



The Role of Dialogue in Meaningful Classroom Interaction in South Africa

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Abstract

The importance of meaningful classroom dialogue in the foundation and early intermediate levels of education in creating effective literacy skills is well documented. Despite comments in a recent paper that there is a dearth of research on classroom observations around print in South Africa since 1994 at foundation level, there have actually been several studies that have observed classroom practice in this area post-1994. This paper discusses three particularly important ones that spanned some three decades in South Africa and observed the role and practice of dialogue in classroom teaching around text at foundation and early intermediate schooling levels. All three studies indicate that teaching styles have changed very little to date, and that meaningful classroom interaction between teacher and learner remains largely absent. The Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) of the participating teachers continues to restrict student agency in the area of classroom interaction. Although each of the researchers captured the evidence in different ways, they all came to the same conclusion: that all teachers are still teaching restrictively and do not ask the type of open, extended questions necessary to engage in dialogue which helps develop critical thinking or the vocabulary necessary to develop effective literacy skills in learners.

Keywords: dialogue, interaction, foundation, intermediate, literacy

1. Introduction

South Africa continues to provide a poor basic education system for its children that fails to give them effective literacy skills. The effects of the teacher's dialogue on the literacy acquisition level of learners is well documented (Hedegaard-Soerensen & Pentthin Grumloese, 2020). Moreover, language, concept and literacy development are interrelated. Effective classroom communication is vital in the early grades, as a learner's self-concept as a reader and writer stabilises during this time (Vaknin-Nusbaum et al., 2020). The negative effects of unsystematic classroom communication between teacher and learner are also well documented (Albalawi & Nadeem, 2020). Three seminal studies, each of which are roughly 13 years apart from one another, ranging from 1992 to 2019, focused on foundation and early intermediate pedagogies, language and literacy, in South Africa, and indicate that teaching styles have changed very little over that span of time. What each study highlighted was the crucial importance of meaningful dialogue, and the fact that it was largely absent. This paper will discuss these observations of classroom practice around text in some detail.

In a recent article on the interactional construction of choral responses during engagement with text in Grade 3 classrooms in township schools (Stoffelsma & Van Charldorp, 2020), the authors state that, to-date, few studies have been conducted in South Africa utilising classroom interaction around text as a means of analysing either the discourse, or the two-way talk, between teachers and learners (Chick, 1996; Macdonald, 2002). Stoffelsma and Van Charldorp (2020) believe what actually occurs in these classrooms remains opaque. There appears to be a gap in their literature, as there have, in fact, been several studies conducted in SA involving classroom observation of teaching practices around language, texts and reading. The three in focus are: Rosemary Wildsmith's (1992) research on teachers as the interface between teaching practice and change; Ursula Hoadley's (2005) investigation of teaching pedagogy in terms of classification and framing; and Kellie Steinke's (2019) examination of the role of pedagogical content knowledge, or PCK, on the affordance for dialogue in the teaching and learning process. Wildsmith (1992) conducted her research at Grade 5 level, while Hoadley (2005) focused on Grade 3 classrooms. Both were influential in informing Steinke's study (2019), which was conducted across Grades three and four. The fact that these three studies were carried out over some three decades, with approximately the same period of time in between each one, allows for an observation of the state of teaching practice in foundation and early intermediate classrooms across time regarding dialogue and the teaching of reading in South Africa (Hoadley, 2005; Hoadley, 2017; Steinke, 2019; Wildsmith, 1992). A discussion of dialogue follows.

