The Role of Dialogue in the Teaching of Reading in South Africa

Kellie Steinke[1,*]

[1]University of Mpumalanga, Mbombela, South Africa

*Corresponding author: Mbombela Campus, Cnr R40 and D725 Roads, Mbombela 1200, South Africa. E-mail: Kelle.steinke@ump.ac.za http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9964-3676

Abstract

The importance of classroom dialogue in promoting effective literacy skills is well documented. Despite comments in a recent paper that there is scant research on classroom observations around print in South Africa post-1994, there have in fact been several studies that have observed classroom practice around reading. The sum of these studies seems to indicate that teaching styles have changed very little over the past 30 years, and that meaningful classroom interaction between teacher and learner remains largely absent. This paper will focus on how the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), of teachers affected their classroom interaction with Grade three and four learners in two semi-urban schools in the Midlands area of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It forms part of a larger, 2019, mixed methods, multiple case study that involved eight teachers and their learners, and examined the effects of PCK on the teaching of reading in these Grades. Findings were that, despite some teachers using additional training, ultimately none were managing to move their learners from decoding to reading effectively, and that lack of meaningful interaction played a central role in this.

1. Introduction

The South African education system continues to provide a sub-standard level of basic education to its learners. It is a shocking statistic that some 78% of Grade fives cannot read for meaning, especially when children are expected to have learnt to read adequately by the end of Grade three (Mullis et al., 2017; Spaull & Hoadley, 2017). At the end of the foundation level, learners are required to learn from reading. If they have not attained sufficient literacy levels, they are set up for academic failure (Pretorius et al., 2016). In addition, oral fluency and self-concept as a reader are strongly influenced by early school reading experiences (Vaknin-Nusbaum et al., 2020). Classroom dialogue, also referred to as 'teacher talk', plays a crucial role in the successful teaching of reading, while at the same time, the negative effects of unsystematic classroom communication between teacher and learner are well documented (Albalawi & Nadeem, 2020). Furthermore, language, concept and literacy development are closely interrelated, and it is at the foundation levels that a child develops a concept of his or herself as a reader and writer (Vaknin-Nusbaum et al., 2020).

This paper focuses on how the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), of teachers affected their classroom interaction with Grade three and four learners in two semi-urban schools in the Midlands area of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It forms part of a larger, 2019, mixed methods, multiple case study that involved eight teachers, along with their learners, and examined the effects of PCK on the teaching of reading in these Grades.

Out of the two schools, one used English as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT), while the other used isZulu as LoLT until Grade four, when most learners in South Africa (SA) are required to switch to English as their medium of instruction. Both schools suffered severe financial and infrastructural constraints. Although not originally a comparative study, the eight teachers were divided ultimately into two groups of four each: Group 1 consisted of teachers who used additional reading teaching training in addition to the current Government Syllabus, the Curriculum Assessment Statements (CAPS); and Group 2, who used only CAPS. The additionally trained group consisted of teachers who were applying scaffolding teaching approaches (Vygotsky, 1978). The main research question of the study was how the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of teachers of reading either hindered or facilitated the teaching of reading in the foundation and intermediate Grades. The study made use of mixed methods research, and was an explanatory, multiple case study, with a parallel, convergent design. A review of the literature follows.

2. A Review of the Literature

A recent article by Stoffelsma and Van Charldorp (2020) focused on textual engagement and the occurrence of choral responses during Grade three classroom interactions in township schools. In this paper, the statement is made that, post-1994, few studies have been conducted in SA 16ecognize classroom interaction around text as a means of analysing either the discourse, or the two-way talk, between teachers and learners. The authors believe that what actually occurs in these classrooms remains opaque (Stoffelsma & Van Charldorp, 2020), On

the contrary, however, there have been a series of classroom observation studies conducted in SA involving teaching practices around language, texts and reading. All in all, they span some three decades, and provide an interesting view of the state of teaching and literacy in SA. The first of these to be discussed in this paper is that of Wildsmith (1992), which was conducted pre-1994 when classroom-based research in SA was indeed scarce (Hoadley, 2012).

The Wildsmith (1992) study sought to uncover the role of teacher's attitudes, perceptions and teaching practices as agents of both change and resistance in teaching and learning, and was carried out with Grade four and five learners, with four teachers, in Soweto, a prominent SA Township (Wildsmith, 1992). Findings noted the tendency to rote learning, whole class chanting, or choral responses, with minimal speech from students, as well as a high frequency of teachers requesting superficial information and students responding with predictable answers (Wildsmith-Cromarty & Balfour, 2019) . Wildsmith (1992) used the Communicative Orientation to Language Teaching, or COLT, as a classroom observation instrument (see Appendix B), that was originally developed to capture communicative language teaching and communicative differences in L2 classrooms (Fröhlich et al., 1985). While the COLT focused mainly on language teaching, it did contain a category for reading (Mady, 2020). However, it was a purely quantitative data instrument that captured what happened in the classroom and the frequency with which it occurred. I was to base the development of my own observation instrument, the Facilitative Orientation to Reading Teaching, or FORT, upon some of the COLT categories, although the FORT needed to account for the teaching of reading and capture more eclectic teaching approaches within the classroom (see Appendix A).

Moving on, some 11 years into democracy, Ursula Hoadley (2005) examined the role of dialogue in classroom practice utilising Bernstein's (2020) Code theory, Pedagogic Discourse and Framing. Hoadley (2005) designed a coding instrument that could capture classroom teaching practice based on Bernstein's idea of the pedagogic device in order to examine the boundaries between everyday knowledge and formal, educational knowledge (Bernstein, 1975, 2020). According to Bernstein (1990), the form of pedagogy found in formal schooling environments inducts learners into a particular way of thinking, and serves to transmit the elaborated, or specialised code. Two key mechanisms by which this happens are classification, which refers to power, and framing, which refers to control (Bernstein, 1995). This paper will concentrate mainly on framing, and its role in classroom dialogue, i.e. who controls the discourse. As Bernstein says: *"Framing refers to the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, sequencing, pacing and evaluation of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship"* (Bernstein 1975:88).

In her initial thesis, Hoadley (2005) observed 89 video-recorded lessons, with four schools and eight teachers in Cape Town townships, in a multiple case study with Grade three learners. She also used structured interviews and made use of video recordings of lessons to observe literacy teaching practice in English and Xhosa home language (L1) and Numeracy. Hoadley's instrument assigned values to the selection, sequencing and pacing, and evaluative criteria of pedagogic practice, as well as to the amount of control the teacher or learner has over hierarchical issues, such as conduct, manners, and character (Bernstein, 1999; Hoadley, 2005). Her findings were that the classroom system only served to perpetuate the pre-existing

inequality for children who entered formal school with a working or lower socio-economic class orientation to language (Hoadley, 2006), and that teachers were still tending towards tight control over the dialogue in classroom interactions. As with the COLT (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995), elements of Hoadley's coding scheme instrument were incorporated into the FORT design, as current best practice in the teaching of reading involves a scaffolded approach to teaching that inherently allows for the relaxing of the boundaries traditionally placed around the pacing and sequencing of the curriculum (Rose, 2019).

