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Using Video Recorded Corpus to Analyze Classroom Interactions in Elementary School EFL Classes

Zehra GABILLON

Université de la Polynésie Française,
EASTCO EA 4241
zehra.gabillon@upf.pf

Rodica AILINCAI

Université de la Polynésie Française,
EASTCO EA 4241
rodica.ailincai@upf.pf

This paper describes an interaction analysis study, which was carried out in a French Polynesian elementary school context. The corpus for the study was gathered via video recordings during an extensive educational project. This project aimed at collecting corpora on various school subjects from French Polynesian elementary schools between the years 2014-2017. The researchers used ATLAS.ti, a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to analyse the classroom interactions collected from six elementary school teachers' EFL classes. The study attempted: a) to discover common teaching strategies and techniques the teachers employed; b) to understand the effects the teachers' actions on the learners, and c) to determine whether the teachers' teaching methodologies were in concordance with today's foreign language teaching approaches. The study used both comprehensive and descriptive data analysis methods. The transcribed data were examined by focusing on both verbal and nonverbal classroom interventions. The codes were generated by studying both classroom exchanges and video recordings. The analysed data were presented using interpretations of individual instances, examples, paradigms, and frequencies.

Keywords: interaction analysis, coding, qualitative research, EFL classroom, young learners, CAQDAS, interactionist perspective, SLA, socio-cultural theory, competency-based approaches, action-oriented approach, communicative language teaching

INTRODUCTION

The present research took place in a French Polynesian elementary school context and reports on a classroom-based interaction analysis study aimed at exploring teacher and learner exchanges. This research work uses a video-recorded corpus gathered via an extensive research project called '**Pratiques Educatives Enseignantes et Parentales en Polynésie**' (**PrEEPP**-Teachers and Parents' Educational Practices in Polynesia) which was funded by the following organizations: *Ministère des Outre-Mer* (Ministry of Overseas France), *Université de la Polynésie Française* (The University of French Polynesia), *Vice-rectorat de la Polynésie française*, and the *ESPE de l'Académie de Guadeloupe*. The project was launched in 2014 and was carried out by a multidisciplinary and multi-institutional research team. The primary objective of this longitudinal research initiative was to constitute a representative body of an educational corpus from French Polynesian elementary school classrooms. To be precise, the initiative comprised of gathering large-scale data samples of different school subjects (i.e. Science, Mathematics, English, and Tahitian) across five French Polynesian archipelagos (Society Islands, Tuamotu Archipelago, Marquesas Islands, Gambier Islands, and Austral Islands). The geographical area that the project covered was as large as Europe and required the researchers to travel long distances (i.e. by boat and plane) to collect data. In 2015, some researchers from the University of French Polynesia integrated another local project into PrEEPP. The project was named after the state elementary school Maeha'a Nui, where the project was carried out. The primary objective of this scheme was to create a multilingual space within the school's premises. This project contained both research and non-research activities. The classroom corpus obtained via the Maeha'a Nui initiative was also integrated into the corpora of PrEEPP. The data collection procedures of PrEEPP initiative were completed in July 2017; however, the transcribing and analysing processes are still in progress. The researchers who participated in the study have started sharing the initial research results through conference communications and academic publications (e.g. see Ailincăi,

Gabillon, Vernaudon, Paia, & Ali, 2016; Ailincal, Gabillon, Vernaudon, Saura, & Ali, 2016; Gabillon, Vernaudon, Marchal, Ailincal, & Paia, 2016; Gabillon, & Rodica, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Gabillon, 2016).

The study described in this paper utilised six samples of video-recorded data gathered during the PrEPPP project. The researchers examined the classroom exchanges collected from six English as a foreign language (henceforth EFL) lessons. These samples were collected from different French Polynesian archipelagos. The study aimed to explore the teaching strategies and techniques the teachers employed in their EFL classes.

The present study based its theoretical stance on the sociocultural and interactionist perspectives in foreign language learning (henceforth L2). Sociocultural and interactionist theories see foreign language learning as happening through dialogic exchanges. These two viewpoints underline the importance of interaction in foreign language learning. From these perspectives, language learning takes place in interaction (in the process of interacting) rather than as a result of it. This classroom corpus-based interaction analysis study utilised both qualitative and descriptive data analysis methods. The researchers used ATLAS.ti, a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to analyse the corpus, and the results were presented by using extracts, comments and histograms.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL STANCE

SLA is a multi-disciplinary field which makes use of insights and research paradigms from other domains such as linguistics, education, sociology, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and psychology (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). It is commonly stated that the issues concerning L2 learning cannot be fully understood from a single perspective (Tarone, 2000). L2 learning involves a multitude of complex and interacting incidents which cannot be captured and understood from a narrow viewpoint. This study views L2 learning as a situated phenomenon which is influenced by both micro and macro social contexts and "...embedded in these contexts are the multiple relations of inequitable power in which language learners participate." (Ellis & Barkhuizen, p. 278, 2005).

This research work based its standpoints on sociocultural (SC) (Vygotsky, 1978, Lantolf, 1994, 2006, 2009) and interactionist perspectives (Swain, 2000). These two viewpoints seem to capture the complexity of foreign language learning (henceforth L2) both in instructional and natural settings. From these viewpoints, language learning is regarded as occurring in interaction (in the process of interacting) rather than as a result of it (Lantolf 2002). Although Vygotsky's works stressed the role of socially mediated interaction in learning, his standpoints were different from today's interactionist perspectives in language learning. The sociocultural and interactionist traditions used different research paradigms and produced different scientific terminology. However, these two approaches share remarkable similarities, as regards the principles which characterize them. In SLA literature, these two standpoints are often referred to under the name of '*socio-interactionist approach*' (e.g. Mondada & Doehler, 2004; Swain, 2000; van Compernelle, 2010). These two perspectives are complementary to one another, and they underline the importance of scaffolding (teacher & peer) and face-to-face interaction in L2 learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf, 1994, 2006, 2009; Swain, 2000). They both view L2 learning as a social phenomenon occurring with the involvement of diverse social actors and artefacts (Lantolf, 2000). In this literature section, the researchers will try to highlight the key terminology used in these two perspectives.

For the last two decades, there has been an exponential increase in the interest in SC theories in L2 learning. This theory suggests that human learning is primarily a social process. Foreign language specialists who adopt an SC framework consider language learning as a social activity in which language operates as a tool for thought (Lantolf, 2002, 2006; Mitchell & Myles, 2004). L2 learning from this viewpoint is seen as an activity which happens both in social (interpersonal—social & cognitive) and personal planes (intrapersonal—individual & cognitive) (Vygotsky, 1978). The sociocultural perspective sees cognitive development and knowledge construction as a collaborative social event, which uses social artefacts. According to this view, optimal cognitive development depends upon socially mediated interaction. From this perspective, language learning is seen as a situated activity that occurs first in a social context through interaction with others and then within the individual through cognitive processes (Lantolf, 2000, 2002, 2006; Mondada & Doehler, 2004; Swain, 2000).

