oui?*

In the lesson from which Classroom extract 6.2 is taken the learners were working on a piece of writing on 'free time' which would serve as a basis for a speaking assessment. Teacher 2 had stopped the class and asked them to think of adjectives to describe their hobbies. As with all the talk sequences which took place in the teachers' classrooms, the

teachers' TL performed a variety of functions, so although the extract was chosen to illustrate how the teacher prompted learners' interest in relevant subject matter, there is also strong evidence in the contributions of the learners and the teacher - typical of the classroom interaction of the teachers in the study - of the collaborative approach to learning that the teacher supported in this class, which will be discussed first.

The talk sequence in Classroom extract 6.2 conformed to the IRF model in turns 1 to 5 as Teacher 2 sought responses through display questions and provided positive evaluations of the learners' answers. In turn 5 she referred to the exchange visit to France that some of the pupils had made in May as she drew their attention to an adjective she had heard the exchange partners using. This appeared to remind Pupil 4 of an expression he had heard and for which he asked the meaning, *What does 'de accord' mean again?* Teacher 2 corrected his pronunciation with a recast, *D'accord*, while Pupil 6 supplied the translation, *Ok*, indicating the collaborative nature of the class where she felt able to provide the answer. Teacher 2 confirmed the translation and related it too to the French exchange, *Ok, et en France ils disent ok*. Pupil 3's contribution in turn 10 was also related by the teacher to the exchange, *E. a été en France donc ils disent en France formidable*. The ethos of collaboration could be said to be further borne out by Pupil 3's confirmation of Teacher 2's reference to the exchange in turn 12 *Eh, oui* and again in turn 15 when she answered Pupil 2's question in the affirmative, taking on the role that the teacher would normally have.

By referring to the French exchange Teacher 2 was restating the 'common ground' she shared with the learners, linking back to a shared experience, which recalled an apparently social rather than pedagogical event which implicitly underlined their group cohesiveness (Dörnyei 2001). Although the sequence occurred within a practice language phase until turn 17 and up till then could be said to conform to the language type associated with practice-type language, Teacher 2's third turn appeared almost conversation-type as her positive evaluations of the learners' responses included personal accounts of the language she and some of the pupils had heard while in France.

It could be said that Teacher 2's repeated references to the French exchange created a 'contextual resource' for the learners (Mercer, 2000: 44) where the adjectives were seen within the wider frame of 'real' communication and therefore more relevant for the learners. The pupils seemed keen to contribute and even those who had not taken part in the exchange to France were interested in the impending visit of the French pupils. The talk shifted to conversation-type language in turns 18, 19 and 21 when the pupils lapsed into English as they discussed the arrival date of the exchange partners, although Teacher 2 continued to use the TL, *Oui, le huit juin.*, before directing a humorous comment in turn 22 to Pupil 2, *A., les filles, les filles françaises sont jolies.* Pupil 2's response in turn 23 in French, *Oh la la!* developed the humorous sequence, to which Teacher 2 responded with a further comment *Attention, la correspondante de D., elle s'appelle M., oui. Elle est jolie.*, before re-focusing the learners' attention on the task from which they had departed.

All the teachers in the study made use of humour and often drew the learners into humorous exchanges where both parties contributed to the banter in the TL. It is important to acknowledge the importance of an atmosphere where teacher and learners felt sufficiently stress-free to take part in humorous repartee. The fact that it also happened in the TL appears to demonstrate the way the teachers had succeeded in creating a collaborative atmosphere where learners appeared to want to use the TL for socially motivated purposes, in this case playing their part in the banter. In the same way that the teacher recognised the pupils as people other than language learners, it appeared that through the use of TL for more 'natural' communicative purposes, they also recognised that the teacher was made up of more than the classroom persona. This was conveyed in the interviews, a quote from which will be seen in Interview extract 6.4. The use of humour will be discussed in the next section of this chapter, where the establishment and maintenance of collaborative relationships in the classroom is considered.

#### **6.4 The Social Functions of conversation-type Language: Establishing and Maintaining Collaborative Relationships**

The teachers displayed a great deal of sensitivity to the learners; it was rare that they used negative language for discipline, preferring to use positive re-focusing strategies, as seen in Chapter 4. They invariably used polite language, evidence of which can be seen in almost all the extracts from the transcripts in Chapters 4 and 5. Also evident in the transcripts was the concern they showed for the learners' face. The pupils, when interviewed, appeared to appreciate the efforts the teachers made to create a supportive and collaborative atmosphere, as can be seen in Interview extract 6.3.

##### **Interview extract 6.3**

*P11: Though he's always firm, he's never like, he's never like, pessimistic and he doesn't use sarcasm.*

*P8: I've never actually seen him raise his voice.*

*P4: It's really relaxed in the class and everybody's just like, he doesn't need to shout.*

The pupils in Interview extract 6.3 underlined the control that the teacher exercised, *he's always firm*, but also the positive atmosphere which he established in the classroom, *he's never like, pessimistic and he doesn't use sarcasm.*, possibly referring to their recognition of the sensitivity displayed by the teacher towards their feelings in a subject area where it is easy to become anxious about making mistakes when speaking in the TL (Horwitz et al., 1986). The use of the word *relaxed* appears to express the affective atmosphere in the classroom, but not the pace of learning, because pupils had also made it clear in the interviews that the pace was brisk and that they were kept busy, evidence of which has been seen in Chapter 4 and also in the three minute extracts, analysed in Chapter 4.

The teachers all communicated information about their lives outside the classroom. Teacher openness provides a model for social skills (Elias et al., 1997) and therefore teacher talk about personal matters might have encouraged a collaborative atmosphere

where learners felt able to talk about themselves more readily. An example of teacher openness was seen in Chapter 4 in Classroom extract 4.3, as an illustration of the kind of simple TL the teachers used, when Teacher 2 described a visit to a luxury hotel with her sister and in Classroom extract 4.16 which was used to illustrate the kind of conversation-type asides the teachers made, without expecting a response from the learners apart from evidence of understanding. Even rare instances of openness set a different tone, where the boundaries between the roles of teacher and learners could be said to have been reduced and the pupils gained a more three dimensional view of their teacher as someone who had a life outside the classroom.

Pupils accepted that they would provide their own personal information in the TL in class and the trust they displayed in the teacher's discretion has been seen in Interview extract 4.10. Interview extract 6.4 provides evidence of their views on teachers offering details of personal information.

#### **Interview extract 6.4**

*P10: I like it; you get to know them better. It's more interesting.*

*P11: He's an interesting person.*

These pupils' perception of information about the teacher being interesting was echoed by pupils of the other teachers. Disclosure of personal details is viewed as reducing the barrier between teacher and learners, although revealing too much information may not be desirable (Bryant, 2003). The teachers in the study, perhaps because of their obvious control, appeared to have judged the amount of information they communicated to the learners to keep their interest, without losing respect.

#### **6.5 Teacher Enthusiasm**

All the teachers appeared to enjoy being in the classroom and in interviews pupils commented on their enthusiasm. In Interview extract 6.5 are typical examples of their comments.

### **Interview extract 6.5**

*P4: [Teacher]'s really enthusiastic.*

*P14: She keeps you awake. [Teacher]'s quite like interested in French and likes her languages, so that sort of comes across and it's like her enthusiasm that wakes everyone up.*

The enthusiasm shown by the teachers appeared to keep the learners focused and create a positive atmosphere. Both learners in interview extract 6.5 mention their teachers' enthusiasm. Pupil 14 attributes the class atmosphere where everyone is 'awake' to her teacher's enthusiastic approach. Her use of the word 'awake' suggests that the pupils are actively paying attention.

Students, consciously or unconsciously, model the attitude the teacher exhibits toward the content. If enthusiastic teachers appear to have a positive attitude toward the content being taught, students may ...associate more positive feelings toward the subject, and consequently achieve more. (Brigham, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 1992: 73)

Teacher enthusiasm is seen as crucial to learners' motivation (Bettencourt et al. 1983, Brigham 1991, Patrick et al. 2000) and has been described as a 'pedagogical necessity' (Tauber & Mester, 2007: 3). Discussing learners' motivation, Csikszentmihalyi, (1997) states, 'Young people are usually more intelligent than adults give them credit for. They can usually discern, for instance, whether an adult ... likes or dislikes what he or she is doing' (p.77). Perhaps the reason the teachers in the study proved successful in obtaining the ready collaboration of the learners in TL talk sequences was their apparently obvious enjoyment in using the TL and also, more implicitly, in the company of the learners.

### **6.6 The Use of Humour**

One of the most striking features of the classrooms of the teachers in the study which highlighted the collaborative ethos was the number of humorous incidents which took place in the TL. The teachers often laughed, as has been seen in Chapter 4 and made

humorous comments, examples of which have already been seen in Classroom extracts 4.18, 5.14 and 6.2 above. Humour is a wide ranging construct, with many definitions, which may include the use of jokes, cartoons, songs, anecdotes and sketches and may be highly idiosyncratic (Medgyes, 2002). Since this study focuses on TL use by teachers to stimulate pupils' responses, humour is taken to be verbal humorous allusions (Alexander, 1997), which often took the form of gentle teasing in the TL by the teachers of their pupils. The pupils entered into the banter and used the TL themselves to contribute to its continuation. Classroom extract 6.3 illustrates how Teacher 2's alertness to a pupil's unexpected input extended conversation-type language to provide a humorous interlude for the whole class in the TL.

### **Classroom extract 6.3**

*1T2: Ok, question numéro dix, c'était comment les vacances? C'était fantastique? C'était super? Ennuyeux?*

*2P5: Super.*

*3P18: Fantastique.*

*4P16: Ennuyeux.*

*5T2: Super. Une personne dit ennuyeux. Mais, écoutez, le collègue est ennuyeux? Super? Fantastique?*

*6P9: Le collègue?*

*7P16: Ennuyeux.*

*8T2: Ennuyeux, il dit toujours ennuyeux, ennuyeux.*

*9P11: He's very negative.*

*10P16: Jouer au foot est super.*

*11T2: Oh! Ecoutez! Positif – jouer au foot, super. (laughs) Ok, on va faire des interviews.*

Teacher 2 was concluding a practice language sequence on holidays and had shifted to conversation-type language in turn 5 to ask pupils their views on school, possibly as a comparison. Pupil 16, who had already mentioned that his holiday had been boring,

*Ennuyeux*, in turn 4, repeated the adjective in turn 7 in response. Immediately Teacher 2 responded with some gentle ribbing in turn 8, *Ennuyeux, il dit toujours ennuyeux, ennuyeux.*, drawing the class's attention to the fact that he said everything was boring. Pupil 11 extended the exchange in English, *He's very negative*. Pupil 16 responded in turn 10 with a 'witty' remark in the TL, *Jouer au foot est super*. This response brought another comment to the class by Teacher 2, *Oh! Ecoutez! Positif – jouer au foot, super*. Teacher 2's responsive alertness is indicated by the way she used Pupil 11's comment, *negative*, as a contrast to *Positif*. Her use of simple language ensured that the whole class 'got' the joke she is making.