2. Classroom dialogue

Dialogue is synonymous with conversation (Howe & Abedin, 2013). However, that conversation, typically in classrooms, tends to remain under the teachers' control. This is despite the benefits of systematic and goal driven communication in the classroom for learners being acknowledged. The value of student participation, extended contributions, feedback, and elaboration, and the use of extended open questions is well documented (Howe et al., 2019), along with explicit teaching, scaffolding, and student agency. It is not just the amount of teacher

talk that matters, but also its substance (Vygotsky, 1978). In South Africa, however, foundation & intermediate teachers have long tended towards deeply entrenched, traditional teaching methods, where they retain tight control over their classroom interaction (Nkosi, 2011; Verbeek, 2010). This is compounded by the difficulties of teachers having to teach, and learners having to learn, in English, which is often not their L1. The result is that students are often not literate in either language (Lebesse & Mtapuri, 2014). Neither is this tendency solely a South African phenomenon, as evidenced by a large-scale investigation into teacher preparation for reading and maths teaching across six African countries: Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda. Teachers in those countries also appeared to lack understanding of the need for comprehension and subsequently tended to focus on decoding, drills and repetition (Akyeampong et al., 2013).

To return to the South African situation, the abovementioned tendency towards teacher-fronting and rote learning was already highlighted back in the pre-1994 years (Wildsmith 1992). Subsequent foundation classroom-observation based studies involving reading post-1994, indicate quite clearly that this situation has continued, and that learners are still failing to make the progression from learning to read to reading to learn across Grades 3 and 4 (Spaull & Pretorius, 2019).

In a small scale study, Nkosi (2011), investigated the teaching of isiZulu reading to Grades 2 and 3 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 practice 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).

In the Vhembe district of Limpopo, Mudzielwana (2012) investigated how teachers understand and teach reading comprehension to Grade 3 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 (Mudzielwana, 2012).

Lebesse and Mtapuri (2014) investigated the conditions necessary for literacy in two languages, namely Sepedi and English, with foundation learners at Grade 3 level in one rural school in South Africa. All Grade 3 level teachers were involved and 20 lessons were observed. They found that learners were not provided with textbooks, and that 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 (Lebesse & Mtapuri, 2014).

Beginning in 2015, the large scale, Early Grade Reading Study, or EGRS (Taylor et al., 2017) was conducted over three years with Grades 1 to 3. It involved 230 schools in the North West Province, with classes numbers ranging from 38 - 45 learners. All schools were quintiles 1-3. Quintiles refer to the level of funding a school in South Africa receives from the Government, with quintile 1 being the poorest in terms of resources, and quintile 5 having, ostensibly, the most resources ((Steinke, 2019). 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 all, EGRS saw a total of 60 observation classroom studies and 8 detailed case studies.

Again, it was found that traditional teaching styles tend to be entrenched, and lacking in effectiveness (Myhill et al., 2016). However, it was the coaching model that seemed to be the most promising. It is apparent from the studies mentioned above that teaching styles and classroom interactions have changed little in the intervening decades since 1994. A discussion of Wildsmith's study (1992) now follows.

3. Teacher attitudes & practices (Wildsmith 1992)

Classroom-based research in pre-1994 South Africa was very scarce (Hoadley, 2012). However, as early as 1992, Wildsmith explored the role of teacher's attitudes, perceptions and teaching practices as agents of both change and resistance in teaching and learning. Wildsmith made use of the theories of Joan Tough, a pioneer in the development of children's skills through thinking and teacher-talk (Tough, 1973, 1977). Tough, in turn, based much of her own work on Bernstein's code theory and pedagogic discourse (Bennett & Beard, 2000; Shafer, 1978).

Wildsmith (1992) conducted her research with Grade 5 learners and four participating teachers in two indigenous first language schools in Soweto, a prominent, South African Township. While the research centred on L2 teaching, it also contained a reading component. Using a binary model of language teaching, Wildsmith (1992) compared transmission, or "banking" versus communication-orientated teaching practice (Freire, 1972). She found that the attitudes and perceptions of teachers towards their teaching and students predetermine the types of interaction that occur in the classroom, and thereby influence learning. Teachers who took a more progressive view of learning tended towards a more flexible, communicative teaching style which encouraged dialogue through elaboration, expansion or extension of ideas whereas those who had more traditional attitudes tended to use a more rigid teaching style, with tight control over classroom discourse, teaching and learning materials, and topics (Minor et al., 2002). She noted several aspects present that one might expect to find in traditional classrooms, such as the use of de-contextualized materials, and a focus on form (Lok, 2017), but with more communicative aspects, such as pair-and group work, and some use of extended texts (Fredericks & Alexander, 2021). However, where banking education predominates, as it did in

this case, the teacher generally has control over all interactions. This type of pedagogy, in the words of Wildsmith, “... *thus allows no pupil initiative and very little peer-sharing*” (Wildsmith 1992:8). This interaction pattern itself is known as the classical initiation-response-feedback, or IRF sequence (Rustandi, 2017), and will be discussed in more detail further on in the paper.