The key terms which are associated to SC philosophies are: ‘mediation’, ‘Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)’, ‘scaffolding’, ‘Activity’, and ‘Social Artefacts’. The term mediation was introduced to literature by Vygotsky (1978) and refers to interpersonal interactions that provide guidance (help) in children's cognitive development and knowledge construction. The ZPD concept is linked with mediation, and it constitutes the central element of the SC theory. ZPD explains how learning takes place in a social context. It refers to the difference between what a learner is capable of doing without guidance and what s/he is capable of doing with guidance (Vygotsky, 1978). The concept has been interpreted and applied to various educational contexts (see Figure 1, Gabillon & Ailincăi, 2006). According to the SC perspective, knowledge is co-constructed with others (other-regulated) in social planes, and it is appropriated (self-regulated, internalized) in personal-planes. In this social setting, language is used as a means by the individual to regulate his/her cognitive activities, that is, language is used as a “...tool for thought...” and “...a tool for learning...” (Lantolf, 2002, 2006; Mitchell & Myles, 2004). The term scaffolding was introduced to the sociocultural literature through the works of Jerome Bruner and his colleagues (Bruner et al., 1976). Later the concept was elaborated by Bruner, and the concept now is associated with him (Bruner, 1978). This term was defined as the process of supportive dialogue, which draws the learners/peers’ attention to the main features of learning (Bruner et al., 1976). According to Vygotsky (1978) the social activity, which involves the use of social artefacts, contributes to the child’s cognitive development. The role of social artefacts in the child's potential cognitive development is explained by Vygotsky's ZPD concept (1979). The SC theory considers all human-made material and objects as artefacts. Swain, Kinnear and Steinman (2011) claim that all artefacts, such as symbolic (e.g. language) and material (e.g. books) can become tools for mediation. Swain et al. (2011) assert that all sort of human mental activity is mediated through individuals' interactions with these social artefacts (symbolic and material world) around them. The role of artefacts in mediating learning is explained and theorised in the activity theory. In SC theory, activity is described as a purposeful social interaction between actors and “artefacts” (the world and its objects). Aleksei Leontiev’s Activity Theory expanded and updated many of the concepts introduced by Vygotsky (Leontiev, 1974, 1978; Engeström, 1987).

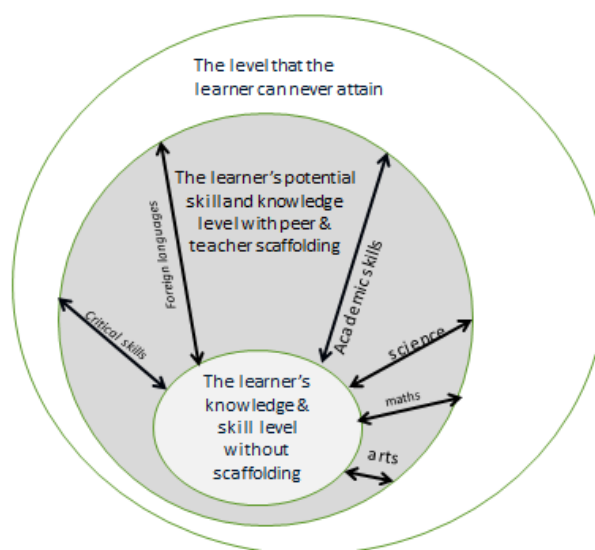


Figure 1. A Schematic representation of the notion of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in an educational context (Gabillon & Ailincăi, 2016).

The key terms used in the interactionist approach are: ‘comprehensible input’, ‘interaction hypothesis’, ‘collaborative interaction/dialogue’, ‘negotiation of meaning’, ‘output’, ‘noticing’ ‘hypothesis testing’ ‘modified output’, and ‘intake’. Interactionist perspective to L2 learning takes its inspiration from Krashen’s ‘input hypothesis’ (Krashen 1979, 1983) which explained that the primary condition for language learning is to understand messages (input). He named this phenomenon as ‘comprehensible input’. In his input hypothesis, he maintained that in order for learners to progress, the level of the input should be ‘i +1’ (‘i’ represents the learner’s language level, and +1 is the new input, which should be a little higher than the learners’ actual level).

L2 Researcher Michael Long insisted that the interactions that take place in L2 learning contexts should not be seen as “...one-directional source of target language input...” (Mitchell & Myles, p. 160, 2004). Long took Krashen’s ideas further by proposing that attention should be paid to the interactions which occur between learners and proposed the ‘interaction hypothesis’ (Long, 1981, 1983). Long’s interaction hypothesis (1981, 1983) claimed that “...L2 acquisition is facilitated when a communication problem arises that causes learners to try to resolve it” (Ellis, 2012, p. 23). This process of modification and restructuring during interactions happening between peers is named as ‘negotiation of meaning’ (Long, 1981,1983). Swain referred to this process as ‘collaborative dialogue’. According to her, collaborative dialogue “...is knowledge-building dialogue...” (Swain, 2000, p. 97) and modifications that are made within these collaborative interactions resolve communication difficulties (Ellis, 1991). Ellis and Barkhuizen defined the negotiation of meaning as “... the conversational exchanges that arise when interlocutors seek to prevent a communicative impasse occurring or to remedy an actual impasse that has arisen...” (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, pp.166-167). Swain maintained that negotiation of meaning process aims to increase the comprehensibility of the interaction and meaning-making (Swain, 1993, 2000). She explained that during the negotiation process the learners use strategies such as repeating, rephrasing, and translating etc. that lead to the comprehension of the input. Nonetheless, she claimed that comprehension is not the sufficient condition for L2 learning and argued that there is a direct link between language use and language learning (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Swain maintained that interaction provides not only comprehensible input but also the opportunity to use the language (output). She put forward a set of claims explaining that “...output pushes learners to process language more deeply...” (Swain, 2000, p.99). She also maintained that ‘output’ should be seen both as part of a communicative and cognitive activity. She formulated this claim as ‘*output hypothesis*’ (Swain, 1985, 1993; Swain & Lapkin, 1995). Swain maintained that ‘output’ requires more cognitive effort than ‘input’ and it pushes the learners to progress. She added that during the output learners may *notice* the gap between their interlanguage and the target language and may look for help to fill in this gap (help from peers or teachers—ZPD). This viewpoint sustains that learners apply a series of ‘*hypothesis testing*’ procedures to test the accuracy of their interlanguage. This process helps them progress in their learning through the use of trial-error strategies and modify their input (intake). Having gone through this activity learners become aware of their problems, predict their needs, set goals, monitor their language performance, and to evaluate their success (Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman, 2011, 2015).

The principles of the aforementioned theories constitute the foundation of the recent L2 teaching approaches. These L2 approaches are grouped under the competency-based language teaching (CBLT). The commonly known L2 teaching methodologies which fall into this category are: a) Action-based/oriented approach (AOA), b) Communicative Language Teaching (CBLT), c) Task-based language teaching (TBLT), d) Project-based approach, e) Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Adler & Milne, 1997; Lier, 2007; Council of Europe, 2001, Richards & Rodgers, 2014). These L2 approaches respond to the key expectations defined in the Common European Framework of reference for languages, other relevant Council of Europe publications (Council of Europe, 2001; European Commission, 1995, 2003, 2008; Eurydice Network, 2006) and in the official texts published by the French Ministry of education. As the name indicates, these competency-based approaches aim to build skills and competencies that learners can transfer and use in other similar contexts. They all emphasize the primacy of face-to-face interaction in language learning and activities which focus on the successful functioning in society (i.e. to be able to use the language communicatively in real-life situations etc.).