Using Goffman's (1981) and Wadensjö's (1998) frameworks, Pupil 16 was acting largely in the role of principal of his utterances in extract 6.3, taking the initiative in turns 4 and 7 as he responded to Teacher 2's initiations and then again in turn 10 when he took the initiative for contributing to the humour, so that Teacher 2 had to respond to his initiation. Teacher 2 in her responses to his comments, remarked only on the meaning he had transmitted, not the form of the language, reinforcing the 'naturalness' of the exchange.

Humour in the classroom has been credited with creating a positive climate which may raise academic achievement (Ziv & Diem, 1975). In a study into effective classroom practice, Day et al. (2008) stated that successful teachers strengthened the relationship with their learners through the use of humour. Humour is said to serve 'psychological, social and cognitive purposes' (Hativa, 2000: 274) resulting in a cohesive and positive atmosphere (Senior, 2001). Pupil 16's use of TL to make a joke appeared to be evidence of the atmosphere that Teacher 2 had created, where the TL was used by pupils, not only to show proof of learning, but also for 'real' sociable communication, such as might occur between a group of friends, where the power differential is not obvious and each participant in the exchange may speak at will. Nonetheless it was clear that Teacher 2 remained in control, allowing the short 'informal' exchange to take place before explicitly drawing class attention to the next piece of work they were going to do.



Not all the humour implied equality of the participants, as was seen in Classroom extract 6.3. In another humorous incident in Teacher 1's classroom, which is reproduced in Classroom extract 6.4, the power differential instead of being diminished, could be said to be emphasised.

#### **Classroom extract 6.4**

1P4: *Est-ce que je peux toilettes, s'il vous plaît?*

2P9: *It's est-ce que je peux aller.*

3P4: *Est-ce que je peux aller aux toilettes, s'il vous plaît?*

4T1: *Aux toilettes? C'est urgent? C'est urgent?*

5P4: *Is it urgent?*

6T1: *C'est urgent?*

7P4: *Oui!*

(Laughter)

8T1: *Dépêche-toi, et pas de cigarettes, F.!*

(Laughter)

All the teachers' pupils generally used the TL for routine requests. When Pupil 4 asked to go to the lavatory in turn 3 Teacher 1 responded by asking if it was really necessary, *C'est urgent?* After checking that she had understood his question in turn 5, *Is it urgent?*, Pupil 4's spirited response *Oui!* in turn 7 was received with laughter by the pupils. Her response indicated that although she recognised his authority, she was also sufficiently at ease to play her part by extending the badinage. Teacher 1's riposte in turn 8, *Dépêche-toi, et pas de cigarettes, F.!*, was also designed to make the pupils laugh, particularly since Pupil 4 was not a smoker, according to the teacher, after the class in conversation. Teacher 1, in a position of power, able to grant or refuse Pupil 4's request, chose to use it to introduce some humour. Teacher 1's final remarks in turn 8, while humorous, could also be said to underline his position of authority, by granting the requested permission and at the same time issuing an admonition.

Humorous incidents were short and occurred at least three times in every lesson. Pupils often contributed to the humour in the TL, although the teachers also used the TL to interject some humour into routine tasks. An example of the way Teacher 1 used humour in a repetition exercise can be seen in Classroom extract 6.5.

### **Classroom extract 6.5**

*1T1: Pardon mademoiselle, pour aller à l'hôtel Splendide s'il vous plaît?*

*2Ps: Pardon mademoiselle, pour aller à l'hôtel Splendide s'il vous plaît?*

*3T1: A l'hôtel Splendide s'il vous plaît?*

*4Ps: A l'hôtel Splendide s'il vous plaît?*

*5T1: C'est loin.*

*6Ps: C'est loin.*

*7T1: Oh, c'est loin.*

*8Ps: Oh, c'est loin.*

*9T1: (smiling) C'est très loin.*

*10Ps: (smiling) C'est très loin.*

*11T1: (laughing) C'est très très loin.*

*12Ps: (smiling) C'est très très loin.*

Classroom extract 6.5 took place after the class had completed a practice language sequence where they had been reading out answers they had written as part of a gap-fill completion exercise, filling in spaces in conversations relating to asking and giving directions. Teacher 1 had advised the class that he was concerned about some aspects of their pronunciation and instituted a sequence of repetition. The sequence in Classroom extract 6.5 should have ended after turn 6, *C'est loin*, however, Teacher 1 continued to repeat the phrase a further three times with linguistic embellishment, gestures and exaggerated tone. It was clear that the pupils appeared to share the joke and enjoyed Teacher 1's performance as they repeated the exaggerated language. Watson & Emerson (1988) state that when humour forms part of the teaching strategy, 'a caring environment

is established' (p.89). However, while it may have been part of the overall strategy, the humour appeared spontaneous and could be said to strengthen relationships by promoting a pleasant atmosphere.

This section has looked at the effects of the teachers' enthusiasm and use of humour, which appeared to contribute to a positive affective atmosphere from which their established control did not detract. As stated in chapter 4 the classroom management structures which the teachers instituted were approved of by the pupils, who appeared to welcome a secure framework within which to learn. However, 'the benign dictatorship' that appeared to function in the classrooms of the teachers seemed to balance the imposition of their desired standards of behaviour and a cohesive positive atmosphere, where pupils were disposed to use the TL if possible. The teachers' enthusiasm and use of humour and the pupils' positive responses appeared to underscore the collaborative nature of the classroom environment they had created. The next section will examine the way the teachers used TL to scaffold the pupils' TL output within this collaborative context.

### **6.7 Teachers' Use of TL to Scaffold Pupils' Responses: Anticipatory Response Cues**

The findings detailed in chapters 4 and 5, as well as the first part of this chapter, have illustrated some of the techniques the teachers used to stimulate pupils' responses through their use of TL in the phases of the lessons and the conversation-type language sequences. The creation and maintenance of a collaborative atmosphere where pupils felt able to contribute in the TL without losing face appeared to be one of their central goals. They also appeared determined to provide learners with opportunities to interact in the TL in their ZPD within scaffolded interaction in preparation for 'real' communication with native speakers. Their use of discoursal follow-up (Cullen, 2002) through a shift to conversation-type language has been discussed earlier in this chapter.

However where conversation-type language differs from discoursal follow-up as defined by Cullen was when they did not just ask referential questions but also provided

response cues to enable the pupils with whom they were interacting to answer. When the teachers in the study shifted from structured language practice to less structured conversation-type language, they often provided anticipatory response cues (ARCs) to help learners respond. They did this by providing an option or a menu of options from which the pupil could choose, if s/he wanted, to reply to the teacher's unpredictable question. Perhaps because of the greater amount of conversation-type language she initiated, as discussed in Chapter 5, this was particularly noticeable in Teacher 2's classroom. By positioning the learners to respond through the provision of ARCs, the teachers were able to move the 'conversation' forward in a way which cannot be described using the IRF format or Cullen's discursal follow-up.

In order for conversation to work, replies should be immediate (Jeffs & Smith, 1999), therefore to help the learners cope with the unpredictable nature of the questions that they were asking in conversation-type sequences the teachers used ARCs after the initiating question. By providing them with the means to answer before the pupils responded, the teachers seemed to foresee any difficulties that the pupils might have, providing ARCs instead of waiting for the learner to formulate their response and then offer feedback.

ARCs can therefore be defined as an option or series of options given by the teacher as examples of an acceptable response, after a question has been posed. Indirect ARCs may also be included in the language of initiating questions where some of the language of the question can be then recycled to enhance the learners' level of language when they respond. It appears that there has been no mention of teachers' use of ARCs in previous research into ML teaching. The identification of their existence may be viewed as an important contribution to knowledge which may improve the analysis of teachers' language, not only in the ML classroom but perhaps also in others where teachers use language to scaffold pupils' responses. An illustration of the type of ARCs the teachers offered the pupils can be seen in Classroom extract 6.6 below.

**Classroom extract 6.6.**

1T2: *Et quel est ton passetemps préféré? Le foot, non?*

2P7: *Le badminton.*

3T2: *Ok. Et tu joues souvent? Tous les jours? Tous les weekends?*

4P7: *Souvent.*

5T2: *Souvent? Combien de fois par semaine?*

6P7: *Six heures par semaine.*

7T2: *Six heures par semaine, oui. Tu joues à XXX High School dans le club?*

8P7: *Non.*

9T2: *Tu n'aimes pas le club à XXX ?*

10P7: *Non je n'aime pas.*

Classroom extract 6.6 took place during a practice language sequence. Teacher 2 began the exchange with the same practice question she had been asking round the group, *quel est ton passetemps préféré?* to Pupil 7. After the question, she provided the ARC *Le foot, non?* It is unlikely at this point that she was offering Pupil 7 help with his answer, using the cue more as a cohesive device to show that she was aware of his possible preferences. However, he rejected her suggestion and answered as principal of his utterance, *Le badminton.*, taking responsibility for communicating his own meaning. Teacher 2 may have been adhering to the IRF format in turn 3, endorsing his answer, *Ok.* However, it is also possible she was acknowledging his choice of a sport different to the one she had assumed he would choose, before asking a follow-up question, *Et tu joues souvent?* to which she subsequently provided two more ARCs in addition to *souvent*, *Tous les jours? Tous les weekends?* which Pupil 7 might choose to use in his reply. In turn 4 he took up one of them, *souvent.* In the next turn, she appeared to seek clarification by asking a question with no anticipatory response cue *Combien de fois par semaine?* which demanded that the pupil provide his own answer, although there was an indirect cue in the question to assist the learner to produce *Six heures par semaine* rather than merely *six heures*. By repeating it, it could be viewed that Teacher 2 endorsed his

response although she may also have been using repetition to register receipt of his message (Tannen, 2007).

Teacher 2 asked two further questions in turns 7 and 9, the first of which, *Tu joues à XXX High School dans le club ?* produced a negative response, *Non*. Teacher 2 provided no feedback, instead posing another question *Tu n'aimes pas le club à XXX ?*, which resulted in a longer response, *Non je n'aime pas*. Both questions could be said to have contained indirect ARCs; both were posed in the declarative mode, making it easier for Pupil 7 to recycle the language of the question as part of his answer if he wished.

ARCs featuring in initiating questions tend to be of a more indirect nature and rather than providing a resource in the form of examples of possible answers, as direct ARCs do, offer language which the pupils can 'borrow' to use in their answers to enhance their utterance. In the example above, *six heures* is a perfectly acceptable answer, but by including *par semaine* that Teacher 2 had provided in the initiating question, Pupil 7 enhanced his TL by giving more detail, as he did when extending his final response in turn 10, *Non, je n'aime pas*, rather than using the monosyllabic negative he had used in turn 8. The conversation-type interactional sequence above in classroom extract 6.6 demonstrates how Teacher 2 provided scaffolding to Pupil 7, in the form of both direct and indirect ARCs, which helped him to answer, removing the direct ARCs as she sensed that the pupil had become more confident in maintaining his part in the 'conversation'. In classroom extract 6.7 Teacher 2 did not remove the scaffolding.