It is significant that Hoadley's (2005) research took place at a time when communicative teaching and Outcomes based Education (OBE) formed the official syllabi in South African Schools. It appears from her findings that despite the introduction of communicative teaching approaches, these were having little impact on actual classroom practice (Hoadley, 2006). In addition, by this time, it was becoming apparent that both the communicative approaches and the related OBE curriculum were proving inadequate in their ability to create effective literacy levels amongst learners in the foundation and intermediate Grades, culminating in revisions to the school curriculum. This would result in the SA Department of Basic Education implementing a new syllabus, known as CAPS (Maddock & Maroun, 2018). While CAPS continues to be fundamentally communicative based, in recent years there has been a development of scaffolded teaching approaches, or what is referred to as a facilitative model of learning and teaching (xxxxxx, 2019). In the area of dialogue, facilitative teaching involves an elaborated interaction sequence between teacher and learner. This interaction sequence may appear similar to the traditional initiation-feedback-response sequence or IRF. However, it contains significant differences that will be discussed further on (Rose, 2016).

To continue across the time continuum, in a small-scale study, Nkosi (2011), investigated the teaching of isiZulu reading to Grades two and three learners at two schools, with a total of eight teachers, in Umlazi in urban KwaZulu Natal, where isiZulu is the home language of the majority of learners. She found that teachers' classroom dialogue appeared to be very much influenced by their personal beliefs, such as the idea that it is better to teach learners in English than in their home language. This resulted in a lack of isiZulu mother-tongue interaction and reading practice in the classroom. In addition, due to the lack of resources for reading in isiZulu, teachers were forced to rely on traditional teaching methods and resources (Nkosi, 2011). Meanwhile, in the following year, in the Vhembe district of Limpopo, Mudzielwana (2012) investigated how teachers understand and teach reading comprehension to Grade three Tshivenda-speaking learners. She placed herself in the position of a non-participant observer in order to establish whether what the teachers said in the audio-taped focus group interviews was borne out in practice in the classroom interactions. Findings indicated that teachers lacked understanding of how to use strategies, plan reading comprehension or reading for meaning, highlighting the urgent need for improved initial teacher training (Howe et al., 2019; Mudzielwana, 2012).

Some twenty years into democracy, Lebese and Mtapuri (2014) investigated the conditions necessary for literacy in two languages, namely Sepedi and English, with foundation learners at Grade three level in one rural school in South Africa. A total of 20 lessons were observed, and it was found that learners were not provided with textbooks, and the only form of reading

that occurred was reading out aloud as a whole class. There were no other method(s) used and little or no learning aids on the walls. Learners were not developing literacy in their home language as they did not read in Sepedi, and they were only exposed to the Sepedi of the teachers, who were not using the academic register of the language. The learners did not receive sufficient exposure to English either, thus making them effectively illiterate in both languages (Lebese & Mtapuri, 2014). The latter finding highlights the importance of the teacher's knowledge of the language of learning and teaching, and especially its use in classroom interaction (Mather & Land, 2014).

Beginning in 2015, the large scale, Early Grade Reading Study, or EGRS (Taylor et al., 2017) was conducted over three years with Grades one to three. It involved 230 schools in the North West Province, with classes with numbers ranging from 38 – 45 learners. All schools were quintiles one to three. Quintiles refer to the level of funding a school in South Africa receives from the Government, with quintile one being the poorest in terms of resources, and quintile five having, in theory, the most resources, although this is not always the case. The purpose of the EGRS was to improve the reading outcomes in the learners' home language, Setswana, and to compare the cost effectiveness of three intervention methods. These were:

- A structured learning programme and centralised training, which involved providing CAPS compatible resources such as lesson plans and quality reading materials for teachers;

- A structured learning programme and specialist on-site coaching for teachers; and

- A parental intervention that worked with parents of learners to highlight issues around literacy and their children.

In total, EGRS saw a total of sixty observation classroom studies and eight detailed case studies. Again, it was found that traditional teaching styles tend to be entrenched, and lacking in effectiveness (Myhill et al., 2016). The recommendations were that a coaching model be considered and applied. This coaching involves, amongst other elements, on-site training and support for the teacher via 19ecognized19 coaches, who visit and observe classrooms. It develops a one-on-one partnership with the teacher that is tailored to her individual needs, and is a promising area for future teacher development (Reid et al., 2020).

More recently, Rule and Land (2017) made use of thematic analysis to examine data from the perspective of reading theory, in order to understand how teachers in the foundation and senior primary school Grade levels teach reading. The research sites consisted of a primary school, as well an adult education centre based on the same premises. The school and adult centre together formed a case study, forming a local learning community. Data was collected from various sources that included extensive classroom observations within the primary school (intermediate and senior levels), and teacher interviews (Rule & Land, 2017). The researchers' conclusions were that teachers needed assistance and training in the understanding of how to teach comprehension strategies to their learners. Few of the participating teachers, either from the primary school or the adult education centre, recognized reading as an intrinsically meaning-making activity. Instead, teachers tended to focus on accurate pronunciation and fluency, using

modelling aloud and then having the learners repeat the text after them. There seemed to be little understanding of how to teach strategies for effective reading, or how to assist learners in drawing inferences. Ultimately, the researchers found what they refer to as an *''oratorical approach to the teaching of reading''* that are linked to the teachers' own more traditional experiences of how they themselves learned to read (Rule & Land, 2017:7).

Finally in this review, a classroom-based study was conducted that focused on the teaching of reading through the recent introduction of trans-languaging (Mgijima, 2019). Trans-languaging involves the deliberate and systematic alternating of languages of input and output between teacher and the learners, with the aim of facilitating understanding of concepts and information. This also involves peer communication within the classroom, as these learners use two languages to communicate with each other as well as with the teacher. It Is a form of flexible bilingualism, where a teacher may, for example, Introduce a concept In one language and then elaborate or explain it to the leaners in another (Mgijima & Makalela, 2021). Using a Solomon four quasi-experimental design, with a total of 215 learners from four different primary schools in the Eastern Cape, Mgijima (2019) investigated the reading development of learners, including their ability to recall information, make predictions and draw inferences from text. Data were collected via a battery of tests written by participating Grade four learners. The findings demonstrated that trans-languaging techniques during classroom lessons had a positive impact on learners' comprehension skills, although this positivity could be hindered by lack of relevant background, linguistic or pragmatic knowledge on the part of the individual learner. This study once again focuses on the importance of the use of language itself in classroom dialogue. After all, one cannot comprehend dialogue or text if one does not understand the language being used (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). By touching on the use of language, comprehension, and use of the mother tongue, the study perhaps comes very close to the heart of interaction and communication within the classroom, as well as its role in teaching and learning (Mgijima & Makalela, 2016). However, it is 20ecognized that language issues alone are not sufficient to remedy the literacy deficit. While the use of mother tongue in teaching and learning remains crucial, it is not ultimately language, but literacy, that is lacking in the schools (Pretorius, 2015).