This research study will also use the principles conveyed through the activity framework designed by Gabillon and Ailincăi (2015b, 2016). The framework was designed through applying the ideas expressed in the sociocultural and interactionist perspectives. The aim of this framework was to provide teachers with some guidance in the conception of their L2 activities. (Gabillon & Ailincăi, 2015b, 2016). The principles of this framework are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Socially-mediated activity design for L2 learning (Gabillon & Ailincal, 2015b)

Socially Mediated Activity (SMA) Framework	
Collective mediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMA views learning as an active and constructive process where learners collectively construct new information through collaborative interaction and joint attention
Joint attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMA uses goal-directed activities which require learners to work together to fulfil tasks
Collaborative interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMA encourages natural face-to-face pair/group interactions. This type of collaborative interaction uses language as a means to exchange information and construct knowledge
Social artefacts & gestures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMA enables the use of artefacts and gestures to mediate learning
Experiential learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMA provides learners with hands-on activities to enable learning through direct experience (e.g. laboratory experience, gardening etc.)
Naturalistic learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMA allows learning to take place in naturalistic learning settings (e.g. laboratory experiments in labs, gardening in the garden etc.)
Active involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMA uses activities which necessitate each individual learner's active participation to complete tasks

CONTEXT

French Polynesia is an 'Overseas Territory' of France (COM-- collectivités d'outre-mer) and the primary and secondary education implement the French National Curriculum. French Polynesia is a multilingual society where several local languages are used as home languages. Nevertheless, French is the only official language and the medium of school instruction. There are a hundred and seventy-two elementary schools scattered over five archipelagos, and because of their remoteness, these schools are not easy to coordinate (Gabillon & Ailincal, 2015a). In French Polynesia, elementary school teachers are generalist teachers, and they do not receive specialised primary level foreign language teacher education as part of their qualification (Gabillon & Ailincal, 2015a).

Between the years 2005-2017, several educational research projects were funded by both the French government and local authorities. These projects addressed issues concerning plurilingualism and school instruction and investigated the influence of bilingualism (French and the Tahitian language) on Polynesian children's school learning. These research activities concerning the importance of plurilingualism have provided the local educational authorities with useful information on Polynesian children's academic, cognitive, social and conational skills in a multilingual elementary school setting (Gabillon & Ailincal, 2015a).

During the PrEEPP project (2014-2017), more than 80 video-recorded data were obtained (from different subject lessons and parent interviews). From the EFL classes, all in all, 16 video-recorded lessons were collected. These recordings were gathered from the following archipelagos: Society Islands (6 lessons), Tuamotu Archipelago (3 EFL lessons), Marquesas Islands (3 lessons), Gambier islands (1 EFL lesson), and Austral islands (3 lessons). The corpora gathered during the PrEEPP initiative were vast, and the researchers have not yet completed transcribing and analysing processes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research work is an interaction analysis study which used both comprehensive and descriptive statistics as analysis methods. The videotaped classroom corpus was transcribed, and the transcribed data were analysed by using a qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti. The results obtained were presented by using qualitative methods (e.g. extracts, comments etc.) and descriptive statistics (e.g. histograms).

The study aimed to: a) to discover common teaching strategies and techniques the teachers employed; b) to understand the influence of the teachers' actions on their learners, and c) to determine whether the teachers' teaching methodologies were in concordance with today's foreign language teaching approaches.

Participants & Data Collection

The present study focuses on EFL learning in this plurilingual French Polynesian context. The subjects involved in this study were four female and two male elementary school teachers with ages ranging from 32 to 45. These teachers had between 8 to 20 years of teaching experience. The video-recorded data contained 121 elementary school students' classroom corpora. The number of students in each class varied from 21 to 27 students. All of the participants were elementary school students between 7 to 11 years of age and 1 to 3 years of English language learning experience.

Data Collection Method

L2 classes involve a variety of actions, and face-to-face exchanges and such incidents could not be easily captured and understood. Classroom-based research requires capturing linguistic, extra-linguistic and social aspects of classroom discourse (Dufon, 2002; Swann, 2001). This research work used video recording as a research instrument. When used as a research instrument video-recording provides researchers with a replicate of actual classroom happenings. Some of the advantages of video-recordings can be listed as follows: A) They capture both linguistic and social cues such as the language, turn taking, voice, intonation, and extra-linguistic elements such as gestures, body language and so forth. B) They provide permanent data which could repeatedly be replayed and studied. C) They help to distinguish different speakers. D) They provide visual information which contributes to clarifying verbal messages. E) They may help to identify observable emotions such as enjoyment, boredom, excitement, anger and so forth. F) They provide contextual information concerning the physical setting such as space, facilities, classroom arrangements, teacher movements, posture and so forth. G) They provide researchers with the complete account of the classroom exchanges (i.e. every word uttered and every action made is recorded).

Analysis Method

This study used interaction analysis method to analyse the video-recorded corpus. Interaction analysis is a widely-used method in SLA and Applied Linguistics research. This research paradigm enables researchers to capture and analyse a multitude of elements occurring during human interactions (both verbal and non-verbal). The analysis procedures entailed transcribing, coding, linking, comparing, grouping and interpreting.

In this study, the following procedures were followed. First, the videotaped corpus was transcribed paying attention to both verbal and non-verbal elements in the corpus samples. The transcriptions were made manually using a transcription notation adapted from the notation system offered by Jefferson (2004) (See Table 2). The transcriptions were then imported to ATLAS.ti software for analysis. The initial coding was performed through the use of open codes. The researchers studied each transcription closely and labelled the exchanges according to the functions they performed in the exchange. Then they labelled the codes mostly using the terms from SLA and Applied Linguistics literature. After the identification and labelling of the concepts, related ideas were linked and grouped. The researchers continued studying, linking and comparing processes until they formed consistent concept groups. Finally, the labelled concepts were reintegrated into higher level categories.

Table 2: Transcription notation used in the study (adapted from Jefferson, 2004)

Symbol	Name	Use
[<i>italic text</i>]	Square brackets	Indicates the start and end points of overlapping speech.
((<i>italic text</i>))	Double Parentheses	Indicates comments, translation, or annotation of non-verbal activity.
(<i>italic text</i>)	Parentheses	Indicates speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript.
...	Ellipsis	Short pause.
°	Degree symbol	Indicates whisper or reduced volume speech.

ALL CAPS	Capitalized text	Indicates shouted or increased volume speech.
<u>underline</u>	Underlined text	Indicates the speaker is emphasizing or stressing the speech.
∴	Colon(s)	Indicates prolongation of an utterance/ indicates a stretched sound.
(hhh)	Parentheses	Indicates laughter in the conversation/speech.
--	Dash	Indicates a break within a word.
=	Equal Sign	Indicates the break and subsequent continuation of a single interrupted utterance.

The insights gained through inductive analysis and comparisons were presented in the form of comments. The SLA and FLL research studies were also contributed to the shaping of the interpretations and comments. The researchers utilized extracts of significant episodes to illustrate vivid examples to support explanations. In addition to qualitative comments and inductive interpretations, a summary of results was presented using frequencies (e.g. histograms).

RESULTS

This section will present the results obtained through comprehensive and inductive analysis procedures. These results concerning the categories and the summary of results will be presented using of comments, tables, histograms, and extracts.

Categories

After intensive comprehensive and inductive analysis processes (e.g. repeated viewing of the video-recorded material, coding, linking, comparing, grouping etc.), the researchers grouped all exchanges under two major categories as ‘*Teacher*’ and ‘*Learners*’. Other higher-level categories were grouped under these two main groups. The summary of results used these groups to explain the outcome of this research.