**Classroom extract 6.7.**

1T2: *Et toi, J. Où as-tu logé?*

2P15: *Dans une caravanne.*

3T2: *Dans une caravanne. Une grande caravanne? Une petite?*

4P15: *Une grande*

5T2: *Une grande caravanne. Quel temps a-t-il fait? Ça c'est plus difficile maintenant. Quel temps a-t-il fait? Il a fait chaud? Il a fait beau? Il a plu?*

6P15: *Il a fait chaud.*

7T2: *Il a fait combien de degrés? Vingt-cinq? Vingt-six? Vingt-sept?*

8P15: *Trente*

Teacher 2 began a practice sequence, which appeared to follow the IRF format for the first four turns, although ARCs were offered to Pupil 15: *Une grande caravanne? Une petite?* in turn 3 as the teacher followed up his answer, after repeating *Dans une caravanne* as affirmation of his response. When Teacher 2 moved on to ask about the weather in turn 5, she signalled that the answer might be difficult to formulate which could be viewed as saving Pupil 15's face, and provided examples as ARCs, *Il a fait chaud? Il a fait beau? Il a plu?*. She also used the declarative form to offer the cues as questions, using a different tonal pattern to indicate a question, an acceptable way to form questions in French, but by using the declarative form, rather than inversion, she made it easier for Pupil 15 to select an answer. In turn 6 Pupil 15 chose one of the cues she offered, *Il a fait chaud*, to which she asked a follow-up question about how hot it was, *Il a fait combien de degrés?* again offering ARCs, *Vingt-cinq? Vingt-six? Vingt-sept?* to assist Pupil 15's response. In this instance, however, he responded using a different figure, *Trente*, although his answer may have been informed by the numbers in the TL provided by the ARCs Teacher 2 offered.

### **6.8 Functions of ARCs: Pace**

The teachers' use of ARCs appeared designed to keep the pace brisk, particularly when they shifted to the more unpredictable type of questioning which characterised conversation-type language. As seen in Chapter 5 in Classroom extract 5.15 where Teacher 2 engaged in 'dual language communicative discourse' with pupils who responded in English, pupils generally did not seem to have a problem understanding teachers' initiations in the TL. However, the formulation of a response in the TL may take some time, as pupils, having decoded the question successfully, first think of a response and then how to frame it in the TL. During a pupil's 'thinking time', even

though it may only be a matter of several seconds, the pace may slow, particularly if there is a series of teacher initiations.

The provision of ARCs offering possibilities for responses not only kept the pace from dipping, but also moved the interaction on. It is also possible that the offer by the teacher of ARCs in the TL directly after a question provided further clues to the meaning of the teacher's initiation, as well as the form of the response expected, thus allowing the learners to answer more briskly. In this way, the teacher was directing a conversation-type exchange which proceeded at a pace which could be said to be comparable to that of an adult and adolescent in an interactional context in a more informal setting. Even if learners did not choose any of the options that the teacher offered through ARCs, through hearing possible models of answers they might develop increased confidence in presenting their own TL response without delay. The scaffolding of the pupils' responses that the provision of ARCs implies is discussed in the next section.

### **6.9 Functions of ARCs: Scaffolded Support**

As well as ensuring a prompt response, the teachers' use of ARCs, particularly by Teacher 2, meant that pupils were exposed not only to their peers' responses, which they might appropriate or adapt for their own use, but also to a variety of other expressions, which they could potentially employ to communicate their own meaning themselves in later interactions, either with the teacher or others. Classroom extracts 6.6 and 6.7 show how Teacher 2 provided direct and indirect ARCs which enabled the learners to respond promptly in conversation-type language sequences. Classroom extract 6.8 illustrates the way Teacher 4 used ARCs to scaffold the learners' responses in a practice language sequence on breakfast food.

#### **Classroom extract 6.8.**

*1T4: Et toi, L.? Tu manges des céréales? Du pain grillé?*

*2P9: Les céréales.*

*3T4: Les céréales, très bien. Et toi, D.? Qu'est-ce que tu manges pour le petit déjeuner? Du pain grillé? Des céréales?*



4P12: *Des céréales.*

5T4: *Des céréales avec du lait?*

6P12: *Oui.*

7T4: *Très bien, D. Qu'est-ce que tu bois, em, C.? Du lait? Du jus d'orange? Un chocolat chaud?*

8P14: *What do I drink?*

9T4: *Oui.*

10P14: *Is tea thé?*

11T4: *Oui, je bois du thé*

12P14: *Le thé*

13T4: *Bien, et toi, R.? Tu bois du thé? Du café?*

14P3: *Du thé*

15T4: *Ok, M., tu bois du thé ou un jus d'orange?*

16P11: *Du thé*

As already stated, Teacher 4's class was a low-performing but enthusiastic class. In Classroom extract 6.8 Teacher 4 was conducting a practice language sequence prior to a listening exercise about the morning routine. The interaction followed the IRF format, with each pupil response validated by Teacher 4 before she moved to the next initiation. In turns 1 and 3, Teacher 4 offered two ARCs, *Du pain grillé? Des céréales?* Both Pupils 9 and 12 took up one of the cues *Des céréales*. In turn 5 Teacher 4 offered Pupil 12 an ARC to extend her answer in the previous turn *Des céréales avec du lait?*, however, Pupil 12 merely responded in the affirmative. Teacher 4 then moved to an initiation relating to breakfast drinks in turn 7, providing three ARCs to help Pupil 14 respond, *Qu'est-ce que tu bois, em, C.? Du lait? Du jus d'orange? Un chocolat chaud?* Pupil 14 checked that she had understood the question *What do I drink?*, before checking again that she had chosen the correct word she wanted to use, which was not one of the options offered, *Is tea thé?* Teacher 4 continued to provide ARCs each time she asked the question to other learners, perhaps as a model for pronunciation or because she could not be sure that the learners would remember the appropriate words.

Offering ARCs continually to the learners, as Teacher 4 did, means that the teachers are providing scaffolding in terms of ensuring the learners hear the TL repeatedly pronounced correctly, which should result in greater learner confidence in accurately pronouncing words and expressions in what may be a very different sound system to their own as they imitate the teachers (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). It also provides constant exposure to the correct form of the language. Although Pupil 14 did not take up Teacher 4's cue in turn 11, *je bois du thé*, preferring to use the accurate but less used *Le thé*, Pupils 3 and 11 both responded using the language the teacher had provided in the ARC, *du thé*.

Repetition both by teachers through the provision of ARCs and by pupils as they adopt one or more may give the whole class exposure to TL expressions used frequently and may be seen as a strategy to help learners memorise them (Oxford, 1990). Interaction which includes repetitions and imitations is considered beneficial for learners' development of autonomous expression (Llinares Garcia, 2003) as the recurrent exposure is 'noticed' not only by those learners participating in the interaction (Schmidt, 2001), but also by the 'overhearers'. As illustrated in Interview extract 6.2, pupils in interviews indicated that they appreciated hearing other pupils in interaction and perceived this as beneficial for their own learning. The provision of ARCs means that they are presented with a variety of options which may be relevant for communicating what they want to say in conversation-type exchanges in the classroom or in 'real' communication with native speakers.

Scaffolding is seen by Bruner (1978) as 'steps taken to reduce the degrees of freedom in carrying out some task so that the child can concentrate on the difficult skill she is in the process of acquiring' (p.19). By offering ARCs to the learners after an initiation it could be said that the teachers were restricting the options for response as a strategy to develop their pupils' confidence and competence in answering using not only TL appropriate for the meaning they wish to convey, but also correct pronunciation and form. As the

teacher models suitable responses learners gradually internalise knowledge through regular practice (Applebee & Langer, 1983). Teachers using ARCs to scaffold pupils use of the TL in interaction are taking a collaborative rather than evaluative role (Applebee, 1986), providing support, which may gradually diminish as the learners become more confident and competent in using the TL to communicate, using their own language as principals, rather than authoring the teacher's language.

Extracts 6.7 and 6.8 illustrate the way direct ARCs were used to scaffold pupils' developing communicative skills. These cues may be particularly useful with lower proficiency learners for a number of reasons; firstly, in a classroom where a great deal of the questioning takes place in the TL, the learners may need time to de-code the meaning of the teacher's initiations. The provision of ARCs may offer assistance in making sense of a teacher's question, by providing additional contextual clues to its meaning through the teacher's supply of appropriate answers. At the same time, they offer relevant expressions which learners can opt to make use of to formulate coherent responses in the TL. As learners become more confident and begin to respond using alternative TL forms and expressions, the teacher may reduce the amount of direct scaffolding to individual pupils as s/he sees fit. Using ARCs to enable pupils to respond also means that they may be more likely to use extended TL, 'borrowed' from the teacher, rather than one word utterances, thus increasing their repertoire of TL expression.

Although the majority of ARCs were offered to learners in conversation-type sequences, they were also used in practice language sequences, as was seen in Classroom extract 6.8, where Teacher 4 offered options to individual learners to assist their responses. Sometimes ARCs were provided to the whole class or group before a practice language sequence began as a reminder of the type of answers which were expected. Classroom extract 6.9 illustrates a slightly different way of using ARCs to support the pupils in their formulation of answers in preparation for practice language sequences.

**Classroom extract 6.9.**

1T2: *Tu es parti quand? La question. En juillet, en août, je suis partie le quatre août, je suis partie, ok, c'est facile. Tu as voyagé comment? Alors, moi, j'ai voyagé en ferry, en voiture. En ferry et en voiture. Comment tu as voyagé L.?*

2P14: *Eh, j'ai voyagé en voiture et en avion.*

3T2: *En voiture et en avion. Et, Z. Comment as-tu voyagé?*

4P3: *J'ai voyagé en avion et en car.*

5T2: *Ok, très bien. Tu es parti avec qui? Alors, avec la famille, avec les amis, avec le collège, avec l'école. Tu as logé où exactement? J'ai logé dans ma caravane. Et toi, P., où as-tu logé?*

6P9: *J'ai logé dans un appartement.*

As explained in Chapter 3, Teacher 2 had divided her mixed ability class into three groups corresponding to their perceived proficiency. In Classroom extract 6.9 she was working with the highest performing group, preparing them for a paired speaking practice language sequence, by checking that they understood the questions and suggesting possible responses. In turn 1, Teacher 2 drew the learners' attention to the first question and offered models of possible answers, before commenting that answering the first question would be easy, *ok, c'est facile.*, possibly as a confidence boosting measure to reassure the learners or as a conversation-type aside. She then demonstrated a possible response to the second question, basing it on her own experience, *Alors, moi, j'ai voyagé en ferry, en voiture.*, before directing the question to Pupil 14.

Teacher 2 then repeated the process in turn 5 with the next two questions in the exercise, suggesting a variety of responses to the first, then offering her own experience as a model answer to the second, before posing the question to Pupil 9. Using ARCs in this way as general indicators of the type of answer the teacher is expecting may be seen as a more efficient use of time with a higher performing class or group, who may not need individual prompts, but who may still welcome the reassurance of a structure within which to express themselves. Teacher 2's openness in disclosing personal information,

which has been discussed earlier in this chapter, also underlines the collaborative atmosphere she promoted in the interaction as she asked pupils about their own experiences.