In summary, the picture provided by the collective findings of the studies above indicates that classroom teaching practice around text in SA has tended to remain traditional and controlling, with restricted learner agency – a situation clearly not conducive to learning (Mendoza & Vite, 2019). In addition, this lack of change spans across a considerable time period in which one might have expected instead to see positive development (Taylor et al., 2019). A theoretical discussion as to what form effective classroom interaction might take follows.

3. Theory

The current research study and related instruments were based on what is referred to as the "Restrictive-Facilitative" teaching model (xxxxxx, 2019). The model had to capture more than just communicative teaching. Teaching practice has continued to evolve over the past few decades into a form that seeks to combine the best of traditional approaches, such as formal

grammar teaching and explicit assessment criteria, with communicative approaches. It could also be called principled eclecticism (Larsen-Freeman, 2018), or a facilitative pedagogy. Thus the instruments developed to capture classroom practice in the study had to be able to account for current best practice in teaching. This can be defined as classroom practice that is already accepted as being highly effective (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015), such as systematic and meaningful classroom communication. Implementing this meaningful dialogue involves a reconceptualised idea of the traditional form of initiation-feedback-response (IRF) interaction (Goodman & Eren, 2013; Rose, 2018).

The traditional IRF sequence was first introduced by in 1975, and presents a three-step, interaction-response-feedback pattern where the teacher initiates, the learner responds, and the teacher gives feedback (Atkins & Brown, 2001). This exchange of information approach in the classroom has been criticised as being more about the fact that the learner is saying what the teacher wants to hear, than about genuine communication. However, despite this criticism, it tends to remain the standard dialogue pattern in classrooms globally (Rustandi, 2017).

On the other hand, meaningful interaction, refers to initiation-response events that occur in the classroom that actually realise learning, as opposed to those where the learners chorus or chant responses, which may not be facilitative (Rose, 2011b). An important facet of meaningful interaction is elaboration. In order to illustrate this process, I will use an explanation of the Learning to Read: Reading to Learn (R2L) approach to literacy teaching, developed first for marginalised aboriginal students in Australia (Rose, 2003). This is because elaboration, meaningful interaction and scaffolding forms an important part of the R2L theoretical base (Rose, 2018). In addition, R2L was one of the additional approaches used by three of the four teachers in Group 1, in addition to CAPS. The remaining teacher made use of READ, which is a communicative-based initiative that employs various reading strategies and materials to improve learners' literacy acquisition (xxxxxx, 2021). Elaboration involves a more communicative form than the traditional IRF routine, and includes explicit teaching; and extended open, and inferential questions. It would typically involve the use of ''WH'' questions that can assist in developing independent learners (Rowe et al., 2017; Tough, 1977). For example, a child may have drawn a picture and, instead of praising the child for the drawing, the teacher may instead ask the child why he/she likes the picture. In this way, the teacher focuses on the effort rather than the product which includes learner support via affirmation, another key tenant of the R2L approach (Rose, 2015).

R2L conceptualises meaningful interaction in the classroom as follows: the teacher initiates, the learner responds and receives feedback, and then the teacher elaborates on the task (Rose, 2011b). This assists the learner to attain to that level of ability that he or she can achieve with the guidance of an expert mentor or guide, but could not necessarily reach if left on their own, known as the zone of proximal development, or ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). Pupil initiative and peer-sharing form part of this interaction (Rustandi, 2017). High-quality interactions can promote students' learning as well their social and academic development (Silinskas et al., 2017). This form of interaction is also referred to as joint attention (O'Madagain & Tomasello, 2021), and is based on the premise that children develop a cultural mode of learning from an early age that forms the basis of their academic or classroom learning. This often occurs

through the mediation of a caregiver or parent (Vygotsky, 1978). As Rose (2011:8) states: *"…adults direct children's attention, or follow their attention to things and activities, then name them, evaluate, demonstrate, explain and so on….. shared emotion is critical as adult and child exchange evaluations of things and actions."*

The R2L interaction cycle is a scaffolded interaction cycle and, although, as mentioned, it might resemble the traditional, typical, IRF pattern, there are three important differences between the two (Dong & Liu, 2020). Firstly, the caregiver's initiation is not simply to get a response, but prepares the learner to respond successfully. Secondly, the follow-up responses, or moves, to the child's answers are not just feedback but incorporate elaboration and shared knowledge around the text and related features. Thirdly, a caregiver's responses are affirming, whereas classroom responses can be negative and inhibit learning (Rose, 2016). Sustained classroom dialogue built around this cycle encourages classroom talk. It might, for example, encourage the use of the abovementioned ''WH'' questions, and thereby extend learning. The traditional IRF interaction does not provide this level of support to learners (Rose, 2004, 2011a). This process is part of a scaffolded form of teaching, which sits at the theoretical heart of R2L. It draws on the classical theories of Vygotsky's (1998) learning as a social process; Halliday's (1978) model of language as text in social context, and Bernstein's (1990) model of education as pedagogic discourse. Lesson sequences and teacher-learner interactions are carefully planned to provide a high level of support for reading and writing texts of all kinds across the curriculum (Halliday, 1978; Rose, 2021).

However, to a large extent in South African classrooms, meaningful interaction is not taking place. Instead, teachers continue to make use of rote learning and chanting, and tend to use what can be referred to as 'safe talk', especially where they themselves are not fully at ease with the use of English as LoLT (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). In addition, initial or pre-service teacher training (ITE) does not provide teachers with knowledge of how to teach reading, or teach them about the role of dialogue in that process (Taylor, 2014). Upon graduation, these teachers continue to teach as they have been taught. This leads to a reliance on traditional teaching methods, where they retain tight control over their classroom interaction, and focus on memorisation and decoding (Ardington et al., 2021). This is compounded by the aforementioned difficulties of the LoLT. In other words, teachers are talking, but it is not just the amount of teacher talk that matters, but also its substance (Vygotsky, 1978). For example, the EGRS found the dominant teaching practices in South Africa to be as follows (Cilliers et al., 2020):

- An over-reliance on teacher-directed strategies;

- Whole-class activities, such as chorusing, where the teachers and student all read together, or repeat after a teacher;

- Students do not attempt to read themselves and merely mimic what the teacher is reading; and

- Students pretend to be reading and the teachers pretend to be teaching.

There is also documented evidence of highly incomplete curriculum coverage, and ineffective

curriculum sequencing and pacing by teachers (Taylor, 2014). A discussion of the research methodology follows.