The SLA and Applied Linguistic terms were used to name the meaning and function of the teachers’ and learners’ utterances. These higher-level categories were formed through applying the qualitative analysis processes used in grounded theory, that is, the concepts were labelled, and then the categories were developed when the researchers discovered concepts on the same phenomenon (not all concepts became groups). This means that when a concept was named it was compared with other concepts for similarities and differences. Only the most grounded, pertinent, and thickest, categories became higher level groups.

The teachers’ classroom exchanges were grouped into five higher-level categories according to their functions. These categories were named as T-Scaffolding strategies, T-Corrective feedback strategies, T-Problems related to L2 competence, T-Use of the Mother Tongue (hereafter L1), and T-Activity Types. Other lower level concepts which represented similar activities were assembled under these headings. Table 3 presents the categories and sub-categories grouped under the category ‘*Teacher*’ (see Table 3).

Table 3: The category ‘*Teacher*’

T-Scaffolding Strategies	T-Corrective feedback strategies	T-Problems related to L2 competence	T-Use of L1	T-Activity Types
Checking understanding	Direct correction	Unattended problem	Use of L1 (Teacher)	Whole class (non-communicative activity)
Use of gesture and artefacts	Guided correction Recast	inauthentic language use		Group/pair work (non- or quasi-communicative activity)

Asking for repetition	Misleading correction	Incorrect language use	Group/pair work (communicative or real-life activity)
Asking for confirmation			
Asking for information			
Giving explanation			

Concerning the students, the categories that emerged through the analysis process indicated three large categories: L-Active Involvement, L-Passive Involvement and L-Use of L1 (see Table 4). Other sub-groups which are linked with these groups were also collected under these three higher level abstractions.

Table 4: The category ‘*Learners*’

L-Active Learner Involvement	L-Passive learner involvement	L-Use of L1
Asking for confirmation /clarification	Reciting/performing	Use of L1
Asking for information	Repeating	
Disagreeing		
Free language use		
Giving explanation		
Peer feedback		

Summary of Results

1) *The number of exchanges and duration of each lesson*

In this study, the analysed classroom exchanges were mainly in the form of simple repetitions or short question-answer type utterances. Only very few of the exchanges were learner initiated. This type of classroom exchange is known as *Initiation Response Feedback* (IRF).

The use of IRF patterns and whether they hinder or promote L2 development has been a subject of debate among SLA and FLL scholars. Many SLA researchers have argued that teachers adapt their classroom interactions according to the focus of the lesson. Some researchers maintained that IRF structure could be useful when the focus is on the ‘accuracy’. However, many SLA studies have reported that the permanent use of such a teaching structure is unlikely to promote the communicative competence needed in real-life communications (Ellis, 2012). These teaching patterns are easy to use and have control over the students because they proceed in an orderly manner and the teacher is the ‘initiator’ and ‘knower’. This style of teaching restricts learner participation and does not allow trial-error possibilities. IRF is considered to be an unproductive instructional format that limits opportunities for L2 development when becomes a routine classroom procedure (Ellis, 2012; Van Lier, 1991, 2008). IRF exchanges are not usual in communicative or task-based activities, which are primarily designed to promote face-to-face learner exchanges.

The transcribed corpus and video recordings illustrated that the language exchanges used in these six teachers’ classrooms were short utterances through which the teachers initiated an exchange, asked a student to respond and then they followed up. Figure 2 presents the total number of exchanges occurred in each teacher’s lesson and the duration of each lesson.

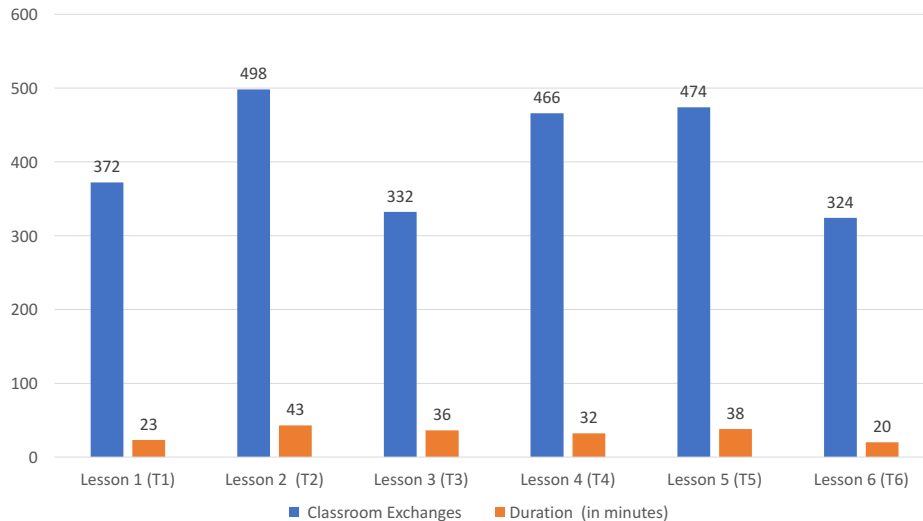


Figure 2: The number of exchanges and duration per lesson (T=Teacher)

Extract1 illustrates a series of repetition drill exchanges between *Teacher1* (T1) and the students. Because of space constraints the researchers included only part of these ubiquitous whole-class exchanges. *Extract 2* is also a good example to characterise an IRF exchange. In this particular example, T1 attempts to elicit the correct language form through the use of an IRF pattern. Although the teacher tries to involve other students in the corrective feedback procedures she fails to give a chance to the student to self-correct and she simply asks the student to repeat the correct language form (see Extracts 1 & 2).

<i>Extract 1</i>	<i>Extract 2</i>
(T=Teacher, Ss=Learners)	(T=Teacher, Ss=Learners S=Student)
T : Ball! Ss: Ball! [Ball] T: Bicycle! Ss: Bicycle! [Bicycle] T: KITE! Ss: Kite! [KITE] T: Doll!	T: Is right? Ss: Yes T: The ball is in? ((She uses a gesture to indicate the position 'in')) Ss: On! T: The ball is on! Stevens? Repeat! S1: The ball is on the table! T: Is good: :::! T: ((The teacher shows another picture.)) ...

2) The Use of L1 & L2 language exposure

The issue of L1 use in foreign language classrooms has long been a subject of debate in the L2 literature. Many scholars (although many of them agreed on the legitimacy of L1 in L2 classrooms) claimed that successful language learning requires extensive L2 input. (Chaudron, 1988; Ellis, 2012; Turnbull, 2001). Ellis (2012) explained that L2 learning is a slow and demanding process and unless learners receive L2 exposure, they cannot acquire it. Turnbull and Arnett (2002), in their literature review about the L1 use, explained that that in some learning situations L1 use can help teachers and peers to scaffold learning and to negotiate meaning. They also maintained that during collaborative tasks the learners' use of L1 facilitates interpersonal interaction and increase their efficiency.

Figure 3 illustrates the frequencies of L1 utilised both by the teachers and the students. The analysis of the corpus from six participant teachers indicated that four out of six teachers sustained L2 use throughout their

lessons except for some short exchanges to fix misunderstandings, to give instructions or explanations, or to make a joke and so forth.