Wildsmith (1992) used the Communicative Orientation to Language Teaching, or COLT, as a classroom observation instrument (Appendix B). The COLT was originally developed by Fröhlich & Spada (1985) to capture communicative language teaching and communicative differences in L2 classrooms, and focused mainly on language teaching, although it did contain a category for reading (Mady, 2020). The COLT was a purely quantitative data instrument that captured what happened in the classroom and the frequency with which it occurred. Wildsmith (1992) found clusters of behaviours that tended to take place during certain lessons. For example, when the aim of the lesson was accuracy, there were more traditional forms such as choral and predictable responses, and high teacher control. When fluency was the focus, one saw elaboration, genuine exchange of information and feedback, more learner agency etc. She plotted these groupings of behaviours on a wheel diagram (Appendix D), that ranged from high verbal interaction to low verbal interaction, over-laying the teacher data over the diagram.

Findings from Wildsmith’s (1992) study was 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). An example of this type of restrictive pedagogy is found depicted in the wheel diagram in Appendix D. The value of these findings lies in the fact that, despite the introduction of new school curricula, such as Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), little appears to have changed in these teaching approaches since the research was conducted (Department of Basic Education, 2016; Department of Education, 1997). Although Wildsmith (1992) was mainly focused on language teaching, it did contain a reading component, in addition to interviews, video recordings, and an attitude questionnaire.

Thus, Wildsmith (1992) forms one of the seminal studies pre-1994 that indicates the situation at that time within teaching and the role of dialogue. Despite the introduction of communicative approaches, teachers were struggling to adapt to new ways of being, thinking and doing in the classroom, and regressing towards traditional teaching methods that included a focus on form, rote learning, and strong teacher control over content and conversation.

4. Hoadley (2005): Code theory, pedagogic discourse and framing

The second study that looked at dialogue in a unique way, was Hoadley’s (2005) who showed that teachers some 13 years later were still tending towards control over the dialogue in classroom interactions. As with Joan Tough (2012), Hoadley was working with Bernstein’s Code theory and Pedagogic Discourse (Bernstein, 1999). Code theory is based on the idea that the socio-economic group that a child is raised in will affect the way in which that child uses language, and the type of speech he uses. So low SES children will receive a restricted, or context-embedded type of language (Bernstein, 2020). Middle class children, on the other

hand, have access to an elaborated code, largely acquired through access to print. This code allows them access to the formal code of schooling (Taylor et al., 2003). This is the language of schools and formal education, and advantages learners from these backgrounds. This code is found mainly in print, and as students from wealthier homes have on average 1000 hours of storybook reading before they begin formal schooling, they are better placed to be successful academically (Rose, 2004). Pedagogy inducts learners into a way of thinking and serves to transmit the elaborated code. Two key mechanisms by which this happens are classification and framing. Classification refers to power, while framing refers to control (Bernstein, 1995). 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).

The pedagogic device is the vehicle by which the information is transmitted. This device consists of an instructional discourse embedded in a regulative discourse. Put simply, instructional discourse is concerned with the transmission of knowledge and skills; regulative discourse refers to the ‘hidden’ expectations in the curriculum, such as behaviour, character, attitude, skills, and knowledge (Hoadley, 2006).