The high level of questioning in conversation-type sequences by the teachers in the study has already been compared in Chapter 4 to that of an elderly relative in conversation with a younger family member whom the former has not seen for some time. The teachers' use of ARCs may also be viewed in that context of an older family member quizzing the younger, offering 'leading' questions or a series of alternatives as answers, which may or may not be taken up by the respondent. Teacher 2 made most use of ARCs, incorporating them into her questioning usually during the conversation-type exchanges, which, as stated in Chapter 5, accounted for almost 40 per cent of the interaction in her lessons. The other teachers also provided their learners with direct and indirect ARCs in conversation-type and practice language exchanges. Classroom extract 6.10 illustrates Teacher 3's use of indirect ARCs, integrated into her questions in a practice language sequence.

#### **Classroom extract 6.10**

*1T3: Hast du einen Computer in deinem Schlafzimmer?*

*2P23: Nein.*

*3T3: Nein. Hast du einen Fernseher in deinem Schlafzimmer?*

*4P23: Ja, ich habe einen Fernseher.*

*5T3: Hast du einen Schreibtisch in deinem Schlafzimmer?*

*6P11: Ich habe einen Schreibtisch.*

*7T3: Ja, ok, ich habe einen Schreibtisch. Hast du eine Lampe in deinem Schlafzimmer?*

*8P6: Ja, ich habe eine Lampe.*

*9T: Ok, sehr gut.*

In Classroom extract 6.10 Teacher 3 was conducting a practice language sequence aimed at reinforcing the use of the accusative case. Each question was composed using the same form of language: *Hast du ... in deinem Schlafzimmer?*, to which pupils replied using the construction: *Ich habe ....* The questions Teacher 3 asked appeared typical of the IRF framework: closed, expecting a particular form of response, followed by an evaluation. However, more appeared to be at stake here rather than a straightforward evaluation, given that within each question, Teacher 3 was also providing a cue to the accusative form of each item about which she asked. Her choice of initiation, *Hast du ... in deinem Schlafzimmer?*, rather than *Was hast du in deinem Schlafzimmer?*, therefore, appeared designed to give the learners exposure to the correct form of the language before they used it themselves.

As stated earlier in this chapter, ARCs do not seem to fit a recognised modern languages classroom participation framework. Although they may appear in teachers' initiations, previous description of IRF exchanges does not appear to recognise the inclusion of anticipatory cues to assist the formulation of learners' responses; nor does Cullen's discursal follow-up (2002) offer possible anticipatory responses to the learners. The assistance provided by ARCs means that the pupils are able to sustain TL interaction in a fluent and 'natural' manner and the 'ratified participants' or 'overhearers' (Goffman, 1981: 131) are able to hear the correct form of the TL in the ARCs offered to the learners, and in their responses.

As the teacher senses that pupils become more confident, s/he may remove the scaffolding that ARCs provide and ask more open-ended questions without supplying cues to help the learners respond. Correspondingly, learners may reject the ARCs the teacher offers, in preference to a response of their own. This can be seen in Classroom extract 6.6, when a pupil declined the ARC the teacher offered when asking about his favourite hobby. Refusal of ARCs was also evident in Classroom extract 6.8, when a learner chose a different breakfast drink from those offered in ARCs by Teacher 4. The learners appeared to want to use the TL to convey the truth when answering, even if they

made a mistake, rather than taking the easy option of choosing from the selection of ARCs the teachers offered, Their apparent desire to be truthful also appeared to demonstrate commitment to their part in the maintenance of the cohesive atmosphere of trust and collaboration which seemed evident in the classroom. In Classroom extract 6.11 below, examples of Teacher 2's removal of ARCs as a means of scaffolding after Pupil 7 has opted not to take up an ARC can be seen in the first part of the interaction. As the exchange develops into conversation-type language, sympathetic language used by Teacher 2 to support the collaborative atmosphere with the learners also becomes evident.

**Classroom extract 6.11.**

*1T2: Tu as voyagé comment?*

*2P7: J'ai voyagé en avion.*

*3T2: Et après? En voiture? En car?*

*4P7: En taxi.*

*5T2: En taxi. Et tu es parti avec qui?*

*6P7: Je suis parti avec ma famille.*

*7T2: Avec ta famille. Tu as des frères ou des soeurs?*

*8P7: Une petite soeur.*

*9T2: Une petite soeur qui est dans ma classe?*

*10P7: Oui.*

*11T2: Elle apprend l'allemand. Elle aime XXX High School?*

*12P7: Non.*

*13T2: Oh, pourquoi?*

*14P7: Em, non amis*

*15T2: Elle n'a pas d'amis dans sa classe?*

*16P7: Non*

*17T2: Aw c'est triste. Alors, tu as logé où?*

Classroom extract 6.11 occurred during a practice language sequence which Teacher 2 then shifted to conversation-type language, before returning to the original practice purpose of the exchange. In turn 1 Pupil 7 responded to Teacher 2's initiation, which did not contain direct ARCs, although some might contend that the question contained an indirect cue which may have assisted his response. In turn 3 Teacher 2 provided two ARCs, *En voiture? En car?*, which Pupil 7 opted not to take up, answering *En taxi*. Teacher 2 then asked another question without recourse to direct ARCs, *Et tu es parti avec qui?*, perhaps sensing that Pupil 7 did not require the scaffolding that they would provide, since he appeared capable of authoring the language to make his own meaning accurately.

It is worth digressing briefly from discussion of the provision of ARCs to consider the second part of Classroom extract 6.11 and the way Teacher 2's language contributed to the collaborative atmosphere in the class, through communicating her interest and concern for the learners. In turn 7 Teacher 2 shifted language type to a conversation-type question *Tu as des frères ou des soeurs?* The conversation-type sequence which followed appeared to show the interest that all the teachers showed in their pupils, as Pupil 7's response, *Une petite soeur* was followed up by Teacher 2, *Une petite soeur qui est dans ma classe?*, using the information he supplied to establish 'common ground' between them. Pupil 7 was asked to explain his response *Non*, to Teacher 2's initiation in turn 11, *Elle aime XXX High School?* Although able to respond promptly and correctly to predictable practice language questioning in the first part of the extract, presented with an open question without any response cues, Pupil 7 appeared to have some difficulty in formulating an accurate response in turn 14, *Em, non amis*. Teacher 2 then reformulated his response (Mercer 2000), *Elle n'a pas d'amis dans sa classe?* and made a phatic comment *Aw c'est triste*, before returning to the practice language sequence. The teachers' reformulations of pupils' TL contributions will be considered in section 6.10.

The dialogue between Teacher 2 and Pupil 7 demonstrates the atmosphere of trust which Teacher 2 appeared to have created in the class. Pupil 7 did not seem reluctant to talk



about his sister's problem, although the whole group was listening. His openness in responding suggests that he was not concerned about losing face before his peers. However, after her sympathetic comment Teacher 2 quickly moved the interaction back to practice language, possibly showing her sensitivity to his perhaps potentially embarrassing revelation.

In Classroom extract 6.11 Teacher 2, as well as judging how much assistance to provide Pupil 7 in the first part of the interaction, showed interest and concern, sustaining the caring relationship that she appeared to have built up with the learners. Teachers who make their concern explicit are seen by learners as more trustworthy and competent (Teven & Hanson, 2004). Pupils may be more motivated to perform well in class if the teacher is viewed as empathetic (Frymier & Thompson, 1992). 'Simply put, caring teachers create more positive learning environments' (Teven & Hanson, 2004: 437). Teacher 2's show of interest and concern was replicated in the classrooms of the other teachers in the study.

This section has examined the use of anticipatory response cues provided by the teachers in the study to assist learners in responding in the TL. By offering the pupils ARCs the teachers were not only saving their face by providing the means to answer promptly, but were also helping them make sense of the language type shifts which the teachers instigated. Using the participation formats of Goffman, (1981) and Wadensjö (1998) the teachers' actions in providing ARCs can be viewed as a step on the way to moving the learners forward from merely practising the language as recapitulators and authors to actively using it to communicate meaning as responders and principals. ARCs could be said to provide learners with a bridge from the secure structure of practice language where questions are predictable and answers prepared, to the more exposed position of conversation-type exchanges, where learners are faced with unpredictable questioning and have to come up with a coherent answer in the TL.

The provision of ARCs offers the learners the means of moving from being authors in practice language sequences to being more independent within the security of scaffolded conversation-type interaction. The pupils' acceptance or rejection of ARCs may be used as an indicator of how confident and competent they feel in communicating their meaning in the TL as principals. ARCs may be considered supportive because of their anticipatory nature, that is, they are offered as choices *before* the learner responds. The next section will consider the teachers' use of reformulating or 'revoicing' *after* pupils' responses.

### **6.10 Revoicing of Pupils' Responses: Reformulation**

Classroom extract 6.11 above illustrated the way Teacher 2 reformulated Pupil 7's incorrect utterance *Em, non amis* by rephrasing it as a question *Elle n'a pas d'amis dans sa classe?* She could also be said to have 'revoiced' (O'Connor & Michaels, 1996) his statement, *Une petite soeur*, which was not incorrect, by extending it to provide more information to the listeners, *Une petite soeur qui est dans ma classe?* Reformulating and revoicing are often described as part of the same technique which allows learners to contribute in discussion even if they lack the fluency to express their ideas (Resnick, 1995) and has often been used to illustrate the way mathematics teachers, for example, scaffold pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts (Dooley, 2009). The teacher's repetition, or reformulation of a learner's utterance, expands it to make it more comprehensible but attributes ownership of the contribution to the learner (O'Connor & Michaels, 1996).

In the ML classroom, where the focus is on developing communicative competence in the TL, teachers' revoicing may have the function of amplifying or reframing more eloquently pupils' contributions to provide a good TL model for them and the rest of the class. This section will examine the teachers' revoicing through reformulations of pupils' TL utterances. Although reformulation is seen as a way of revoicing pupils' language, in the context of the ML class it implies correction of some sort of error (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Reformulation through recasts has already been discussed as an error correction

technique in Chapter 4, where the teacher repeated pupils' imperfect utterances correctly. Reformulation also involves repetition and may involve a fuller reframing of the utterance so that the form and the sense is made clearer to the speaker and other learners (Yifat & Zadunaisky-Ehrlich, 2008), while at the same time, in the context of a ML classroom, giving learners exposure to extended TL talk. An example of reformulation can be seen below in Classroom extract 6.12.

**Classroom extract 6.12.**

1T2: ... *Oh, super. Et A., où as-tu passé les vacances?*

2P6: *Eh, anglais.*

3T2: *Tu as passé les vacances en Angleterre?*

4P6: *Oui.*

Classroom extract 6.12 occurred in a personalised practice language sequence where Teacher 2 was asking pupils where they had been on holiday. The extract illustrates a reformulation through the teacher's recast of Pupil 6's erroneous response. The teacher asked Pupil 6 the initiating question she had previously asked the other pupils in the group, *où as-tu passé les vacances?* In turn 5 she reformulated his response, *anglais*, framing it as a question *Tu as passé les vacances en Angleterre?* so that he could concur without losing face. At the same time, the question provided the rest of the group with correct TL form and clarity of meaning and kept the learner as principal of the utterance (Goffman, 1981).