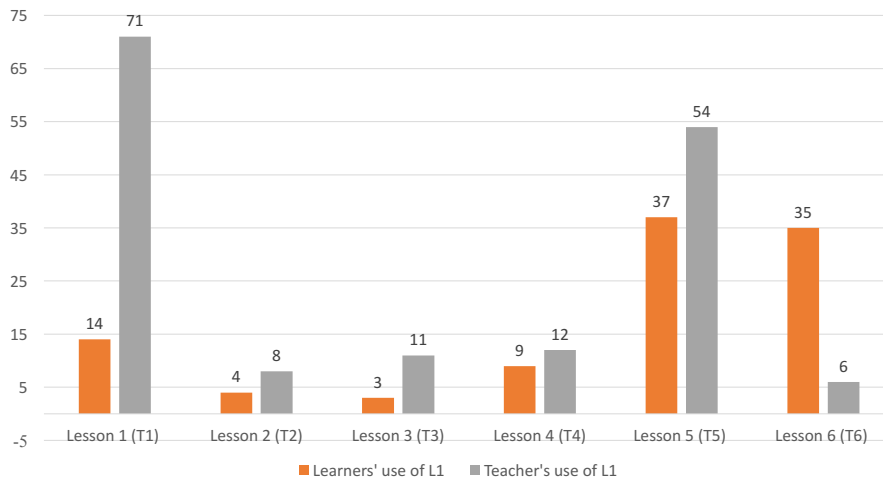


Figure 3: The use of L1 (teacher & learners) and the teacher's encouragement to use L2 (T=Teacher, E=Exchanges)

The analysis of the classroom exchanges showed that *T1* and *Teacher5* (T5) both used L1 extensively during their lessons. However, *T1* used L1 more frequently than the other five teachers. In many occasions the teacher's use of L1 did not seem to be necessary and the exchanges in L1 were particularly very lengthy (see Extracts 4 and 5).

Extract 3

(T=Teacher, Ss=Learners S=Student)

S2: Sac, bag!
 T: Sac ((bag)), the bag. Tout le monde est d'accord ?
 ((Does everyone agree?)) ((The teacher writes the words in French and in English.))
 Ss: Oui! ((Yes !))
 T : Tout le monde répète ((Eveybody repeats)) : bag !
 Ss: Bag!
 T : Autre chose peut- être! ((Perhaps another thing!))
 T : Kahea? ((The teacher points to Kahea))
 S9 : °°° (Unclear speech)
 T: Plus fort ma puce. ((Louder my heart))
 S9: Table...
 T : Table! Est ce que c'est bon? (('Table' ! Is it correct?))
 Ss: Oui! ((Yes!))
 ((Some students keep their hands up. They are waiting for the The teacher to ask them to speak.))
 T: Répétez ! table! ((Repeat ! 'table'))
 Ss : Table!


Extract 4

(T=Teacher, Ss=Learners S=Student)

T: Bien! Poupée ((Well! Doll)), a doll! A vous! ((You!))
 Ss: A doll!
 T : On passera à la prononciation ensuite. ((We will then proceed to pronunciation.))
 T : Alors ! Yo :-:yo? Alors ça pourrait être quoi ? Je ne fais pas le niveau difficile normalement le matin.
 ((Well! Yo:-:Yo ! What could it be? Normally, I do not do the difficult level in the morning.))

 T : Allez ! On fait un petit rappel, ce ne seront pas long, on va voir si vous vous en rappelez. ((Come on, we (will) do a little revision, it will not be long, we'll see if you remember.))
 T : C'était une des premières séances de l'année. ((It was one of the first sessions of the year.))
 T : En français Yo-yo en anglais yo-yo. ((In French, it is yo-yo. In English, it is yo-yo)) ((The teacher writes the words on the board.))
 T : En français puzzle en anglais puzzle ((In French, it is puzzle. In English, it is puzzle))
 T : En français robot en anglais robot. ((In French, it is robot. In English, it is robot))
 T : En français table en anglais table ! ((In French, it is table. In English, it is table))

T1's lesson was based on translating language items from English to French or vice versa. However, T5 used L1 to give complex instructions, to explain the purpose of the task, to check understanding, to socialize with her students and to manage the class (see Extracts 5 & 6).

 **Extract 5**

(T=Teacher, Ss=Learners S=Student)

T: You will write the message to them. So, let's try today.
 T: Qui a compris là ce que je viens de dire? ((Who has understood what I've just said?))
 Ss (some): En fait on va écrire une lettre. ((In fact, we will write a letter.))
 T: By computer.
 Ss (some): On va écrire une lettre ! ((We will write a letter.))
 T: By computer! ... [S: J'ai déjà vue. ((I have already seen it.))]
 Ss (some): On va écrire un mail. ((We will write an e-mail.))
 T: Can you repeat (Canny)? Listen!
 T: Calyssa, repeat, please ?
 S: On va leur envoyer un mail. ((We will send them an email.))
 T: On va leur envoyer un mail. ((We will send them an email.))

 **Extract 6**

(T=Teacher, Ss=Learners S=Student)

T: So... Who is ready to write? Who is ready to write?
 ((She mimes meaning that they should write.))
 T: Qui est prêt? Qui est prêt, déjà ? ((Some students raise their hands.)) Are you sure?
 T: Sûr? Sûr? [Unclear and overlapping speech.]
 S: Moi!° Moi!° [Me! Me!]
 T: Wait a minute...prêts ? (ready?) Can you.... Yes? Can you give me some example? ` `
 Ss (some): Cochone ((Pig?))
 T: (hhh) aii aie non!
 T: So...
 Ss (some): On va regarder dans le dictionnaire! ((We will look it up in a dictionary.))

Regarding the students, the corpus indicated that in T5 and T6's classes the learners used L1 more than the students in other teachers' classes (except T5s class) (see Figure 3). In T6's lesson, the students were engaged in a group activity (the students were seven-year-old and most of the time the teacher was not present with the students). The close analysis of the learner interactions illustrated that these students were 'at task' 100% of the time and used L1 primarily to negotiate meaning, to give explanations to their classmates, to show disapproval, to imitate the teacher and so forth. All the activities they performed related to the task that they were involved in (see Extract 7). The students in T5's classroom, on the other hand, used L1 to show understanding, to ask for clarifications and so forth. However, they were not always 'at task' (see Extract 6).

 **Extract 7**

(S=Student)

S4 : Sais pas comment on dit les grands nombres. ((Does not know how we say big numbers))
 S6 : (Addresses S1 by calling out her name.)
 S1 : Sixteen?
 S6 : Yes, very good ((Imitates his teacher.)). ((We do not see the teacher but we hear her giggles.))
 S2 : Elle a dit 'six'...((She said six...))
 S6 : Teen:: ((He confirms that she (S1) said sixteen and not six.))
 S2 : Teen? ((Asking for confirmation.))
 S6 : (Nods his head in agreement.)
 Ss: ... [Unclear overlapping speech]
 S6 : Tiens! ((Take!)) (Passes the box of flashcards to S1.)