Hoadley (2005) designed a coding instrument that could capture classroom teaching practice based on Bernstein’s classification and framing, with the idea of examining the boundaries between everyday knowledge and formal, educational knowledge. In her initial thesis, she observed 89 video-recorded lessons, with four schools and eight teachers in Cape Town townships, in a comparative design, multiple case study with Grade three learners. Like Wildsmith and Steinke (2019), she also used structured interviews, video recordings of lessons to observe literacy teaching practice in English and Xhosa 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). Her findings were that the classroom system only served to perpetuate the inequality for children who entered formal school with a working class orientation to language (Bernstein, 1990). Schooling tended to reproduce that which the middle-class children brought with them, thus leaving those disadvantaged further behind (Heimans et al., 2021). It is through classification and framing, realised through classroom teaching practice, that the power to bring change lies.

Therefore, Hoadley (2005) indicated that over a decade into a Democratic South Africa, little had changed in teaching practice, despite the introduction of communicative teaching. 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, resulting in revisions to the school curriculum itself as well as teaching and learning practice in general. One major area of focus in the new paradigm was scaffolded teaching, involving an elaborated interaction sequence between teacher and learner, which may appear similar, but is not the same as the traditional initiation-feedback-response sequence (IRF). See Appendix C for a summary of the continuum between restrictive, communicative and emancipatory approaches.

5. The IRF sequence versus scaffolding

The IRF sequence was first presented by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) and presents a three-step, interaction-response-feedback pattern where the teacher initiates, the learner responds, and the teacher gives feedback. 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, rather than really communicating. However, it remains the standard dialogue pattern in classrooms globally (Swann et al, 2004). To be truly effective, however, classroom interaction needs to be meaningful (Tough, 1977). By meaningful interaction is meant the initiation-response events that occur in the classroom that actually realise learning, as opposed to those where the learners chorus or chant responses that may not be facilitative (Rose, 2011b). In contrast, 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.*"

This 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 'WH' questions to extend learning by asking students to explain what they think, and why. The traditional IRF does not provide this level of support to learners (Rose, 2004, 2011a). The third study to be discussed, Steinke (2019), used the concepts of scaffolding as both a major theoretical tenant, as well as a feature of best practice.

6. Steinke (2019): Teachers' PCK (2019)

Steinke (2019) observed classroom reading teaching practices of four Grade 3 and four Grade 4 teachers at two schools in the KZN Midlands, and proposed that PCK, strongly influenced by the attitudes and beliefs of the teacher, becomes realized through classroom interaction, which takes place via language. The purpose of the study was to capture what teachers do when they teach reading. The study made use of the COLT in the development of an instrument to capture the teaching of reading in classrooms, called the Facilitative Orientation to Language Teaching, or FORT (Appendices A1, A2, A3, A4). Qualitative data, such as semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were added to the FORT to provide evidence of the *why and how* of teacher practice. Pre- and post-reading assessments were also conducted with participating students (Steinke & Wildsmith, 2021).

Based upon the concepts of classification and framing underlying Hoadley's coding instrument (Hoadley, 2017), the FORT developed categories that could allow the researcher to capture the measure of control the teacher exercised over the sequencing and pacing, the elements of which include, amongst others, time allocation, transitions, modelling and scaffolding, that come together to form the lesson (Chan, 2021; Goldsmith, 2009). The resulting FORT data were graphically represented in the form of two groups: Group 1, which consisted of teachers who use additional teaching of reading training, along with the current South African Department of Basic Education curriculum, known as Curriculum Policy Assessment Statements, or CAPS, and teachers who choose to make use only of CAPS (Steinke & Wildsmith-Cromarty, 2019). The findings showed that although the additionally trained teachers in Group 1 were generally using a greater range of beneficial teaching strategies, all the lessons recorded remain effectively teacher led. Therefore, although additional reading teaching training is necessary, it appears this may not be sufficient to change deeply entrenched teaching styles. Steinke (2019) suggested that teachers may benefit further from a form of on-going coaching that involves on-site training and support for the teacher via specialised coaches who visit and observe classrooms. It develops a one-on-one partnership with the teacher that is tailored to her individual needs (Reid et al., 2020).