4. Methods

A total of eight teachers participated in this study, along with their classrooms, with an average of 45 learners in each class. The instruments used in the study consisted of classroom observations; pre- and post-study reading assessments; semi-structured interviews with participating teachers; and the FORT classroom observation instrument (see Appendix A). Lessons were recorded, captured on the FORT and then carefully analysed. Details of these instruments, especially the FORT, have been described in detail in a previous paper (xxxxxx, 2021), so that provided here will be brief. However, a description of the FORT related to its capture of classroom dialogue is necessary.

Originally based upon the COLT (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995), and Hoadley's (2005) coding scheme for classification and framing, the FORT is a classroom observation instrument designed to capture reading teaching. The instrument was designed to account for scaffolded approaches to teaching and learning, and effective, two-way classroom interaction that allows for a wide variety of speech events. In addition, it involves the relaxing of the traditional boundaries around the pacing and sequencing of the curriculum (Bernstein, 1990) to allow weaker learners who may have fallen behind to catch up (Ajjawi et al., 2018). What the above elements of effective teaching, realised via language and classroom interaction, have in common is that the teacher is key. Boundaries and control can be maintained or contested by the teacher because, ultimately, she holds the power (Chan, 2021; Goldsmith, 2009).

Like the COLT, the FORT made use of two sections, A and B (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995). However, the FORT needed to capture qualitative as well as quantitative data and allow for triangulation of data with the other research instruments, such as the semi-structured teacher interviews and reading assessments (see Appendix A). Section A contained categories such as Time, Activity, Participant Organization, Modality and Management, whereas Section B contained possible discourse events that could occur between student and learner and vice versa. It also included a category named 'Other' that could capture non-verbal communication such as body language, raising of hands, and facial expressions. The frequency of behaviours was captured according to 5-minute time increments, with a total of 20 minutes eventually representing one lessons for the sale of analysis. The resulting FORT data were graphically represented in the form of the previously mentioned two teacher Groups. A discussion of the findings follows.

5. Results & Discussion

The study findings indicated firstly, that the additional training of teachers of reading did appear to make a difference to the teaching of reading. This was evidenced by the Group 1 teachers placing more focus on amongst others, comprehension, varying reading strategies, and

integrated teaching that incorporates elements such as writing, spelling, language use and punctuation. It was also evidenced by the higher level of engagement of the learners of the Group 1 teachers during the lessons themselves. However, despite this, it appears that in both Group 1 and Group 2, teachers are still keeping a firm control on classroom interaction. As mentioned, the FORT data was captured graphically, with both groups of teachers displayed in each graph for comparison. In figure 1 below, one can see the level of interaction of teacher to learner. Group 1 is indicated by the blue bar, while Group 1 is represented by the orange bar:
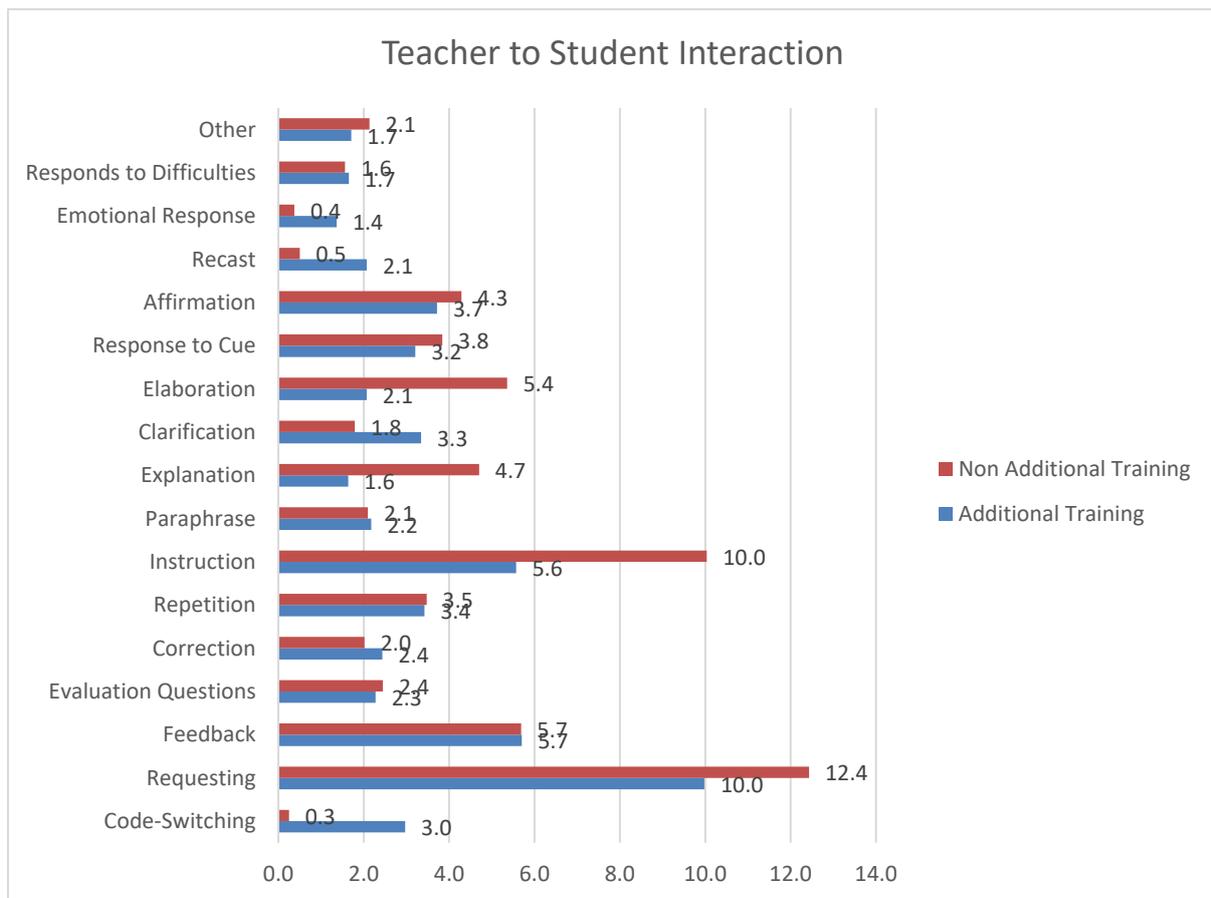
Figure 1. Teacher to Student Interaction