**6.11 Revoicing of Pupils' Responses: Amplification**

Another technique which the teachers used when 'revoicing', did not have the function of error correction, but elaboration of a learner's TL statement. As stated above, revoicing implies that the teacher repeats, rephrases or enlarges on a learner's contribution, providing affirmation to the learner while making it more comprehensible to other learners (O'Connor & Michaels, 1996). Revoicing may supply additional scaffolding as pupils' TL contributions are expanded or amplified (Lawrence, 2006) using language that is familiar to pupils, demonstrating that language they already know

may be ‘recycled’ in a variety of situations. Classroom extract 6.13 offers an example of revoicing using amplification in Teacher 2’s class.

### **Classroom extract 6.13**

1T2: *Qu’est-ce que vous préférez comme hôtel?*

2P3: *Eh, Hôtel Chevalier d’Assart.*

3T2: *Et pourquoi tu préfères?*

4P3: *Em, c’est, parce que c’est trois étoiles.*

5T2: *Parce que c’est trois étoiles. C’est plus chic. Les hôtels trois étoiles ont des restaurants, quelquefois des piscines, oui?*

The group had been considering a number of advertisements for hotels in different areas of France. In turn 1 Teacher 2 asked them which hotel they preferred, *Qu’est-ce que vous préférez comme hôtel?* Pupil 3 stated her choice in turn 2 and the reason for it in turn 4, *Em, c’est, parce que c’est trois étoiles.* The answer was correct in form and Teacher 2’s elaboration of Pupil 3’s statement, *Parce que c’est trois étoiles. C’est plus chic. Les hôtels trois étoiles ont des restaurants, quelquefois des piscines.*, not only provided positive feedback about her answer, but also an amplification of the response which allowed the other learners to have a better idea of why Pupil 3 might have chosen it. The addition of the tag question, *oui?* after her amplification, inviting agreement, suggested that Teacher 3 acknowledged the reasons for Pupil 3’s choice and her role as principal of the response.

### **6.12 Revoicing of Pupils’ Responses: Translation of Pupils’ English Utterances**

It could be said that the teachers also used a revoicing technique when they translated pupils’ English utterances. An example of such can be seen in Chapter 5 when Teacher 1 translated pupils’ English explanations of a grammar point. Another example can be seen in Classroom extract 6.14 when Teacher 1 translated a pupil’s English statement, when he was working with a group on home area.

#### **Classroom extract 6.14**

1T1: *C'est bien? Qu'est-ce qu'on va faire? Qu'est-ce qu'on va faire? Vous pouvez le dire en anglais si vous voulez. R.? Qu'est-ce qu'on va faire?*

2P8: *It's where you live.*

3T1: *Hein?*

4P9: *It's two people talking about where they live.*

5T1: *Oui, c'est une conversation. Oui? Mais ce n'est pas sur Edimbourg, c'est sur le? Comment dit-on 'area', 'district'? Regardez le titre.*

P4: *Le quartier.*

Classroom extract 6.14 took place during a period when the class was working in groups; one group had gone to another room with the Foreign Conversation Assistant; one group was working on a reading exercise and the third group was working with Teacher 1, who had provided them with a worksheet consisting of questions and answers relating to home area. Teacher 1 often asked pupils to speculate on what they were going to be asked to do, as he did in turn 1, *Qu'est-ce qu'on va faire?* This may have been a strategy to keep their attention or to engage them in thinking about the task at an early stage. He also gave them 'permission' to use English to explain *Vous pouvez le dire en anglais si vous voulez.*, a technique which all the teachers adopted when confirming understanding of instructions or analysis of the form of the language, although they themselves tended to stay in the role of TL speakers.

In turns 2 and 4 Pupils 8 and 9 both responded, Pupil 9 appearing to revoice Pupil 8's answer *It's where you live* in English in turn 4, *It's two people talking about where they live* before Teacher 1 revoiced both their responses with an explanation in the TL in turn 5, *Oui, c'est une conversation. Oui?* He then elaborated further, *Mais ce n'est pas sur Edimbourg, c'est sur le?* By incorporating a question in the supplementary information he was providing, he was also able to engage the learners in interaction to make collective sense of the context for the task.

Sometimes the teachers asked the learners to collaborate in revoicing English statements in the TL. Teacher 4's pupils who, as has been explained, were judged low performers, often asked her how to express their meaning in the TL. An example of the way she involved the class in reformulating an English statement into TL can be seen below in Classroom extract 6.15.

### **Extract 6.15**

*1T4: Très bien. Tu changes la question s'il te plait, R. Qu'est-ce que tu as fait ce weekend?*

*2P5: Qu'est-ce que tu as fait ce weekend?*

*3T4: Très bien.*

*4P5: N.*

*5P9: Em, Miss, how do you say that you went to a show?*

*6T4: Pardon?*

*7P9: The play.*

*8T4: Went to see a play, ok. Well, how do we say I went, first of all?*

*9P9: Je suis*

*10P3: Allé*

*11T4: Let N. try herself. I know you know the answer, but I'm sure she can try herself. Think about how you say I went to the cinema, N.*

*12P9: Je suis allée*

*13T4: Je suis allée, très bien. And to see? Anybody?*

*14P7: Regarde*

*15T4: Regarder's to watch, très bien M. Je suis allée regarder and the word for show?*

*16P12: Au théâtre.*

*17T4: Théâtre, oui, c'est bien J. Je suis allée au théâtre. Ou je suis allée regarder une spectacle. Je suis allée au théâtre. Ou je suis allée regarder une spectacle.*

Classroom extract 6.15 occurred during the routine question and answer session that Teacher 4 used as a 'warm up' at the beginning of the lesson to re-orient the learners to

the TL. As was noted earlier in this chapter, pupils were keen to tell the truth, rather than opt for a response which merely demonstrated that they could use an accurate form of the language. In turn 5 Pupil 9 asked Teacher 4 how to translate an event that had occurred during the weekend, *Em, Miss, how do you say that you went to a show?* Instead of translating the sentence for her, in turn 8 Teacher 4 invited her to attempt the translation herself, breaking the prospective utterance into constituent parts, *Well, how do we say I went, first of all?* Pupil 9's response in turn 9 was interrupted by Pupil 3, who was then lightly rebuked by the teacher for interrupting in turn 11, *Let N. try herself. I know you know the answer, but I'm sure she can try herself.* Her rebuke was typical of the kind of discipline moves the teachers made, so that there would be no loss of face for the recipient. She also reminded Pupil 9 of previous learning, *Think about how you say I went to the cinema, N.* to reactivate the desired TL form.

Pupil 9 produced the correct form of the verb in turn 12, *Je suis allée*, and Teacher 4 turned her attention to the second constituent part of the translation, *And to see? Anybody?* Turns 14 to 17 demonstrate Teacher 4's flexibility in terms of accepting pupils' contributions, which may have been different to responses she was expecting, and how she used their collaborative engagement in the process of making meaning in the TL. Finally Teacher 4 reiterated the two translations that the class and she had produced, giving each one equal validity, thus affirming all the contributions from the learners and demonstrating her responsive alertness.

Classroom extract 6.15 typifies the kind of scaffolding the teachers provided when assisting pupils to reformulate speech from English to the TL. By breaking up the translation into three constituent components, Teacher 4 enabled pupils to actively participate in working together to create meaning in the TL.

Revoicing through reformulation and amplification may be described as alternatives to the third turn in the IRF participation framework. Although both provide positive feedback to the learners, they play less of an evaluative and more of a facilitating role,

helping learners to collaborate in making sense of the language they speak and hear as well as validating their contributions as legitimate (Hall, 2003). O'Connor and Michaels (2007) argue that revoicing is a four part participation framework where the pupil can ultimately agree or not with the teacher's interpretation of what s/he has contributed. If Goffman's production format (1981) is used to describe the teachers' actions in reformulating or revoicing the learners' TL utterances, they can be seen to be acting in the role of animator and author; the pupil is the principal. By giving the learners access to the correct form of extended TL, the teachers are providing them with scaffolding which will prepare them for future TL exchanges.

This chapter focused more closely on the TL the teachers used when interacting with the learners and has considered strategies the teachers used to enable learners to contribute in the TL as principals of their utterances. The teachers' enthusiasm, use of humour and conversation-type language appeared to create and maintain an atmosphere of collaboration where the learners seemed willing to take part in the interaction that was taking place. The provision of ARCs by the teachers was identified as a key feature in the teachers' TL which not only enabled learners to take part in 'conversation-type' interactional sequences, but also in interactional sequences where the focus was more explicitly pedagogical. The teachers' offer of ARCs in interactional sequences appeared to provide scaffolding which facilitated learners' responses and allowed them to enhance their TL contributions if they wanted. The use of ARCs as a scaffolding strategy does not appear to have been recognised before and offers a valuable contribution to the process of analysis of classroom language.

Reformulation and amplification of learners' TL utterances allowed the learners to retain ownership of the meaning that was expressed and also showed the teachers' concern that the learners should have exposure to abundant relevant TL, which could be appropriate for use in conversation outside the classroom with native speakers. Interwoven throughout the extracts of interaction in this chapter, as was the case in the two previous



chapters, are examples of the way the teachers used the TL to preserve the learners' sense of face and encourage them to contribute to the interaction that had been initiated.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 have described the findings of the study after analysis of the data took place. Chapter 7 will discuss the contribution these findings make to the greater knowledge about ML teaching and what these findings may mean for ML teachers before drawing conclusions and suggesting further avenues for research into interaction in the ML class.

## **Chapter 7    Conclusions**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This thesis reports the findings of research aimed at answering the following questions:

- What do ‘successful’ teachers do to develop an active response from the learners, specifically, what do the teachers do to enable pupils to use the TL for a communicative purpose in the Scottish secondary ML classroom?
- How do teachers establish a ‘social’ atmosphere which provides opportunities to involve the pupils in interaction?

The research questions sought to identify strategies ML teachers deemed examples of ‘good’ practice employed to stimulate meaningful interaction in the TL with learners. Given that the learners in this study were adolescents with no choice as to whether they were in the ML class or not, the aim was also to identify the way the teachers created a collaborative atmosphere in which learners appeared willing to respond in the TL, which necessitated looking at the ‘social’ nature of the classroom encounter. Since this study appears to be the first to investigate ways the TL is used stimulate interaction in ML lessons in the Scottish secondary school context, the answers to the research questions could be a valuable resource for beginning ML teachers as well as those with more experience wishing to develop their skills. Furthermore, it is hoped that the wider research community will be able to refer to the research findings when working in other contexts, as many of the findings reflect good practice in general.

The methodology used in the study has been described in Chapter 3. The findings from the analysis of the data were presented and discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. This chapter aims to establish how well the research questions have been addressed, bringing together the findings from the previous three chapters to present coherent arguments which underline *how* the TL may be used to engage learners in communicative interaction. Limitations of the study will also be addressed as well as recommendations for further research.