As mentioned, the FORT made use of the COLT (see Appendix B) as a foundation, but also needed to capture qualitative, as well as quantitative data (Fröhlich & Spada 1985). In addition, it needed to account specifically for the teaching of reading. One way of achieving this was using semi-structured interviews and observations to ascertain the beliefs, attitudes and theories of teachers that underpin their methods, and creating categories for classroom activities and materials used (Gaynor et al., 1997). The FORT also needed to account for more modern, eclectic forms of teaching practice (Vaknin-Nusbaum et al., 2020). Whereas communicative approaches were originally regarded as revolutionary in their view of language and communication as social behaviour (Savignon, 2018), they proved inadequate by themselves to provide effective literacy levels for learners that have already been disadvantaged through poorer socio-economic conditions (Jansen, 1998; Pretorius, 2015). Thus best practice in teaching evolved into a form that combines the best of traditional approaches with that of communicative approaches. Best practice is defined here as existing classroom practice that is already accepted as containing a high degree of effectiveness (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015). This would include practices such as scaffolded learning, explicit teaching of grammar, vocabulary and comprehension strategies, and use of an extended elaboration cycle, which have shown themselves to facilitate literacy acquisition, particularly in developing countries (Nag et al., 2016). This means that Wildsmith's (1992) original binary model would no longer suffice, and led to the development of the Restrictive-Facilitative pedagogical model of reading (Appendix C). Over and above these reformulations, the FORT needed to be designed to capture the teaching of reading in the classroom (Appendix A1,2,3,4).

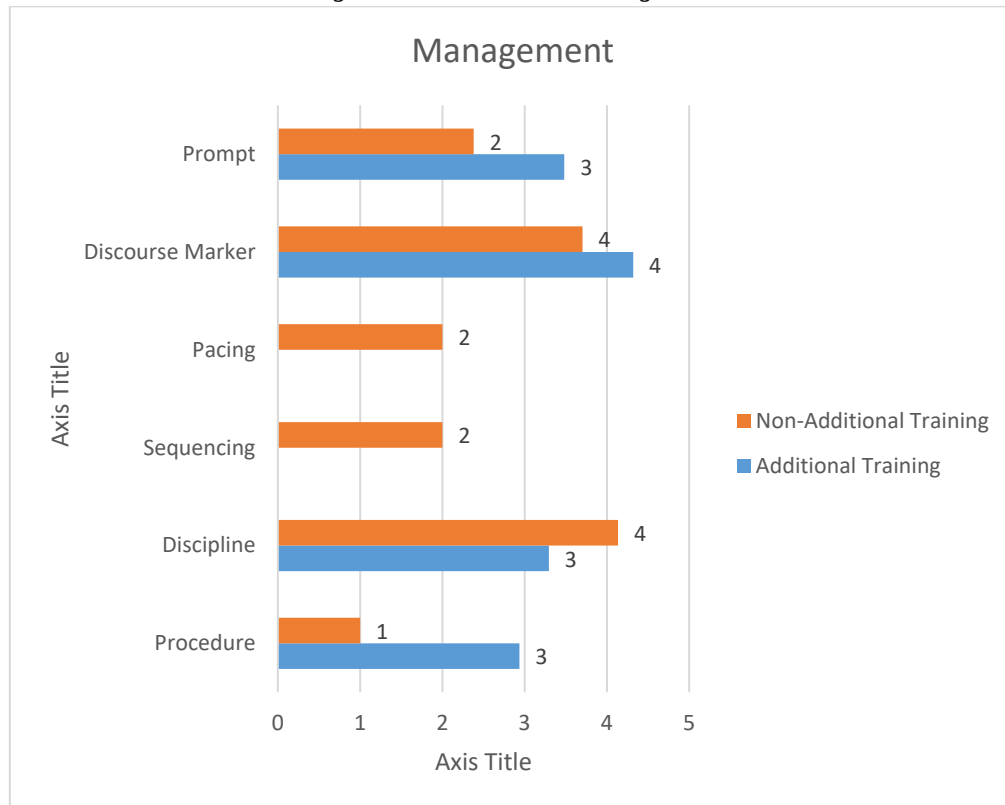
Like the COLT, the FORT made use of two sections, A & B. Categories such as Time, Activity, and Participant Organization (Appendix A1), Management and Organization (Appendix A2) formed part of Section A. However, reading teaching needed to form a larger section, while Modality needed to allow for focus on practices such as integrated teaching, decoding and, comprehension, including types of open and closed questions, as well as inferencing categories