From **Figure 1,** it appears that both groups of teachers were talking frequently to their learners, and both groups cover most of the available categories. The additionally trained Group 1 does tend to have higher scores on most of these. However, if we examine **Figure 2** below, which is the graph representing the data from the interaction from learner to teacher, we see a marked contrast. Again, the blue bar represents Group 1, while the orange represents Group 2:
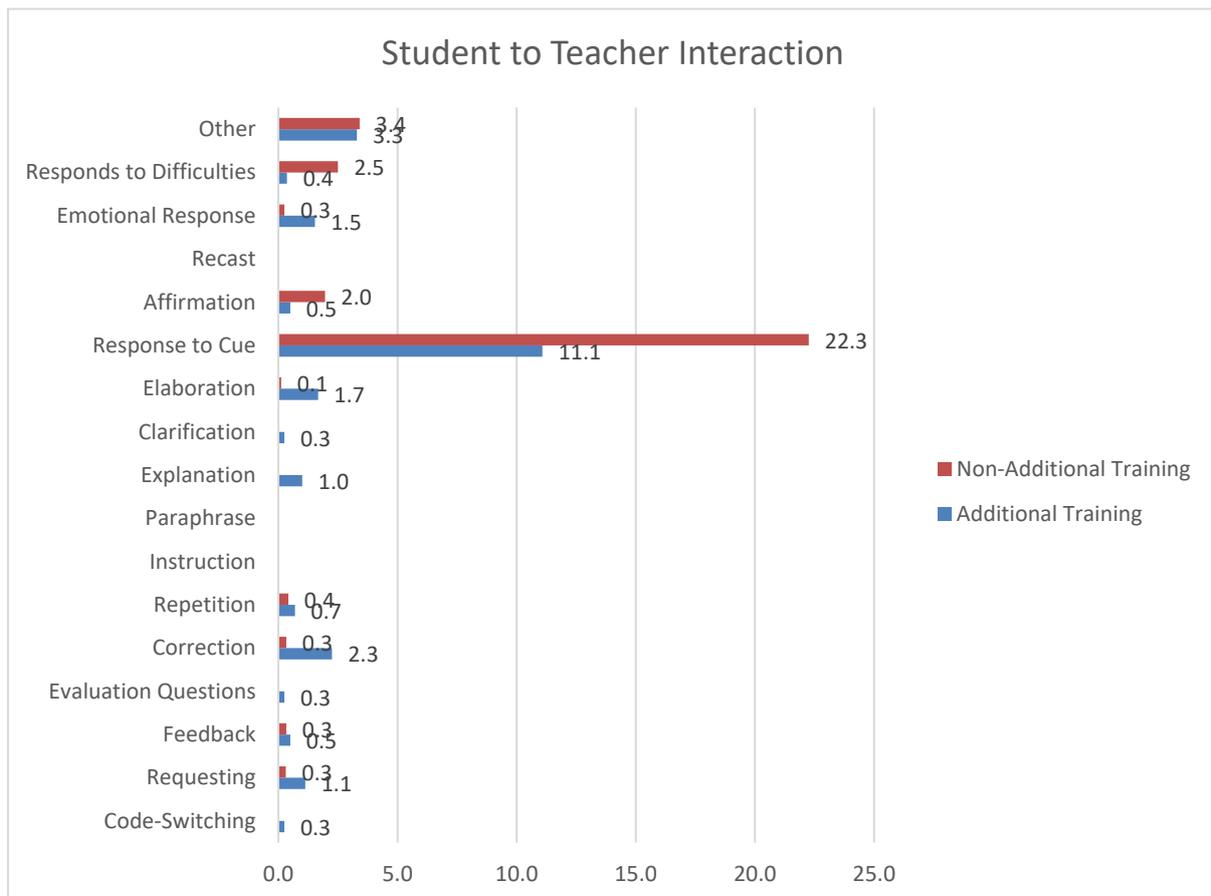
Figure 2. Student to Teacher Interaction

It becomes quite apparent, from **Figure 2**, that there is relatively little interaction from learner to teacher for both Groups. As with **Figure 1,** there is slightly more communication from the learners in Group 1, and they cover slightly more across the spectrum of events. However, both groups clearly have a response to teachers' cues for their highest score. Learner agency appears quite constrained. Yet another angle from which one can approach the analysis of the classroom interaction is from another FORT category, Management, which forms part of Section A. **Figure 3** below provides the FORT graphical data for Management:
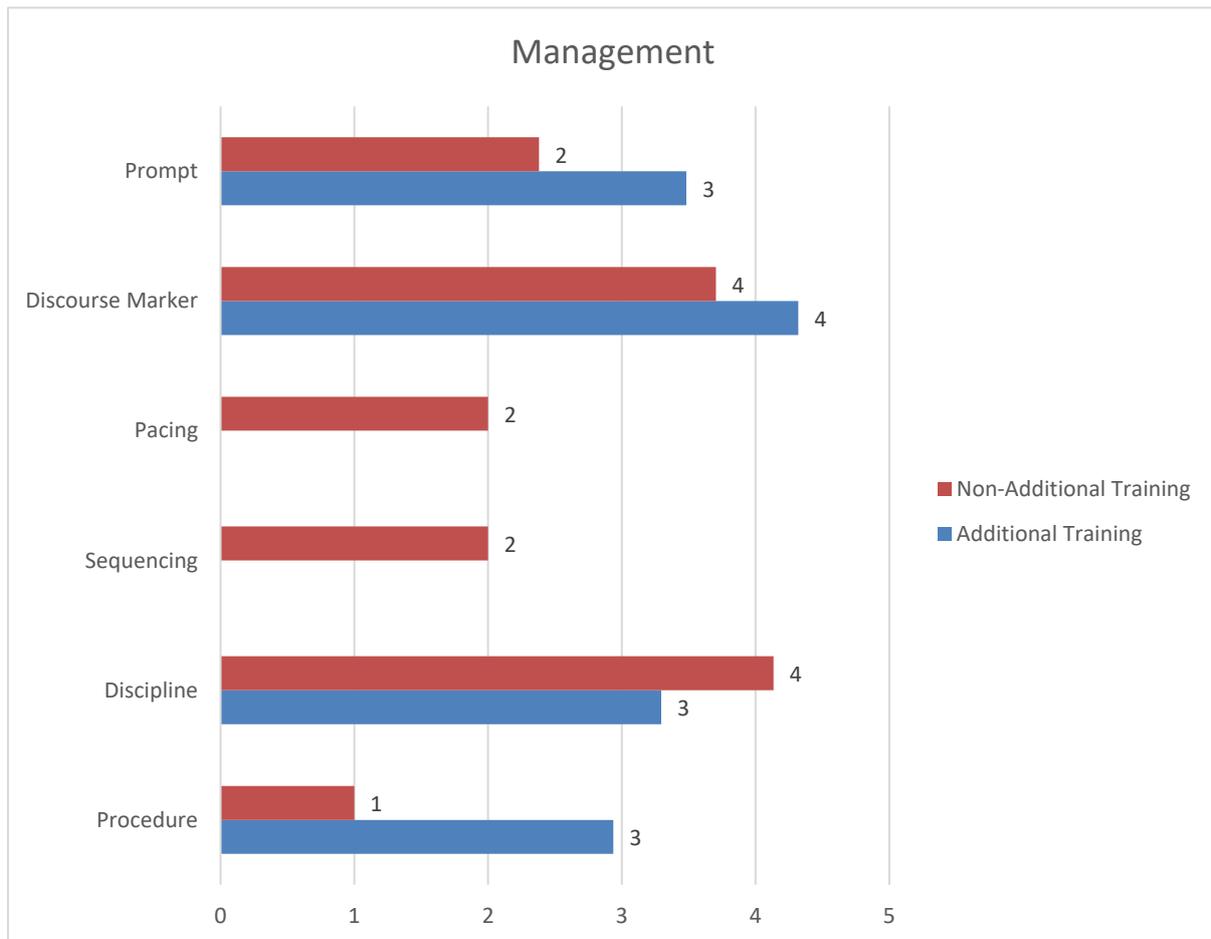
Figure 3. Management