3) Scaffolding strategies used by the teachers

The results obtained illustrated that the teachers used main teaching and scaffolding strategies which are commonly used by L2 teachers. The researchers grouped these strategies under the following labels: ‘Asking for clarification’, ‘asking for confirmation’, ‘asking for repetition’, ‘giving explanation’, ‘asking for information’ and use of artefacts’. ‘Asking for clarification’ refers to a strategy that teacher employs to help learners make their meaning clear. The teacher may also use this strategy to check learners’ understanding. The primary function of this strategy is to make sure that the learners have understood the phenomenon in question. When used efficiently ‘asking for clarification’ strategy can promote active cognitive learner engagement and L2 development. The analysis indicated that this strategy was not very frequently used by the teachers except for T4 and T5 (see Figure 4).

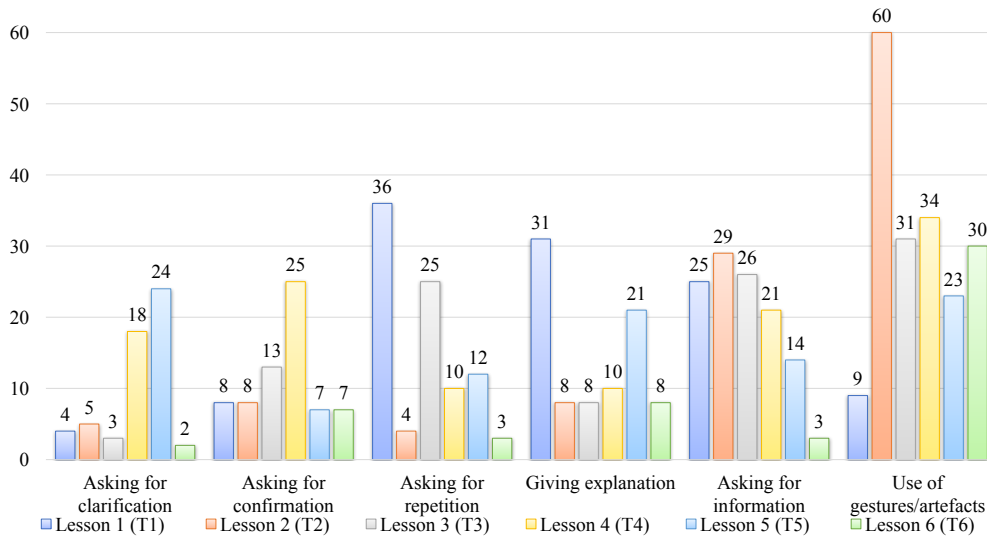


Figure 4: Scaffolding strategies used by the teachers (T=Teacher)

In this study ‘asking for confirmation’ refers to the teacher’s request for confirmation to make sure that the learner means what s/he intends to say. However, in some cases this strategy may be used as a recast which is employed to direct the learner’s attention to a mistake, and by asking for confirmation the teacher gives him/her the opportunity to correct himself/herself. These two functions are interrelated and sometimes it is difficult to separate one from the other. In this study, the researchers used the term ‘asking for confirmation’ to refer to both of these functions. The analysis revealed that this strategy was primarily used as a recast to indicate learners that they committed an error.

In L2 classrooms, functions of these teaching strategies may differ depending on the requirements of the situation and the intended purposes. For instance, ‘asking for repetition’ may take divers forms varying such as rote repetitions of words (see Extract 1 above), clarification requests to resolve misunderstandings, or asking for a repetition to hear well. In this research study the researchers defined ‘asking for repetition’ as a rote learning technique which is performed mechanically. The corpus illustrated that some teachers employed this strategy frequently (e.g. T1 and T3).

‘Giving explanations’ is the most commonly used and known teaching strategy. However, when it is used frequently and interminably this technique can lead to minimising useful Student Talking Time (STT). Some examples from T1 and T2’s classrooms illustrated frequent and lengthy explanations, many of which could have been avoided through the use of examples, contextualising and the use of gestures or artefacts.

The category labelled as ‘asking for information’ means any form of request to obtain information or response from the students. This can be in the form of a simple question, elicitation, or brainstorming that necessitates a

response from the learner. In the lessons the researchers examined, this strategy was predominantly used to get responses from the students. These, responses were predominantly in the form of short or one-word answers (T1 and T2).

The strategy ‘use of gestures/artefacts’ was exploited by all of the teachers observed. Mostly the teachers used this strategy to teach vocabulary items through the employment of flash-cards, PowerPoint slides, pictures, and objects. Many applied linguistic researchers, recommend a variety of comprehension based Total Physical Response activities [TPR—Demonstration based L2 teaching method first introduced to the Applied Linguistics literature by James Asher (1969)] that encourage learner participation through the use of non-verbal response (through, demonstrating, drawing, acting, showing pictures etc.). Thus, supplementing verbal exchanges with non-verbal activities, through which the learners can participate, is highly recommended. The researchers did not observe other creative use of artefacts and objects. Activities such as real-life tasks, the use of TPR, artefacts and gestures to supplement instructions etc. were not observed in the analysed lessons.

The results also indicated that the learners were not encouraged to make use of artefacts and gestures to help them communicate, either. The learners were mainly encouraged to respond to the teacher verbally and non-verbal aspect of expression was very limited. Longitudinal SLA research studies have shown that young learners manifest a silent period at early stages of their L2 development (Ellis 2012).

4) Corrective feedback strategies used by the teachers

Corrective feedback, that is, how teachers ‘repair’ their students’ language errors, has been one of the most researched SLA topics (Ellis, 2009). Corrective feedback is an integral part of L2 learning and the methods teachers use to engage their students in this process influence the learners’ L2 developments. How and how much error correction should be done, when errors should be corrected (immediately or delayed), by whom the correction should be done (teacher or students) have been the subjects of debates in SLA research (e.g. Ellis, 2009; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Russell, 2009 etc.). SLA research has maintained that repair (error-correction) can be used as a learning tool if it is not over done and when it is done efficiently. Recast (guided repair), that draws the learner’s attention to a faulty language output, is viewed as an effective strategy to help learners notice the gap between their language production and the target language form. This strategy is known as an implicit error correction technique, through which the teacher encourages the learner to self-repair. The recast technique may also be used to encourage peer correction if the student cannot manage to self-repair. The direct correction technique, which was widely used in former L2 methodologies (Audio-lingual method—based on the behaviouristic approach) is no longer recommended by current L2 teaching pedagogies. During corrective feedback, it is also important that the purpose of the correction is understood by the learner (that the correction should not be misleading).

The results the researchers obtained through the analysis of the video-recordings and the transcriptions indicated that the participant teachers had the tendencies to use guided repair strategy (see Figure 5). However, on some occasions the teachers did not manage to make their purpose clear to their students. On some other occasions, the repair strategies the teachers employed were not clear because they were not sure about what exactly the error was or how to repair the error (which resulted in misleading corrections).