The research questions may appear at first sight to focus on different areas of the ML classroom, the first question examining the teachers' TL with the aim of identifying strategies for engaging learners in interaction and the second focusing on the 'social' nature of the classroom and the construction of a collaborative atmosphere within which learners are seen to respond readily. However, answers to the two questions appeared closely intertwined as it became evident that the teachers' TL had clear social as well as pedagogical functions. The four teachers represented four very different characters and there were differences in the amount and 'types' of their TL. Differences have been noted throughout this thesis; however, what is striking is that there were remarkable similarities regarding the functions for which they used the TL. A brief summary of these similarities and their implications for practice is offered below. Discussion of possible reasons behind the differences has already taken place in previous chapters, but will also be revisited briefly.

## **7.2 Pedagogical and Collaborative Functions of the Teachers' TL**

In Chapter 4 the high level of teacher control was discussed. The teachers appeared to operate within a strict disciplinary code, deciding where the learners sat, the focus of the lesson, the activities which took place in the classroom and who should speak and when. Teacher control of pace also meant that the learners had to stay alert and there was little opportunity for them to go off-task. Evidence from the interviews with pupils demonstrated their approval for this type of structure. Teacher control appears to run counter to the creation of a learner-centred ethos, where learners are encouraged to have a say in what is learned and how learning should take place. However, the very particular context of the secondary school classroom appears to demand a very structured framework and it is possible that the 'benign dictatorship' the teachers imposed was effective in ensuring that learners were unable to opt out. The exacting nature of the teachers' demands, unequivocally understood and endorsed by the learners, was not seen as repressive, possibly due to the enthusiasm they appeared to display for the TL and the good humour with which they conducted the lessons.

The evidence from the observations and the interviews with both teachers and pupils, therefore, suggests that clear expectations of behaviour should be made explicit to the learners but that the imposition of control should be achieved by a 'light touch' approach, sensitive to the need to maintain learners' confidence and demonstrating respect for them.

The research shows that maintaining a brisk pace in the lesson appeared to make it less easy for learners to go off-task, particularly when they were continuously invited to respond to questions not only of a pedagogical but also of a 'sociable' nature. The constant breaking up of teacher utterances, posing questions which required either a verbal or non-verbal response, seemingly directed randomly to pupils, appeared to ensure that learners stayed alert. Many of the questions posed by the teachers in the study were 'tag' questions, designed to check understanding or elicit agreement, a device which could be said to underline the collaborative nature of effective teaching and learning.

The study identified three main categories or types of TL interaction which related to the pedagogical focus of the lesson in the teachers' lessons 'Operational-type' language was used for organisation and instructions. 'Analysis-type' language related to discussion and explanation of grammar. 'Practice-type' language describes the display type of questioning that took place within structured exercises designed to rehearse particular TL constructions. All the pedagogically focused language was highly interactional and often personalised. Although the questions in practice-type language interactional sequences usually demanded learners' manipulation of particular grammatical structures in response, they were typically designed so that the learners also had to provide personal information.

Personalisation of the language they are learning makes it more relevant to learners and results in greater motivation (Dörnyei 2001, Liulienė & Metiūnienė 2006). Beginning teachers may find that relating grammar structures and practice language in interactional

TL sequences to learners' interests and lifestyles may have the consequence of more motivated learners because they are using the TL to express their own views, preferences and personal information in preparation for conversation with native speakers.

The research found that as well as explicit pedagogically focused TL, the teachers in the study all employed 'conversation-type' TL 'pop ups', most often within a practice-type language interactional sequence and which, although the purpose may have been pedagogical, were likely to have appeared to the pupils merely as an expression of the teacher's interest in the learner's response. Through carefully scaffolded questions, designed to be 'overheard' by the whole class, the teachers encouraged learners to develop their answers in short TL sequences which explored their personal experiences. If Wadensjö's (1998) and Goffman's (1981) reception and production formats are used as a framework to describe the interaction, the teachers could be said to have enabled the learners to act in the role of responders and principals, taking responsibility themselves for continuing the interaction. The role of conversation-type language will be discussed further later in this chapter. It is important to note here the contrast it presents to the 'normal' pedagogical focus in the classroom.

Evidence shows that the way the TL might be used to achieve pedagogical objectives through a balance of pedagogical focus and more personal conversation-type communicative interaction appeared very effective as learners were obliged to use the TL to produce their own meanings. This balance of apparently different functions is a technique which could be adopted by other teachers wishing to increase pupils' TL communicative competence and make classroom interaction less predictable and therefore more dialogic. The teacher's apparently obvious interest that is conveyed to the learners may impact on the affective domain, as they perceive the teacher's interest in them as people other than merely language learners, with a possible subsequent enhancement of their sense of self.

Teachers' corresponding openness about some aspects of their own lives outside the classroom was also instrumental in creating a more sociable atmosphere, beneficial to the teacher-pupil relationship even though the power differential did not appear to be greatly reduced. This suggests that while establishing a group norm of achievement by making their expectations of learners' performance explicit, teachers should perhaps also establish a group norm of collaboration by sharing experiences and building on 'common ground' that underlines the 'social' nature of the classroom encounter. Beginning and even more experienced teachers may fear a 'loss of control' in the ML classroom which may lead them to concentrate on activities and interaction with a narrow pedagogical focus; perhaps taking a more inclusive view of the learners as individuals and communicating interest in them may have beneficial effects on their TL output and go some way to resolving the apparent dichotomy between exacting teacher control and learner-centredness.

### **7.3 Quantities of TL and English**

The actual amount of exclusive TL use in teacher turns in the study varied: 49% (Teacher 4); 77% (Teacher 2); 88% (Teacher 1); 93% (Teacher 3). The quantity of exclusive TL turns appears to correlate to the level of the learners, more TL being used with high performing pupils. Exclusively English speaking turns were evident more often in the class of low performing pupils. However, instances of 'code switching' where English appeared as an interjection within a TL turn were counted separately which meant that the relative quantities of TL use by the teachers could be considered higher. The variable use of TL, English and the use of English interjections appears to reflect each teacher's judgement of the optimum level to use with particular classes and in particular stages of the lesson.

The decision about how much TL to use with a class may seem difficult to beginning teachers who lack the teaching experience to judge effectively. The decisions the teachers in the study took regarding TL and English use appeared to be as a result of reactive alertness to the learners' verbal and non-verbal responses. Staying alert to the

messages the learners communicate through body language in addition to their verbal responses may therefore be significant in assisting teachers to decide when to transfer some or all of the TL to English. Another strategy which the teachers often deployed was to ask learners to translate their TL utterances into English, thus ensuring that they were made comprehensible to the whole class. This strategy has the added effect of involving the learners in working to decode the language, as they would have to if faced with a native speaker. The use of learner translation may be useful to teachers who wish to provide support and challenge for all the learners in their class; support provided by translations from their possibly more able peers who may enjoy the challenge posed by interpreting the teacher's TL utterances for the class.

Although the teachers in the study were strict about pupils' use of the TL in practice exercises they also permitted their use of English, particularly when used as a meta-language to discuss grammar, although the teachers invariably stayed in their TL persona. A flexible attitude to learners' use of English may therefore be effective in helping learners construct their understanding of the form of the language, allowing them the security of the mother tongue to articulate understanding.

#### **7.4 Interaction**

Throughout the observations I was struck by the *intensity* of the interaction that the teachers initiated. Each teacher turn usually contained at least more than one invitation to respond; this might include 'tag' questions or the teacher might rephrase or repeat a question. The teachers also interjected instructions and humorous comments which often did not require a verbal response but to which the learners had to pay attention. The creation and maintenance of a collaborative atmosphere within the pedagogical structure of the classroom through the use of the TL for less 'formal' communication has already been noted. The next section will consider the purposes of the TL that the teachers employed and the implications for practitioners.

### **7.5 Functions of the Teachers' Language: Conversation-type Language**

It could be argued that the conversation-type language the teachers employed in interaction with the pupils, as well as contributing to a collaborative ethos, provided them with an opportunity to use the TL in as close a situation to 'real world' communication with native speakers as is possible in a ML classroom. Pupils performed in predictable speaking exercises using practice-type TL structures and vocabulary as a rehearsal for using them with native speakers. However, it appeared that only in conversation-type 'pop ups' were they exposed to unpredictable TL interaction of the type they might face in conversation with a sympathetic native speaker in which they had to use the structures and vocabulary 'for real'.

It appears, therefore, that conversation-type language sequences may serve the useful function of exposing the learners to 'authentic' TL 'conversation' where they actually use the language for the purpose of communicating their own meaning rather than to practise structures in preparation for communication some time in the future. While the analysis-type language and practice-type language interactional sequences are necessary for learners to gain mastery of the form of the language and rehearse its application, it may be that conversation-type language confers 'added value' because it allows the learners to use the TL to rehearse talking about their personal concerns and interests in a way that they may not be able to do in a strictly controlled practice-type language exercise. Not all learners may get the opportunity to take part in conversation-type sequences in every lesson, however, it can be suggested that the rest of the class, the 'overhearers' or 'ratified participants' (Goffman, 1981) benefit from witnessing the interaction and may learn from it.

The amount of TL conversation-type initiations used by the teachers varied: 2% (Teacher 4); 7% (Teacher 1); 10% (Teacher 3); 37% (Teacher 2). With the exception of Teacher 2 they did not represent a large proportion of the classroom TL interaction, however, they appeared effective not only in preparing learners to interact in a meaningful manner with native speakers, but also in transmitting the teachers' interest in



them as individuals, underlining the collaborative nature of the teaching and learning process. Beginning and more experienced teachers may find that personalising the interaction by introducing conversation-type ‘pop-ups’ may result in greater collaboration from the learners because they are hearing and using the TL used for a real communicative purpose; they may also react positively to the implicit message being conveyed by the teachers, that of interest in them and their lives outside the classroom.

### **7.6 Functions of the Teachers’ Language: Face**

It is important to remember that the learners in this study were adolescents who were obliged to study ML and might have been reluctant to speak in class. Poulton et al. (1997) found speaking in front of their classmates was the greatest fear of the adolescents in their study. Asking adolescent learners to speak in a language where their level is equivalent to that of a two to three year old native speaker and of which they may have insecure mastery requires a great deal of sensitivity. All the teachers in the study showed great skill in the steps they took to ensure that learners were not in a position where they would lose face. Learners were alerted to tasks which might be considered ‘complicated’ or difficult, so that any problems they encountered could be attributed to the task, not their lack of ability. Error correction was generally carried out using recasts or invitations to reconsider the utterance so that learners could self-correct rather than be seen to be corrected by the teacher. Incomplete or faulty learner responses were ‘revoiced’ through reformulation or amplification so that the learner remained as the principal of the utterance. The teachers’ sensitive handling of errors may have been responsible for pupils’ apparent willingness to contribute in the TL.