Management not only allows for the capturing of the pacing and sequencing (P&S) of the lessons by the teacher, but also includes categories such as discourse markers, prompts and discipline, which all assist the teacher in organising the flow of lessons, and maximising chances for a facilitative classroom environment (Valente et al., 2019). All these elements are ultimately realised via teacher talk, or classroom dialogue. While all these categories are essential in terms of classroom management, the focus here will be on the categories of Pacing and Sequencing (P&S) within Management, shown in **Figure 3**. As mentioned, P&S concern the pace of the teaching, the way in which knowledge is built up, and the content to be covered. As **Figure 3** indicates, the overt relaxing of these boundaries were captured relatively infrequently on the FORT, and the only by the Group 2, CAPS-only teachers. However, the additional trained teachers were making use of scaffolded teaching in the form of the aforementioned R2L and READ. The principal foundation of scaffolding is the relaxing of the P&S boundaries to allow weaker learners who may have fallen behind to catch up. This provision is inherent in the theory and practice of scaffolded teaching, and is realised via the teaching practice and choice of materials used for the lessons (Rose, 2016). By linking the qualitative categories of the FORT, such as Materials and Activities, not just with its other quantitative frequency data, but also with instruments such as the semi-structured interviews,

one is able to see the theories and beliefs of the teacher, her materials, and the form classroom activities take. A large component of these activities involves principled, systematic, meaningful interaction and elaboration.

One such indication of the benefits of such activities may be seen from the remaining category on the **Figure 3**, Management data graph, namely, Procedure. Procedure involves the teacher's knowledge of what needs to be done for effective teaching, such as handing out material and taking class registers (Cox, 2017). Procedures mainly consisted of teachers handing out worksheets, papers, or learners retrieving the relevant learning equipment. Activity levels used in the observed scaffolded learning cycles, involved additional materials such as sentence strips, scissors and chalk boards. Such activities may reveal greater engagement by the learners in the lesson (Pinter, 2017). Ultimately, both activity and theory are guided by the PCK of a capable and skilled teacher and thereby extend learning (Rose & Martin, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978).

Brought together, this information highlights the central role of the teacher (Hoadley, 2017). Ultimately, this also raises the issue of the necessity of adequate teacher training (Stoffelsma, 2019). As long as teachers remain unaware of the hidden curriculum, or the underlying forms of learning and knowledge they are transmitting via their teaching approaches, their ability to come to grips with the deeper issues underlying teaching remain opaque (Macdonald, 2002). It is generally understood that teacher training in South Africa remains inadequate, especially regarding foundation level teachers (Makiwane-Mazinyo & Pillay, 2017), and a large component of the teaching training that is missing is the importance of dialogue and its crucial role in the teaching and learning process (Howe et al., 2019). Interaction is inextricably linked to the beliefs, attitudes, theories and pedagogical content knowledge of the teacher (Arockiasamy, 2015). For learning to take place, learners need to engage through dialogue. This can be in the form of oral interaction, written language, or ideally, both (Walqui & Heritage, 2018). Explicit teaching needs to be alternated with strategies for vocabulary building that can encourage learners to attain independent learning and responsibility (Ogle et al., 2015). In addition, the value and necessity of an adequate vocabulary is understood, but in order for the learners to develop a more durable, rich vocabulary, their teachers would need to engage in more interactive and in-depth instruction (Coyne et al., 2019). Critically, dialogue also develops effective thinking skills (Dubey & Ratnaparkhi, 2017).

6. Conclusion

This paper focused on the role of dialogue and teaching of reading in Grades three and four in South Africa. Teaching practice has changed little since 1994. Teachers still tend towards rote teaching and whole-class chanting. The lack of meaningful classroom interaction between teacher and learners plays a large role in this. While additional training in the teaching of reading is beneficial, it is not sufficient if learner agency in the classroom is restricted, and teachers fail to ask the type of open, extended questions that would allow learners to develop necessary critical thinking skills, and vocabulary for effective reading.

Acknowledgements

References

Ajjawi, R., Tai, J., Dawson, P., & Boud, D. (2018). Conceptualising evaluative judgement for sustainable assessment in higher education. In *Developing Evaluative Judgement in Higher Education* (pp. 7-17). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-017-0220-3

Albalawi, H., & Nadeem, M. (2020). Exploring the impact of ineffective formal communication between teachers and students: A case study of Mustaqbal University and Jubail University College, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *English Language Teaching*, *13*(3), 68-76. https://doi.org/0.5539/elt.v13n3p68

Ardington, C., Wills, G., Pretorius, E., Mohohlwane, N., & Menendez, A. (2021). Benchmarking oral reading fluency in the early grades in Nguni languages. *International Journal of Educational Development*, *84*, 102433. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2021.102433

Arockiasamy, S. (2015). *Flander's interaction analysis categories system (FIACS)*. Retrieved 20 August, from http://stxaviersbedcollege.org/sim/technology_arock.pdf

Atkins, A., & Brown, H. (2001). *Sinclair and Coulthard's 'IRF' model in a one-to-one classroom: an analysis*. Retrieved 01/11/2022 from https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-artslaw/cels/essays/csdp/Atkins4.pdf

Bernstein, B. (1975). Class and pedagogies: Visible and invisible. *Educational studies*, *1*(1), 23-41.

Bernstein, B. (1990). *The structuring of pedagogic discourse: Volume IV of Class, Codes and Control*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203011263

Bernstein, B. (1995). Code theory and its positioning: A case study in misrecognition. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *16*(1), 3-19. https://doi.org/10.1080/0142569950160101

Bernstein, B. (1999). Official knowledge and pedagogic identities. In *Pedagogy and the shaping of consciousness.* London: Continuum (pp. 246-261).

Bernstein, B. (2020). Social Class, Codes and Communication. In *Handbücher zur Sprach-und Kommunikationswissenschaft/Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science (HSK)* (pp. 563-579). De Gruyter Mouton. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110858020-074

Chan, J. (2021). Utilizing lesson study in enhancing teaching pedagogy. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education (TURCOMAT)*, *12*(10), 4255-4263.