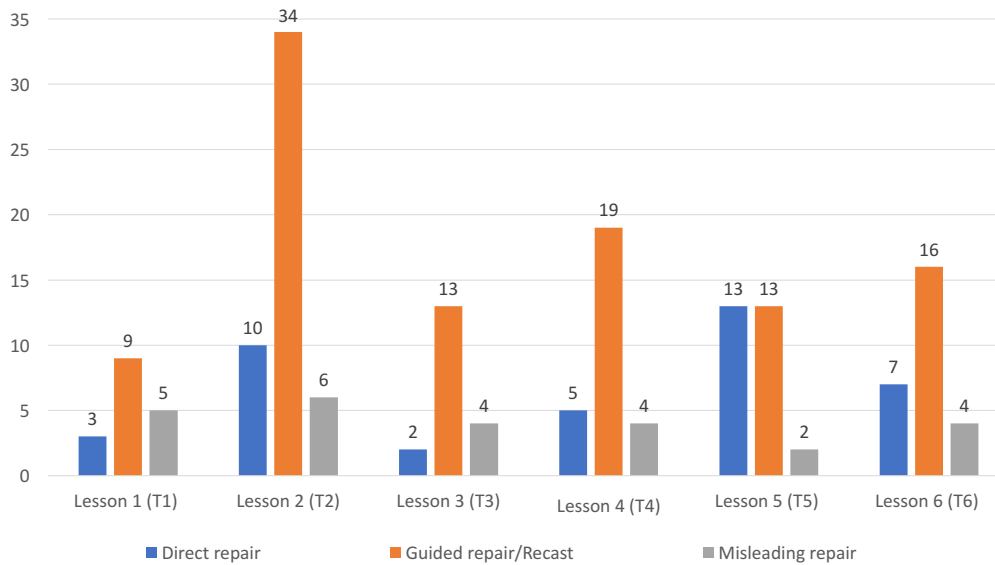


Figure 5: Corrective feedback strategies used by the teachers (T=Teacher, E=Exchanges)

5) Problems related to the teachers' L2 competence

As mentioned earlier, in French Polynesia, elementary school teachers are generalist teachers and they do not receive specialised primary level foreign language teacher education as part of their qualification. However, all elementary school teachers are expected to have B2 level L2 competence (B2: upper-intermediate level that corresponds to the scales provided by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages--CEFR). The results obtained from this study indicated that the teachers had some L2 difficulties (see Extracts 8 & 9).

Extract 8

(T=Teacher)

T: Look! Now:: close your eyes /aisəs/.....Close your eyes! /aisəs/ ((She mispronounces the word 'eyes'.)) ((Children close their eyes.))

T: Close your eyes! /aisəs/ Hei! ((She mispronounces the word 'eyes'. She looks around to check.))

T: Frederic et Faratetama ((Frederic and Tomatetama)) ... close your eyes/aisəs/!

T: Open your eyes /ais/! ((She pronounces eyes correctly.))

T: Open your eyes! /aisəs/ ((She mispronounces the word 'eyes'. She picks one of the pictures from the board.))

These L2 competence related problems were grouped under the following headings: a) incorrect language use (e.g. mispronunciation, wrong word choice, wrong use of language structures etc.); b) leaving the problem unattended (not knowing how to correct an error or how to respond to a student's answer etc.); and c) inauthentic L2 use refers to the language use which does not comply with the authentic/natural native speaker use of the target language (e.g. such as translation of French expressions into English etc.).

Extract 9

(S= Student, T=Teacher)

T : Ehhhm...The other... you please...will make an exercise, Okay? ((He uses the wrong verb 'make' with the word exercise))

Ss (some): Exercice?? ((Exercise?)) [Unclear and overlapping speech.]

T: Tumuhai, Miranda (Unclear speech). You work with me Okay? The others... You make... You will make an exercise.
 ((He uses the wrong verb 'make' with the word exercise))
 Ss: On va faire un exercice. [We will do an exercise.] [Unclear and overlapping speech.]

Inauthentic language use could be linked to language transfer or other cultural contextual influences. In general, these detected problems were minor and did not seem to be causing any harm to the learners' L2 development. However, the same types of mistakes were recurrently observed in almost all of the teachers' discourse. Thus, this problem, despite its trivial nature, reveals to be an issue to consider in elementary school teachers' initial teacher education (see Figure 6).

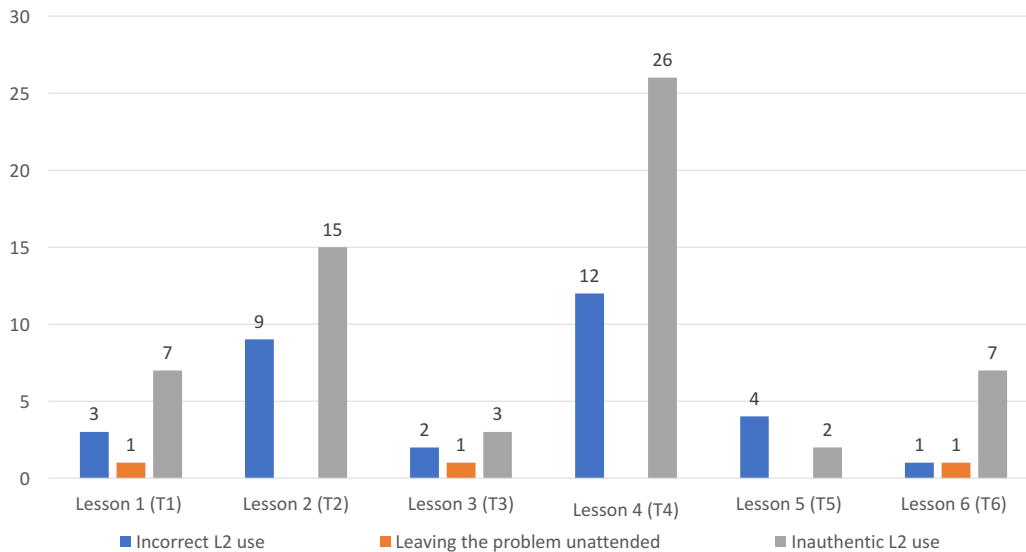


Figure 6: Problems linked to the teachers' L2 competence (T=Teacher)

6) *Learner Involvement*

Issues concerning learner engagement in L2 classrooms have been the central topic in diverse SLA debates and research activities. Research in this area has focused both on the issues concerning learner participation, Teacher Talking Time (TTT), Student Talking Time (STT), teacher and learner interaction types, learner and cognition, learner initiation, classroom task types and so forth (Ellis, 2012; Lier, 2007; Long, 1981, 1983; Swain, 2001; Van Lier, 2008). The common point of these studies was learners' active engagement in their own L2 learning. It is now a common belief that active learner engagement is the key to L2 learning. However, it should be noted that learner participation using IRF structure, using mechanical repetition drills should not be considered as active learner engagement. Other, oral teacher-learner productions, which are the results of short question-answer type interactions, should not be mistaken for active learner participation. The results obtained from these six elementary school teachers' lessons indicated that these teachers (except T6) involved their learners in IRF type interactions based on short oral teacher-learner exchanges or mechanical repetition drills (see Figure 7).