Beginning teachers need to be aware of the importance of the face-saving strategies mentioned above which allow learners to feel as secure as possible in the process of language learning and reduce the threat to their self-esteem. It is also important that they minimise any difficulty that learners may experience in expressing themselves in the TL by providing the means to answer promptly if necessary. The teachers in the study all provided anticipatory response cues (ARCS) which were designed to give the learners

assistance to respond appropriately; this provision was particularly noticeable when the teachers introduced conversation-type initiations, although it was also evident in other types of initiations.

### **7.7 Functions of the Teachers' Language: Anticipatory Response Cues (ARCs)**

The provision of ARCs and the contribution they make to the development of pupils' communicative competence does not appear to have been recognised as a feature of interaction in the ML classroom in previous research; nor can they be explained by conventional participation frameworks, such as the IRF (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) or even Discoursal Follow-up (Cullen, 2002). In order to explain the way ARCs work, it was necessary to adopt the reception and production formats of Wadensjö (1998) and Goffman (1981) to describe how learners move from merely repeating TL to manipulating it under the guidance of the teacher to finally taking responsibility for using it to make their own meaning as principals of the utterance in the role of responder. ARCs provide scaffolding which enable the learner to perform in the TL at a level in between that of author and principal as explained below.

Direct ARCs offer the learner a menu of options from which s/he may choose to respond without delay, thus keeping the pace of the lesson brisk, as well as providing the learner with the correct language relevant to his/her situation. If, as analysis of the field notes revealed, teacher choice of respondents appears random and unpredictable, ARCs also offer the 'overhearers' of the interaction vocabulary and structures they may need or wish to use in response when they are chosen to answer. Indirect ARCs are usually incorporated into teachers' initiations and may allow the respondent to enhance his/her answer by 'borrowing' language used in the question to extend the response. Nonetheless, in the study not all pupils appeared to require ARCs, many of them providing their own responses as principals of their utterances.

The provision of ARCs was particularly useful to learners in conversation-type interaction the teachers initiated which departed from the 'script' of practice language

exercises and allowed pupils to express their meaning without the time lapse that might have occurred as they sought to retrieve vocabulary or structures for which they were not prepared. As well as keeping the pace of the lesson dynamic, the use of ARCs means that learners are not only helped to respond, but the provision of possible answers may lessen chances of cognitive overload through providing clues to the meaning of an unpredictable question. Offering ARCs also means that the learners do not lose face before their peers as they are seen to be able to respond promptly. The use of ARCs in classrooms where learners have previously had little experience of teacher TL may facilitate its success by providing security to the learners that they will be assisted to answer leading to a subsequent lowering of their ‘affective filter’ (Krashen, 1988).

### **7.8 An Alternative Participation Framework**

Although the classrooms in the study appeared similar to others in relation to the amount of interaction which took place within the IRF framework (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), the use of Goffman’s (1981) and Wadensjö’s (1998) production and reception formats to describe the way the teachers scaffolded the interaction through the provision of ARCs was particularly helpful. These unconventional formats may assist those who wish to employ an alternative participation framework to give a clearer picture of ways ML learners may be supported to move from responding to display questions to making their own meaning in response to unpredicted referential questions.

The study aimed to identify strategies which successful teachers employed to stimulate TL interaction and create a collaborative atmosphere with learners. The TL that the teachers employed was multi-layered in terms of pedagogical and social functions. Within the structured pedagogical framework that they imposed within their classrooms they also transmitted an obvious interest in the learners and concern that they should not lose face in the lengthy process of learning to speak a foreign language. They focused not just on pedagogical features of the language but also initiated ‘conversation-type’ sequences which allowed learners to hear and use the TL being used in a more ‘real’ ‘sociable’ context, in which they too revealed personal information. They also employed

strategies such as humour, constant questioning and a seemingly random selection of respondents which ensured that the learners were forced to stay alert. They offered ARCs to assist learners to respond which at the same time provided other learners with models of TL interactional language which might assist them when they were chosen to answer.

While it could be argued that it was each teacher's character which contributed to the positive atmosphere, the teachers had very different personalities and mannerisms. However, as stated earlier, the findings suggest that the strategies they employed, which are summarised above, were extremely similar and provoked similar reactions from very different types of pupils. This appears to be the first study to look at the Scottish secondary ML classroom with an exploratory focus, rather than taking a stance which aims to test hypotheses within a theoretical framework. The contribution that this study makes, therefore, through its close analysis of the interaction between teachers and learners, can be seen as the identification of certain strategies, employed by 'good' teachers which appeared to encourage learners' responses while also having regard to their face. The function of ARCs does not appear to have been mentioned in the research literature up to now; it may be that the recognition of this important TL strategy which assists learners to respond will be welcomed by practitioners and contribute to their store of possible interactional approaches, while providing other scholars with a starting point for further research.

### **7.9 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research**

Because this is one of the few studies focusing on TL interaction in the Scottish secondary school ML context, and may be the first to look at TL strategies the teachers employed in order to promote interaction with the learners a number of decisions had to be taken about the scale of the research. There were a number of components in the lessons which might have merited more scrutiny, the most relevant of which will now be described.

Although a large number of tasks the teachers planned for the learners required verbal interaction the tasks themselves were not examined to ascertain whether they stimulated more or less interaction; the concentration was on the way verbal interaction between the teacher and the learners was encouraged by the teachers' TL. Nor was there a focus on pupil/pupil speaking exercises. Both these areas might have yielded a rich source of additional information about pupils' development of communicative TL and may be the subject of further research activity.

Pursuing the aims of the research meant that certain activities in the teachers' classrooms were not investigated. Exercises which did not require a verbal response, such as reading comprehension or writing texts in the TL were not examined. However, the reinforcement they provide may be influential in consolidating pupils' language and could be the focus of a two-pronged approach to TL learning which could benefit from investigation.

Because of the focus on TL interaction, it was not possible to examine closely the teachers' and the learners' use of English during the lessons. Although generally accepted as a meta-language when the pedagogical focus was on analysis of language, it may be that there were patterns to the teachers' use of English which were not discerned and may be considered as an area which would benefit from further study. Another related area for potential future research might be the examination of pupils' use of English during interaction with the teacher. Although the teachers in the main maintained their TL personae during interactional sequences, pupils were, on occasions, allowed to respond in English. Research identifying possible reasons for these departures from the accepted mode of communication in the TL may provide greater insight into the complex character of interaction in the ML classroom.

The interviews with learners provided a rich fund of data, however, their evidence was used for triangulation, to support or challenge the findings arising from the analysis of the transcripts which were viewed as the main source of data. The pupils' voice has

often been ignored in research studies or considered secondary, as was the case to a degree in this research. Further work exploring their views of the ML teaching and learning process is planned so that deeper awareness of their perceptions of what works best for them might be obtained.

The teachers all appeared very successful in using the TL to engage pupils and position them to respond in the TL. However, as noted in the introduction to this thesis and in the review of the literature, it seems that many teachers do not believe that it is possible or desirable to use the TL as extensively as those teachers in the study did. These teachers may also be considered successful in terms of examination results and continuation rates post compulsory study. Research comparing the two approaches may be fruitful in determining significant commonalities or differences in pupils' TL output.

Description of the strategies identified which appeared so successful in creating an atmosphere of collaboration where the pupils responded readily to the TL used by the teachers has, of necessity, been concise. The use of humour in the classroom, for example, or face-saving moves may be the subject of further research into the special nature of relationships within the ML classroom.

The teachers' use of ARCs within the different types of language sequences to scaffold learners' TL use was one of the most significant findings of the study. However, more research into ARCs needs to be conducted not only to enable teachers to incorporate them more systematically in their interactive practices, but also to investigate whether there is a correlation between the amount of ARCs offered to higher or poorer performing pupils. In this study the provision of ARCs tended to be predominant in conversation-type interaction, however, research into their use in interactional sequences in different pedagogical foci of lessons could offer a clearer picture of how pupils' TL interactive skills may be developed. A deductive approach considering whether systematic use of ARCs makes a difference in learners' TL communicative competence may also shed light on their effectiveness or not. In addition, a more generic study may

determine whether the use of ARCs assists greater understanding of subject knowledge or not.

The strategies identified in the teachers' TL in classroom interaction appeared to be instrumental in stimulating the pupils' responses in the TL. However, no assumptions can be made from these findings that real learning was necessarily taking place. Although in the interviews the pupils' perceptions were that they were clearly learning, no claims can be made that the teacher strategies identified in this thesis for prompting interaction can bring about pupils' learning. To do so would require a very different type of study which involved carefully controlled comparisons. Nonetheless, as noted in the literature review, practice is seen as essential for language acquisition (Ur 1995, Ellis, 2005b, Belchamber 2007) and without the practice of the language instigated by the teachers' initiations, the learners may have been denied opportunities for producing and improving their output.

#### **7.10 Contribution to a Wider Understanding of ML Teaching**

In conducting this research the aim was to identify strategies that successful ML teachers used to stimulate TL interaction with the learners. A secondary aspiration was to discover how they created a collaborative atmosphere where adolescent learners appeared disposed to respond to their initiations. From the evidence presented in this thesis, it seems clear that the creation of a collaborative atmosphere where the learners' affective filter is low is of considerable value in supporting adolescent learners' contributions in the modern languages classroom. The fact that the establishment and maintenance of such an atmosphere in the classrooms of the teachers in the study was achieved through the medium of the TL is all the more remarkable because of the limited nature of the learners' knowledge and the fact that all present shared a common first language.

Measures taken by the teachers to preserve the learners' face, including sensitive error correction and acknowledgment of the complexity of some areas of study enabled the

learners to respond apparently willingly in the TL when asked to do so. Teacher revoicing and reformulating of learners' TL responses enabled individual learners to retain ownership of the meaning of their response while exposing other learners, 'the overhearers', to more accurate or amplified renderings of individual output.

The results of the study suggest that the teachers' TL was multi-functional and used to communicate to learners not only on an explicit pedagogical level but also on an implicit affective level, sensitive to learners' possible insecurities. Teachers also scaffolded learners' utterances carefully, providing them with ARCs to assist them to respond, thus overcoming any barriers they might feel impeded their responses. TL ARCs have not been identified in other research studies and although intuitively employed by the teachers, if adopted systematically, they may have a genuine impact on the quantity and quality of TL pupils produce in the classroom. At the very least they can be viewed as an enabling strategy for pupils which also allows the teacher to keep the pace of the lesson brisk

Goffman's (1981) and Wadensjö's (1998) production and reception formats do not appear to have been used before to analyse the different interactive processes which take place in the environment of the ML classroom, yet both formats seemed particularly appropriate to describe the functions of the teachers' interactional moves and the scaffolding they provided to support learners' responses. They were also effective in describing learners' TL development as they moved from repetition of new language through authoring it in controlled practice sequences to using it to make their own meaning in 'natural' interaction as responders and principals. The use of these formats may be regarded as an important analytical tool in the examination of teacher/pupil interaction, not just in the ML classroom, but in other curricular areas where interaction is seen as important for learning.