Cilliers, J., Fleisch, B., Prinsloo, C., & Taylor, S. (2020). How to improve teaching practice? An experimental comparison of centralized training and in-classroom coaching. *Journal of Human Resources*, *55*(3), 926-962. Retrieved from www.ekon.sun.ac.za/wpapers/2018/wp152018

Cox, J. (2017). *Classroom management: Procedures. K-12 news, lessons & shared resources by teachers, for teachers*. Retrieved 5 March from http://www.teachhub.com/classroom-management-procedures

Coyne, M., McCoach, D., Ware, S., Austin, C., Loftus-R., & Baker, D. (2019). Racing against the vocabulary gap: Matthew effects in early vocabulary instruction and intervention. *Exceptional Children*, *85*(2), 163-179. https://doi.org/10.1177/0014402918789162

Dong, Y., & Liu, S. (2020). Dynamic features of students' scaffolding interaction in English writing class. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies*, *10*(6), 647-656. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1006.04

Du Plessis, P., & Mestry, R. (2019). Teachers for rural schools–a challenge for South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, *39*. https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v39ns1a1774

Dubey, A., & Ratnaparkhi, P. (2017). Development of critical thinking skills in English language classroom through dialogue method. *Educational Quest - An International Journal of Education and Applied Social Sciences*, *8*(3), 635-641. http://dx.doi.org/10.5958/2230-7311.2017.00116.7

Fröhlich, M., Spada, N., & Allen, P. (1985). Differences in the communicative orientation of L2 classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly*, *19*, pp. 27-57.

Goldsmith, J. (2009). Pacing and time allocation at the micro-and meso-level within the class hour: Why pacing is important, how to study it, and what it implies for individual lesson planning. *Bellaterra Journal of Teaching & Learning Language & Literature*, *1*(1), 30-48. https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/jtl3.34

Goodman, J., & Eren, N. (2013). Student agency: Success, failure, and lessons learned. *Ethics and Education*, *8*(2), 123-139. https://doi.org/10.1080/17449642.2013.843360

Halliday, M. (1978). *Language as social semiotics*. Edward Arnold.

Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2015). *Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school*. Teachers'College Press.

Hoadley, U. (2005). *Social class, pedagogy and the specialization of voice in four South African primary schools.* [University of Cape town]. Cape Town.

Hoadley, U. (2006). The reproduction of social class differences through pedagogy: A model for the investigation of pedagogic variation. Second meeting of the Consortium for Research on Schooling, University of Cape Town.

Hoadley, U. (2012). What do we know about teaching and learning in South African primary schools? *Education as Change*, *16*(2), 187-202.

https://doi.org/10.1080/16823206.2012.745725

Howe, C., Hennessy, S., Mercer, N., Vrikki, M., & Wheatley, L. (2019). Teacher–student dialogue during classroom teaching: Does it really impact on student outcomes? *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, *28*(4-5), 462-512. https://doi.org/10.1080/10508406.2019.1573730

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2018). Looking ahead: Future directions in, and future research into, second language acquisition. *Foreign language annals*, *51*(1), 55-72. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12314

Lebese, M., & Mtapuri, O. (2014). Biliteracy development: Problems and prospects-an ethnographic case study in South Africa. *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*, *11*(1), 74. Retrieved from http://www.bangladeshsociology.net/11.1/b511.1-4.pdf

Macdonald, C. (2002). Are the children still swimming up the waterfall? A look at literacy development in the new curriculum. *Language Matters*, *33*(1), 111-141. https://doi.org/10.1080/10228190208566181

Maddock, L., & Maroun, W. (2018). Exploring the present state of South African education: Challenges and recommendations. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *32*(2), 192-214. https://doi.org/10.20853/32-2-1641

Mady, C. (2020). Teacher adaptations to support students with special education needs in French immersion. In L. Cammarata & T. Ó Ceallaigh (Eds.), *Teacher Development for Immersion and Content-Based Instruction* (Vol. 110, pp. 93-118). John Benjamin's Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1075/jicb.17011.mad

Makiwane-Mazinyo, M., & Pillay, P. (2017). Challenges teachers encounter in teaching English reading to the intermediate phase learners in the uThungulu district schools in KwaZulu Natal. *Gender and Behaviour*, *15*(4), 10453-10475. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-c1f02ef36

Mather, N., & Land, S. (2014). Exploring educators' understanding of developing learners' reading skills and their readiness to implement CAPS. *Journal for Language Teaching*, *48*(2), 199-215. http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jlt.v48i2.9

Mendoza, D., & Vite, C. (2019). The teacher's role in the classroom and new trends. *Ciencias Huasteca Boletín Científico de la Escuela Superior de Huejutla*, *13*, 17-21.

Mgijima, V. (2019). *Trajectories of the effects of translanguaging on reading comprehension among IsiXhosa-English multilingual learners.* University of the Witwatersrand. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/10539/28008

Mgijima, V., & Makalela, L. (2016). The effects of translanguaging on the bi-literate inferencing strategies of fourth grade learners. *Perspectives in Education*, *34*(3), 86-93. http://dx.doi.org/10.18820/2519593X/pie.v34i3.7

Mgijima, V., & Makalela, L. (2021). Developing summary writing skills through

translanguaging. *South African Journal of African Languages*, *41*(2), 196-206. https://doi.org/10.1080/02572117.2021.1948223

Mudzielwana, N. (2012). *Teaching reading comprehension to grade 3 Tshivenda-speaking learners*. University of Pretoria.

Mullis, I., Martin, M., Foy, P., & Hooper, M. (2017). *ePIRLS 2016: International Results in Online Informational Reading*. Lynch School of Education. Retrieved 18 March from https://nicspaull.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/p16-pirls-international-results-in-reading.pdf

Myhill, D., Jones, S., & Wilson, A. (2016). Writing conversations: fostering metalinguistic discussion about writing. *Research Papers in Education*, *31*(1), 23-44.

Nkosi, Z. (2011). *An exploration into the pedagogy of teaching reading in selected foundation phase isiZulu home language classes in Umlazi schools* [University of KwaZulu-Natal]. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation.

O'Madagain, C., & Tomasello, M. (2021). Joint attention to mental content and the social origin of reasoning. *Synthese*, *198*(5), 4057-4078.

Ogle, D., Blachowicz, C., Fisher, P., & Lang, L. (2015). *Academic vocabulary in middle and high school: Effective practices across the disciplines*. Guilford Publications.

Pinter, A. (2017). Teaching young language learners. In *Oxford Handbook for Language Learners*. Oxford University Press.

Pretorius, E. (2015). Failure to launch: Matching language policy with literacy accomplishment in South African schools. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, *2015*(234), 47-76. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl-2015-0004

Pretorius, E., Jackson, M., McKay, V., Murray, S., & Spaull, N. (2016). *Teaching reading (and writing) in the Foundation Phase: A concept note* (RESEP, Issue. Retrieved from http://resep.sun.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/RESEPp_Zenex-Teaching-ReadingWriting_Email.pdf

Reid, A., Cook, J., Viedge, C., & Scheepers, C. (2020). Developing management effectiveness: The nexus between teaching and coaching. *The International Journal of Management Education*, *18*(1), 100334. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2019.100334

Rose, D. (2003). *Submission to the Aboriginal Education Review 2003, New South Wales Department of Education and Training*. NSW Department of Education and Training. Retrieved 26 May from https://www.readingtolearn.com.au/images/pdf/Learning_to_Read_A_Middle_Years.pdf

Rose, D. (2004). Sequencing and pacing of the hidden curriculum: how indigenous children are left out of the chain. . In J. Muller, A. Morais, & B. Davies (Eds.), *Reading Bernstein, Researching Bernstein* (pp. 97-107). Routledge Falmer.