(Appendices A3 & A4). In addition, a category for knowledge (activation of old and creation of new) needed to be incorporated. Part B of the FORT was quite different from the COLT in that it needed to account for all possible discourse events that could take place in a reading lesson within the classroom, from student to teacher and vice versa. It included a category named 'Other' that could capture non-verbal communication such as body language, raising of hands, and facial expressions. Similar to Wildsmith (1992), Steinke (2019) captured the frequency of behaviours within a 5-minute time span, to mark frequency of discourse events on the FORT to capture quantitative data, whilst using categories like Activity and Materials to capture qualitative data. These two components, when placed together along with data from the interviews with participating teachers, and observations from video recorded lessons, were able to capture a detailed picture of classroom practice. The FORT also included and developed the categories of Sequencing and Pacing, from those originally contained in Hoadley (2005) (Appendix A2).

7. Capturing sequencing and pacing on the FORT

The categories of sequencing and pacing were placed under Management, Part A (Appendix A2) of the FORT. There was little evidence of overt relaxing of these boundaries in the classroom practice that could be recorded on the FORT, with only one teacher deliberately deciding to go back to a previous lesson or concept in the recorded lessons. However, the relaxing of the sequencing and pacing is inherent in the scaffolding approaches that were used by the four additionally trained teachers in the study. Scaffolding is designed to relax such boundaries to allow weaker learners to catch up (Rose, 2016). This highlights aspects of the FORT design that allow one to link sections of the FORT, including parts A and B, closely, so as to gain both qualitative and quantitative data to provide both the how and why of the pedagogy. Numbers alone are not sufficient (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). In this case, that involved placing Sequencing and Pacing in the Management category alongside the Material and Activities categories also contained in Part A (Appendix A1), so as to determine whether relaxing of these boundaries is occurring as a result of being embedded in the teaching practice itself (Rose, 2004). The meaningfulness of the teacher style will depend on the related activity and theory (e.g. scaffolding via the R2L cycle) underlying her teaching. The activity and theory are guided by the PCK of a capable and skilled teacher and thereby extend learning (Rose & Martin, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978). In addition, the Sequencing and Pacing categories were placed side-by-side with Discipline, Verbal Prompting and Discourse Markers. Figure 1 below illustrates the data captured on this Management section of the FORT. Group 1 is represented by the orange bar line, (or additionally trained group), while Group 2 is represented by the blue bar line (or non-additionally trained teacher group).

Figure 1: FORT Part A: Management



Source: (Steinke and Wildsmith, 2019:40)

One can see from the above that both teacher groups tend to have similar scores for prompting, discourse markers and discipline. While classroom discipline is important in order to maximise the environment for learners (Great Schools Partnership, 2017), verbal prompting and discourse markers play a vital role in sequencing and pacing of the learning and curriculum because they assist in regulating the teacher's organisation of learning materials and time. This organisation is realised through a seemingly basic form of communication that portions-off information, or sequencing. In the same way, verbal prompting allows the teacher to assess when learners are not moving at the required pace, or when they are losing concentration or motivation (Government of Alberta: Education, 2017). While the categories of sequencing and pacing have already been discussed in some detail, the last category on the above graph, Procedure, stands out.

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). Although this category is not a focus of discussion here, it is important to mention that these procedures mainly consisted of teachers handing out worksheets, papers, or learners retrieving the relevant learning equipment, and that the higher scoring of this category by the ADD group may be a result of the increased activity levels used in the scaffolded learning cycle which 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).