### **7.11 Implications for practitioners**

The significance of this research lies in the insights and strategies that it offers to practitioners. The results of this study may be useful to beginning and more experienced teachers who wish to stimulate more pupil involvement in the interactional process within the classroom, but are unsure of how to go about it. They may also provide a starting point for those who wish to explore further the very special nature of the ML classroom environment. As noted in the review of the literature, teachers may lack the confidence to use more than minimal quantities of the TL, either due to fear of not being understood and therefore risking losing control of the class, or because of a lack of knowledge of the kind of language which may be effective in engaging pupils in interaction. This study has identified a number of strategies which appeared particularly successful in stimulating pupils' responses in a variety of interactional sequences which occurred during different pedagogical foci in the lesson. Also identified were ways the TL was used to create and maintain an atmosphere of collaboration, so that learners responded readily to teachers' initiations.

Ellis (2005a: 52) states, 'teachers are concerned with what works in their own particular teaching contexts. [C]lassroom research ...is still remote from actual practice'. This study has explored the practice of successful ML teachers and analysed the language they used to involve pupils in interaction. It could be argued that the results of this study may have reduced the gap between research and practice for practitioners, because it has enabled practical strategies to be identified, which they may use to improve TL interaction between themselves and their pupils in the ML class. It can be assumed that teachers enter and remain in the teaching profession because of two major factors: enthusiasm for their subject and also because they enjoy working with young people. Practical approaches which have proved effective with a wide variety of learners may be seen as particularly valuable to those teachers wishing to increase the quality and quantity of the TL they use in the classroom to interact with their pupils.

Practitioners may also be interested in the interactional moves that the teachers in the study deployed which helped to ensure a positive group dynamic where the learners collaborated readily with the teacher. This study has unpacked how the teachers employed face-saving moves and language designed to cement collaboration between them and their learners. This may be considered a helpful support for beginning teachers and also for those with more experience, who wish to develop a positive, engaging classroom ethos. It is envisaged that the findings can form the basis of pre-service and in-service programmes which will inform participants of the research outcomes and offer opportunities to discuss and put into practice those strategies identified which appeared to be so effective in the classrooms of the teachers in the study.

As this was an exploratory study, the findings may also serve as a point of departure for further research. In discussing the limitations of the research, a number of possible avenues worthy of investigation have been identified; however, teachers may also wish to use the findings as the basis for action research, perhaps regarding their own or colleagues' TL use in the classroom. Teacher educators may also make use of the findings, not only to inform their students, but also for their own research purposes. The dissemination of the findings is planned to take place in conferences and in publications, not only for educational and ML researchers, but also for practising teachers so that the potential value of the results may be considered by as wide an audience as possible.

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## **Appendix 1 Interview Questions: Teachers**

1. How long have you been using the TL?
2. What's your philosophy regarding the use of the TL?
3. What do you think is the greatest advantage to using the TL?
4. What do you think is the greatest disadvantage to using the TL?
5. What do you find helpful to make sure that all the pupils understand?
6. What do you find helpful to make sure that all the pupils listen?
7. Do you adapt your TL use for different classes?
8. Could you talk me through a typical lesson from beginning to end?
9. When do you use English in the classroom?
10. What do you do when pupils speak to you in English?
11. What do you find encourages pupils to speak?
12. How do you deal with pupils' mistakes?
13. Is there a tension between using the TL and teaching grammar?
14. Have you found any activities particularly useful in getting pupils to talk?
15. How do you go about building a relationship with a class?
16. During the observations, I was struck by the fact that there appeared to be no discipline issues. Can you comment on that?
17. You appear to ask a lot of questions, but do not concentrate on one person. It seems that although you talk to individuals it's for the whole class. Is my reading of this correct?
18. You appear to give quite a lot of personal information about yourself. Is there a reason for that?
19. What do you think are the qualities necessary to be a successful ML teacher?

## **Appendix 2 Interview Questions: Pupils**

1. Is the Languages classroom different from other classrooms?
2. When does the teacher speak French/German in the class?
3. How do you feel about the teacher speaking French/German?
4. How does the teacher make sure that everyone understands?
5. Could you talk me through a typical lesson from beginning to end?
6. When do you speak French/German?
7. What happens if you speak in English in the languages classroom?
8. What activities do you think help you to develop your speaking skills in the foreign language?
9. What activities would you like to have more of in the languages classroom?
10. What does the teacher do to help you speak in the foreign language?
11. What happens if you make a mistake?
12. How is French/German different (or similar ) to English?
13. How well do you think you know the grammar of French/German, how it works?

### Appendix 3 3-Minute Extract (1)

- 1T: *Ich hasse es, wenn ich meine Stimme höre. Das ist nicht so gut. Was ist das auf Englisch? Ich hasse es, wenn ich meine Stimme höre. Was ist das? E.?*
- 2P1: *You hate it when you can hear your own voice.*
- 3T: *Ja, und so kann ich jetzt meine Stimme hören. Ist nicht so gut, ok? So, das Badezimmer ist neben meinem Schlafzimmer. Ok, sehr gut, ok. Das Badezimmer ist neben meinem Schlafzimmer. Wer hat hier ein Problem? Wer versteht das nicht? Ist das ok? A., du hast es falsch geschrieben. Ist es ok?*
- 4P2: *Ja.*
- 5T: *Ja, du verstehst es jetzt, Dativ, neben meinem Schlafzimmer. Was war nun die Nächste ? Was war nun die Nächste ? M.?*
- 6P3: *The living room is behind the dining room.*
- 7T: *Ok.*
- 8P3: *Das Wohnzimmer ist hinter dem Esszimmer.*
- 9T: *Sehr gut. Das Wohnzimmer ist hinter dem Esszimmer. Wer hat hier etwas Falsches geschrieben? Alles ok? Sehr gut. War das nun die letzte Frage?*
- 10Ps: *Nein.*
- 11T: *Nein, die Nächste ?*
- 12P4 : *The kitchen is next to the utility room.*
- 13T: *Ok, los!*
- 14P4: *Die Küche ist neben dem Waschküche.*
- 15T: *Die Küche ist neben ist richtig, und dann Waschküche, pass auf C., Waschküche (writing on board). Die meisten Wörter, pass auf, die meisten Wörter die mit 'e' enden, sind normalerweise 'die' Wörter. Ok? So was muss das sein? Kannst du das korriegieren?*
- 16P4: *Das Wohnzimmer ist hinter der Esszimmer.*
- 17T: *Nein, Waschküche.*
- 18P4: *Eh?*
- 19T: *Die Küche und ...*



- 20P4: *Oh yeah, oh yeah, die Küche ist neben der Waschküche.*
- 21T: *Richtig, die Küche ist neben der Waschküche. Passt auf, die meisten Wörter die mit 'e' enden, sind 'die' Wörter. Was ist das auf Englisch? Die meisten Wörter die 'e' als Endung haben, sind 'die' Wörter.*
- 22P5: *Most of the words that end in 'e' are feminine.*
- 23T; *Sehr gut. Also, die Küche ist neben der Waschküche. Ok, und die Nächste, V. ?  
War das die Letzte?*
- 24Ps: *Ja.*
- 25T: *Ok dann sagt bitte: das war die Letzte.*
- 26Ps: *Das war die Letzte.*
- 27T: *V. kann auch das sagen, ok? Sehr gut. Wer hat ein Problem? Wer hat ein Problem mit diesem Dativ? Alles ok? Ist alles klar? Ok, Passt auf. Hier haben wir (writing on board) Nominativ. Wir wiederholen ein bisschen Nominativ, Dativ und dann Akusativ, ok. Was ist Nominativ dann? Was ist das Wort für 'the' im Nominativ? Wer kann mir sagen? D?*
- 28P6: *Der, die das.*
- 29T: *Ok, das ist entweder der, die oder das (writing on board). Das ist Nominativ.*

#### Appendix 4 3-Minute Extract (2)

T : *Il y a combien de questions? Z.?*

P4 : *Eh cinq?*

T : *Cinq? A.?*

P4 : *Six.*

T : *Six?*

P5 : *Eh, quatorze.*

T : *Bon, il y a quatorze numéros mais je pense il y a sept numéros et sept réponses, oui? Ok, regardez les questions. Oui? Comment dit-on 'which area do you live in'? 'Which area do you live in'? B.?*

P6 : *Tu habites dans quel that word.*

T : *(laughs) Oui, ce mot, comment on prononce ? Tu habites dans quel?*

P6 : *Quartier.*

T : *Quartier.*

P6 : *d'Edimbourg.*

T : *d'Edimbourg, oui. On peut voir un peu? Tu habites dans quel quartier d'Edimbourg? J.?*

P7 : *Ah, j'habite à Newington.*

T : *Uhuh. Et toi A.?*

P5 : *J'habite à Prestonfield.*

T : *Uhuh. Et toi F.?*

P8 : *Em, j'habite à Edimbourg.*

T : *Ok, la deuxième question, oui, mais où à Edimbourg? Dans quel quartier?*

P8 : *(in posh accent) Morningside.*

T : *Oh! Oh! à Morningside. Oh! Tres chic, tres chic, oui, ok. Comment dit-on en français, 'Where's that situated'? Z.?*

P4 : *Où est situé.*

T : *Où est situé. Par exemple, quel question tu demandes à F.?*

P4 : *Où est situé Morningside?*

*T : Uhuh. Oui. On peut dire où est situé ou une autre question, c'est où se trouve...oui? Où se trouve? Troisième. Comment dit-on en français, 'Where's Prestonfield'? Comment dit-on ça en français?*

*P4 : Où se trouve Prestonfield?*

*T : Oui, où se trouve Prestonfield? Et voilà vous avez les possibilités de réponses, oui? Comment dit-on en français What's Prestonfield like? (silence, one or two hands up) Alors réveillez-vous un peu. Wakey wake. L., Comment dit-on 'What's Prestonfield like'?*

*P9: C'est comment Prestonfield?*

*T : Très bien, ça c'est question cinq. C'est comment? Oui? Il y a une autre façon de demander. There's another way of asking. Comment tu trouves Prestonfield? Qu'est-ce que c'est?*

## **Appendix 5 : List of Original Codes and Overarching Category Groups**

### **Actual language:**

**Simple language**

**Use of cognates**

**Short phrases**

**Repetition of own utterances**

**Repetition of pupils' utterances**

**Rephrasing**

### **Delivery:**

**Slow speed**

**Enthusiasm**

**Humour**

**Body language/visual aids**

**Discipline**

### **Interaction language:**

**Addressing/questioning whole class, while speaking to one pupil**

**Pupils prompted by name to respond**

**Pupils offered menu of options for replies**

**Checks for comprehension**

**Thinking aloud**

**TL consistency in bi-lingual conversation with pupils**

**Personal information/anecdotes**

**Information about the target culture**

### **Responses to pupil interaction:**

**Strategically responsive to pupils' language**

**Personal knowledge about pupils exploited**

**Immediate translation of pupils' English responses**

**Face-saving strategies**

**Phatic comments**

**Attitude to errors**

**Praise**

**Interest in pupils' responses**

**Focus of language:**

**Organisation**

**Practice of structures**

**Grammar**

**Informal/conversation-type**

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