Rose, D. (2011a). *Implementation and outcomes of the professional learning programme, 2010:*

Report for Western NSW Region, NSW Department of education and children's services Reading to Learn. Retrieved 30 May, from http://www.readingtolearn.com.au

Rose, D. (2011b). Meaning beyond the margins: learning to interact with books. In S. Dreyfus, S. Hood, & M. Stenglin (Eds.), *Semiotic Margins: Reclaiming Meaning* (pp. 177-209). Continuum.

Rose, D. (2015). Genre, knowledge and pedagogy in the Sydney School. In N. Artemeva & A. Freedman (Eds.), *Trends and Traditions in Genre Studies* (pp. 1-26). Inkshed.

Rose, D. (2016). Engaging and supporting all our students to read and learn from reading. *PETAA Paper*, *202*, 1-12.

Rose, D. (2018). Languages of schooling: Embedding literacy learning with genre-based pedagogy. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *6*(1), 59-89. https://doi.org/10.1515/eujal-2017-0008

Rose, D. (2019). Building a pedagogic metalanguage I: Curriculum genres. In *Accessing Academic Discourse* (pp. 236-267). Routledge.

Rose, D. (2021). Reading metaphor: Symbolising, connoting and abducing meanings. *Linguistics and Education*, *64*, 100932. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2021.100932

Rose, D., & Martin, J. (2012). *Learning to Write, Reading to Learn: Genre, knowledge and pedagogy in the Sydney School*. Equinox.

Rowe, M., Leech, K., & Cabrera, N. (2017). Going beyond input quantity: Wh-questions matter for toddlers' language and cognitive development. *Cognitive science*, *41*, 162-179. https://doi.org/10.1111/cogs.12349

Rule, P., & Land, S. (2017). Finding the plot in South African reading education. *Reading & Writing-Journal of the Reading Association of South Africa*, *8*(1), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.4102/rw.v8i1.121

Rustandi, A. (2017). An analysis of irf (initiation-response-feedback) on classroom interaction in EFL speaking class. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature and Culture*, *2*(1), 239-250. http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.2.1.239-250

Silinskas, G., Pakarinen, E., Lerkkanen, M., Poikkeus, A., & Nurmi, J. (2017). Classroom interaction and literacy activities in kindergarten: Longitudinal links to Grade 1 readers at risk and not at risk of reading difficulties. *Contemporary educational psychology*, *51*, 321-335. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2017.09.002

Spada, N., & Fröhlich, M. (1995). *COLT--Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observation Scheme: Coding conventions and applications*. National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research.

Spaull, N., & Hoadley, U. (2017). *Getting reading right: Building firm foundations*. ChildGauge, Issue.

Stoffelsma, L. (2019). From 'sheep' to 'amphibian': English vocabulary teaching strategies in South African township schools. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, *9*(1), 1-10. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v9i1.650

Stoffelsma, L., & Van Charldorp, T. (2020). A closer look at the interactional construction of choral responses in South African township schools. *Linguistics and Education*, *58*, 100829.

Taylor, N. (2014). *Initial teacher education research project: An examination of aspects of initial teacher education curricula at five higher education institutions*. Summary report.

Taylor, N., Fleisch, B., & Shindler, J. (2019). *Education scenarios for 2019*. Key Driving Forces Scenarios 2019, Issue.

Taylor, S., Cilliers, J., & Prinsloo, C. (2017). *The Early Grade Reading Study: Impact evaluation after two years of interventions*. Retrieved 4 April, from https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ad0c33a620b85e4b3940685/t/5b212e081ae6cfe4e04e2055/1528901172519/Grade+2+Report+12+Oct+2017.pdf

Tough, J. (1977). *Talking and Learning*. Ward Lock Educational.

Vaknin-Nusbaum, V., Nevo, E., Brande, S., & Gambrell, L. (2020). Reading and writing motivation of third to sixth graders. *Reading Psychology*, *41*(1), 44-70. https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2019.1674435

Valente, S., Monteiro, A., & Lourenço, A. (2019). The relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and classroom discipline management. *Psychology in the Schools*, *56*(5), 741-750. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22218

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard.

Walqui, A., & Heritage, M. (2018). Meaningful classroom talk: Supporting English learners' oral language development. *American Educator*, *42*(3), 18.

Wildsmith-Cromarty, R., & Balfour, R. (2019). Language learning and teaching in South African primary schools. *Language Teaching*, *52*(3), 296-317. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444819000181

Wildsmith, R. (1992). *Teacher attitudes and practices: A correlational study*. University of London.

Macrothink Institute ™

Appendices

Appendix A1: FORT part A – PCK and reading teaching

From xxxxxx (2019:52-54):

Time	Activity & Type of Material Used	Participant Organization			Reading Teaching																								Activating & Creating Knowledge
		Class	Group	Individual	Modality													Decoding					Comprehension					
					Focus on Integrated Skills					Silent Reading	Reading Out Loud																	
		Choral (Whole Class) Response	Same Group Response	Different Group Response	Same Individual Response	Different Individual Response	Spelling	Punctuation	Grammar	Vocabulary	Writing	Individual Silent Reading	Group Silent Reading	Individual Reading Out Loud	Shared Reading Out Loud	Group Reading Out Loud	Oral Fluency	Non-word reading	Familiar Word Recognition	Phonemic Awareness	Referential Comprehension	Inferential Comprehension	Open Question - Extended	Open Question - Restricted	Closed Question	Existing	New

Management				Organisation of Information	
Procedure	Discipline	Pacing	Sequencing	Prompt	Discourse Marker

Appendix A3: FORT part B – Teacher to learner interaction

Language	Dialogue																
LoLT	Code-switching	Requesting	Feedback	Evaluation Questions	Correction	Repetition	Instruction	Paraphrase	Explanation	Clarification	Elaboration	Response to Cue	Affirmation	Recast	Emotional Response	Responds to Difficulties	Other

Appendix A4: FORT part B – Learner to teacher interaction

Language	Dialogue																
LoLT	Code-switching	Requesting	Feedback	Evaluation Questions	Correction	Repetition	Instruction	Paraphrase	Explanation	Clarification	Elaboration	Response to Cue	Affirmation	Recast	Emotional Response	Responds to Difficulties	Other

Appendix B: The COLT

From: Froehlich, Allen, Spade (1985:57) Communicative Orientation of L2 classrooms

APPENDIX B

Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT): Part A

Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT): Part B

Copyrights