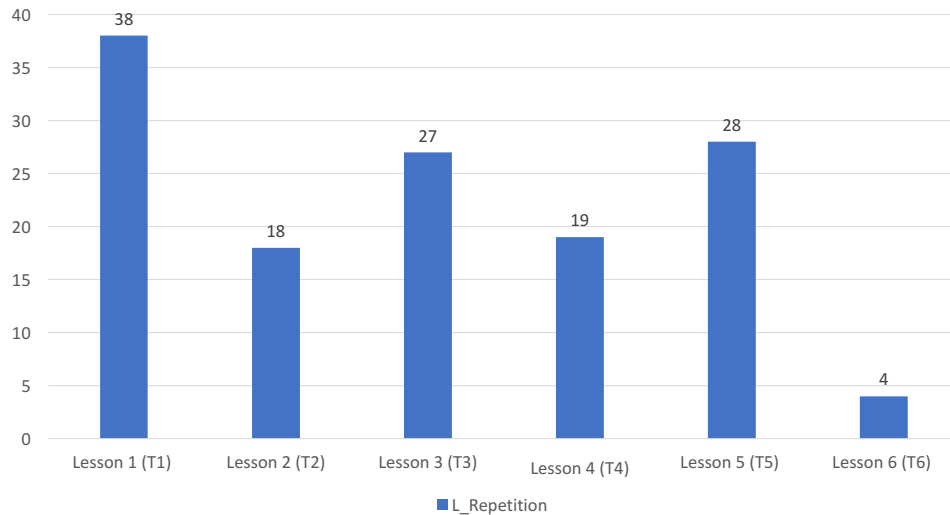


Figure 7: Passive learner involvement (T=Teacher, L=Learners)

Only T6's classroom contained some elements which favoured active learner engagement (see Figures 8 & 9). The results from the interaction and video-recorded material analysis illustrated that the students in T6's class were more actively engaged in their learning than the students in other teachers' classrooms. In this classroom, the students had the opportunities to collaborate with each other and engage in negotiation of meaning (i.e. asking for confirmation, clarification, giving explanations, disagreeing, giving feedback). The students were arranged in a group of seven students and the task given to them afforded the learners the opportunities to be actively engaged in L2 learning. Extract 10 represents a good example for negotiation of meaning taking place between three students in T6 class. These students were seven years old and had only a year of L2 learning experience. Their task was to take cards from a box, read maths operations to their classmates and ask their classmates to give the answer.

Extract 10

(S= Student)

S7: ((Takes a flashcard from the box)) Fifty-one minus nine.

S6 : Is...

S7 : Je sais! ((I know!)) ((She raises her hand, turns her head and looks for the teacher.))

S7 : Sixty...

S6 : Mais non! Moins! On a dit moins...((No, we said 'minus'.))

S6 : On a pas dit "plus"! ((We did not say 'plus'.))

S6 : Fifty...Fifty-two! Fifty-two!

S4 : Quarante! Quarante! ((Forty ! Forty !))

S7 : Forty-two!

S6 : Non, FORTY-TWO! Forty-two!

S7 : J'ai dit avant toi.((I said it before you.))

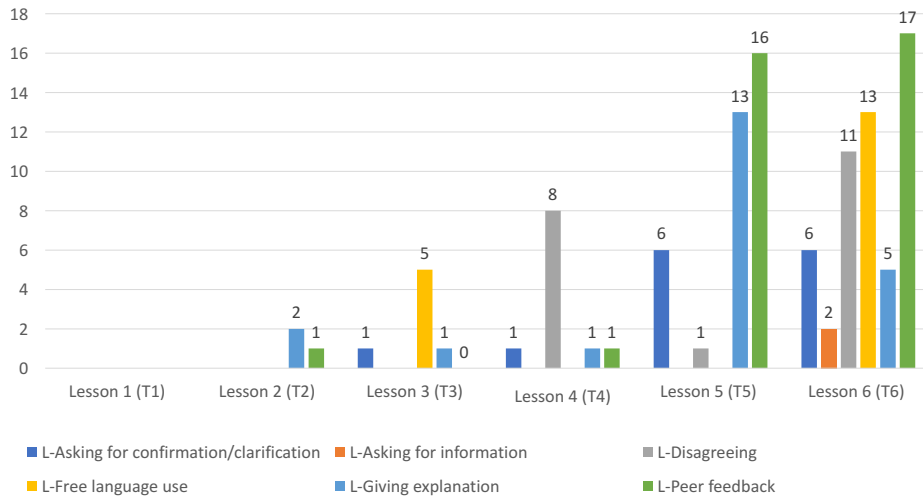


Figure 8: Active learner involvement (T=Teacher, L=Learners)

A number of studies have reported that small group activities help learners produce not only greater amount of language and but also better-quality language compared to activities in traditional teacher-oriented classroom settings (Ellis, 2003, 2012; Lier, 2007; Long 1981,1983). Group work also provides learners with the opportunities to negotiate for meaning when a communication problem arises. These studies maintained that group work can offer interactional conditions that facilitate L2 learning compared to L2 situations involving only teacher-student exchanges.

Figure 9 displays that the five teachers out of six favoured non-communicative activities (i.e. mechanical activities) over activities based on real-life needs. The results also suggest that these teachers (except T6,) spent more time performing whole-class IRF than group activities that promote interaction and language production (output).

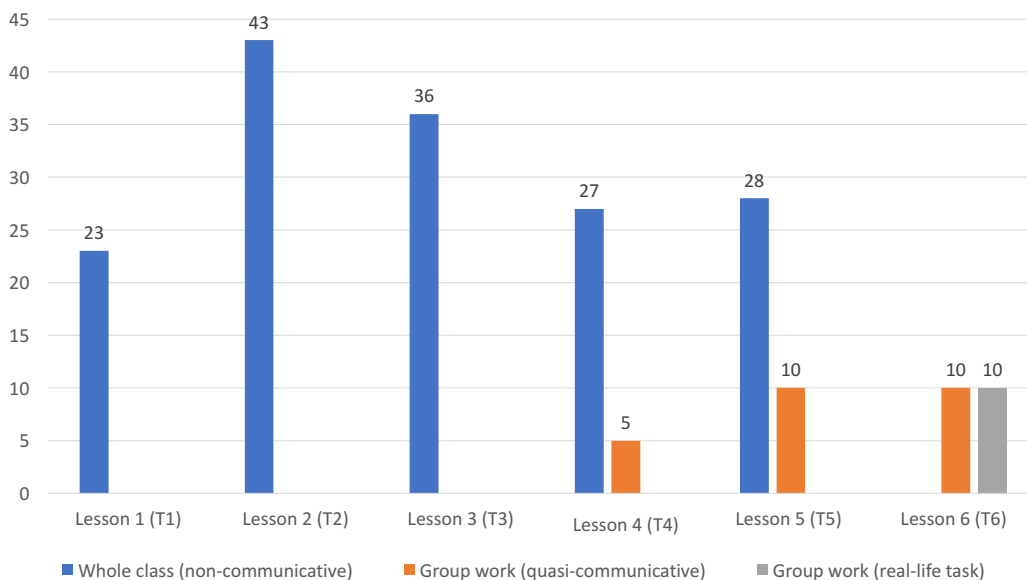


Figure 9: Activity types used in minutes (T=Teacher)

CONCLUSION

Several studies have reported that understanding messages conveyed by the teacher or engaging in controlled teacher-fronted mechanical activities (e.g. repetition drills or question-answer exercises) are not favourable conditions to learn an L2. It has been repeatedly reported that face-to-face small group interactions through which learners engage in cognitive activities provide the necessary conditions to use and improve L2 learning. The summary of the results showed that among these six teachers only T6 used group work activities through which the learners could engage in negotiation of meaning and free, learner-initiated language production.

In this study, the analysis of the learners' and teacher's classroom interactions displayed that, although the teachers used various forms of scaffolding and feedback strategies, the following points required consideration:

- The roles the learners had in the classroom were predominantly passive.
- There were very limited real-life exchanges and group-work activities.
- The activities that the learners were provided with did not encourage cognitive learner engagement.
- The learners were primarily provided with IRF situations.
- The majority of the exchanges were in the form of simple repetitions or short question-answer type exchanges. Few of the exchanges were learner initiated.

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