The purpose behind these illustrations is to show that, via framing, the relaxing of sequencing and pacing boundaries, and evaluation criteria, the maintenance of, or contesting of, power lies

with the teacher. The concerns of Bernstein over differences between poorer and middle-class children, or what we could refer to as an ‘inequality bridge’, can be crossed via the explicit teaching of evaluative criteria, thus making the hidden curriculum visible to the learner (Hoadley, 2017). The role of the teacher is central. Ultimately, this also raises the issue of the necessity of adequate teacher training (Stoffelsma, 2019). As MacDonald (2002) stated, 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. 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). Thus, Steinke’s (2019) study provides the third link in the chain when it comes to observing the role of dialogue in developing effective literacy skills in learners. All three of the studies focus on the teacher as an agent of change in the classroom. Wildsmith (1992) views the agent of change as the teacher’s practice itself; Hoadley (2005) sees it as classification and framing, while Steinke (2019) ties these threads together through language, or classroom interaction and PCK. However, ultimately all the components of classroom teaching practice, boundaries and control, pacing and sequencing, assessment, and teaching and learning itself, must take place via dialogue between teacher, learner and vice versa. This is what defines interaction, and it 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).

7. Conclusion

This paper has highlighted three seminal studies that observed classroom practice and dialogue around text. Each study was roughly the same length of time apart from each other, and together spans some three decades, which provides a view of the intractability of traditional teaching approaches and the absence of meaningful, two-way dialogue between teachers and learners. The studies were Wildsmith (1992), Hoadley (2005), and Steinke (2019).

Meaningful dialogue stimulates independent thinking and learning at the foundation and early intermediate education levels. However, all three researchers found that the PCK of the participating teachers restricted this opportunity for effective classroom interaction. They captured the evidence in different ways, namely through language and learning, classification and framing, and the FORT and the teaching of reading. Yet all came to same conclusion: that all teachers are still teaching restrictively and do not ask the type of open, extended questions

that would allow learners to develop critical thinking skills as well as the vocabulary necessary for effective reading. Learners need more agency in their learning, and this can only happen through providing adequate opportunities for two-way, classroom dialogue.

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Appendices

Appendix A1: FORT Part A – PCK and reading teaching

From Steinke & Wildsmith (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

Appendix A2: FORT Part A - Management

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 C: The restrictive-facilitative pedagogical model

Restrictive Pedagogy		Facilitative Pedagogy
		
Traditional Approaches	Communicative approaches	Emancipatory approach
Behaviourism (Skinner, 1954).	Social reform, democracy, the relationship between knowledge and experience (Freire, 1972; Dewey, 1902).	Language as a functional, social semiotic (Halliday, 1994; Halliday, 1996; Halliday, 1978).
Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom & Krathwohl, 1966; Krathwohl, 2002).		Scaffolding, and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978).
		Code theory; the Pedagogic Device; Classification and framing (Bernstein, 1990; Bernstein, 1999).
		Genre and R2L approaches – explicit teaching of reading and writing via scaffolding (Rose & Martin, 2012; Martin, 1999; Martin & Rose, 2005).
Rote learning	Natural approaches	Both deductive and inductive reasoning are necessary (Bowers & Kirby, 2010; Cumming & Elkins, 1999)
Banking	Learner-centred	Learners bring their own experiences into the classroom environment (Rothery, 1996).
Focus on discipline and teacher authority	Group work; learner construes meaning through experience; teacher is the 'sage on the side'.	Guidance of teacher as well as peers are necessary in order for the learner to reach the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978).
Errors seen as 'wrong'	Errors can facilitate the learning process	Some error correction necessary, depending on context (Bromley, 2011).
Strong framing and classification	Weak classification and framing	Utilises both, depending on context (Bernstein, 1990).
Bottom-up approach – decoding	Top-down approach – comprehension	Utilises both bottom-up and top-down approaches (Steinke, 2012)
Focus on form	Focus on meaning	Both are utilised depending on context (Rose, 2004; Steinke, 2012).

Appendix D: Wheel diagram of teachers' pedagogical practices in terms of communicative orientation.

(Wildsmith (1992a:229): An example of a wheel diagram with overlaid data)

